

2026-2027



Family Guide



Address:

200 E. North Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21202

Web & Phone:

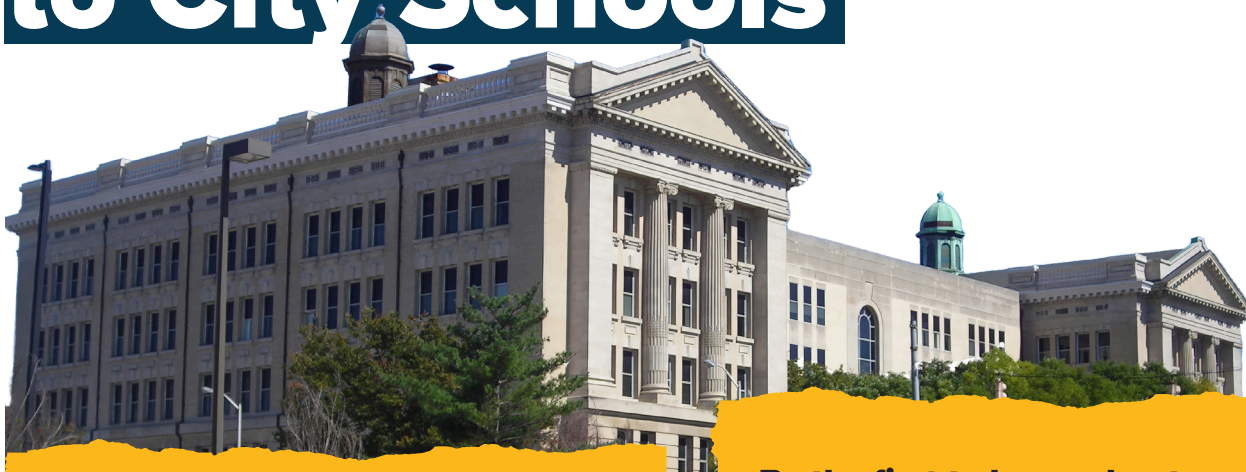
www.baltimorecityschools.org
443-984-2000



2026-27

FAMILY GUIDE

to City Schools



Quick contacts at Central Office

Enrollment

(including registration, school choice, school transfers):
410-396-8600 • enrollment@bcps.k12.md.us

Transportation:

410-396-7440 • Transportation@bcps.k12.md.us

Family engagement (including volunteering):

410-545-1870 • engagement@bcps.k12.md.us

Academic programs:

Pre-K and kindergarten, 443-642-3039
Grades 1-2, 443-642-3990

Special education:

443-984-1561 • SpecialEducation@bcps.k12.md.us

School Police: www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/school-police

410-396-8588 (in an emergency, call 911)

Multilingual Enrollment and Support Center:

443-642-4481 • MESC@bcps.k12.md.us

Reporting inappropriate or potentially illegal activity by
a City Schools employee (can be done anonymously):
1-800-679-0185 or at this [link](#).

For all other concerns:

443-984-2000

Have a concern at your school?

Here's what to do.

1. Talk with your child's teacher.
2. Talk with your principal.
3. Call Central Office (use the numbers above to get to the right department).

Still have a concern?

Call the CEO Ombudsman at 410-545-1870.

Be the first to know about school closings or delays.

Poor weather or emergencies can sometimes cause school closings. To receive notifications by phone, text, or email, make sure your school always has your current contact information. You can update information online through Campus Portal or by calling your school.

You can also get notifications via our City Schools Mobile App or following us on Facebook, Twitter, and Nextdoor. Learn more at www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/inclement-weather

Find out more about what's happening at City Schools:

Visit www.baltimorecityschools.org.

Ask at your school for the school website address or social media accounts! Find links to our social media here: linktr.ee/baltcityschoolsonsocial

You can also follow us on social media:

    @BaltCitySchools
 @CitySchoolsTV

In Spanish:

  @BaltCitySchoolsES
 @CitySchoolsES

Mobile App:

 bit.ly/CitySchoolsAppApple
 bit.ly/CitySchoolsAppGoogle

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Welcome to the 2026–27 School Year!

Dear City Schools families,

Welcome! As we begin this new school year together, I am filled with gratitude, optimism, and excitement. Since joining City Schools, I have been inspired by the pride, passion, and commitment I have experienced from students, families, educators, staff, and community members across Baltimore. Together, there is no limit to what our students can achieve.

As someone whose own life was greatly shaped by public education, I know the transformative power of great schools and caring adults. Our vision is clear: beginning in the earliest grades, every student should be on a pathway to success beyond City Schools whether that future includes enrollment, enlistment, employment or entrepreneurship.

As part of my [entry plan](#), I will Connect. Discover. Deliver. I look forward to listening, learning, and working alongside our families, educators, staff, and community partners. Every decision we make will be guided by one question: What is best for our students?

Families are among our most important partners in this work. Your engagement, encouragement, and advocacy are essential to your child's success, and we are committed to strengthening that partnership. We will ground our work together in outstanding customer service so that every interaction with City Schools reflects the respect, responsiveness, and care our families deserve.

This guide includes important information and resources to help your family prepare for the school year ahead. I encourage you to stay connected with your child's school and take advantage of the many opportunities to engage throughout the year.

Thank you for being an essential part of the City Schools family. I am honored to serve as your CEO, and I look forward to working alongside you to ensure every student has the opportunities they deserve.

Here's to a wonderful school year!

Sincerely,

Dr. Jermaine Dawson

Dr. Jermaine Dawson
Chief Executive Officer
Baltimore City Public Schools



Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook, Parent Code of Conduct, & Student Code of Conduct:

As a supplement to this Family Guide, City Schools' [Student Rights & Responsibilities Handbook](#) uses student-friendly language to summarize key student rights (freedoms and protections), and responsibilities (rules) that all students are expected to follow to support their learning, health, and safety. The Student Rights & Responsibilities Handbook summarizes, in student-friendly language, key student rights, or freedoms and protections, as well as responsibilities, or rules that all students are expected to follow to support their learning, health, and safety. Topics include access to a free, well-rounded public education; student wholeness; student voice, participation, and leadership; equitable and fair treatment; safe, secure, and orderly learning environment; and responsible use of technology. We also developed a set of [Shared Commitments for Families and Other Visitors to Our Schools](#). In addition, our expectations for appropriate student behavior and disciplinary consequences for student misconduct are set forth in City Schools' [Student Code of Conduct](#). Parents and families are encouraged to review both documents each year and discuss them with their children.

About City Schools

The schools and programs that make up Baltimore City Public Schools include:

- Schools that serve a neighborhood or the entire city
- International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement, and gifted and advanced learner programs
- Career and Technical Education (“CTE”) programs leading to industry certifications in fields such as information technology, construction, and health care.
- Specialized programming, like the arts, sciences, or language immersion
- Schools for students who need extra support and credit options

Each year City Schools reviews the district’s “portfolio” to make sure schools are effectively functioning for students, families, and communities. Find out more at www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/annual-review.

School choice. Elementary (grades K-5) and middle (grades 6-8) school students have a “zoned” neighborhood school and can also apply to citywide charter schools, where students are admitted through a school-based lottery process.

For middle (grades 6-8) and high (grades 9-12) school students, there are dozens of options available, including schools with selective programs, career and technical programs, a focus on arts or sciences, and programs to make up credits. Through [City Schools' Middle and High School Choice process](#), students and families can select the schools they want to attend. Some middle and high schools have academic “entrance criteria” for admission - meaning students need to earn certain grades or test scores in order to attend the school. Other schools with specialized programming may require students

to audition, interview, or submit special materials in order to attend the school. It’s never too early to find out about the options and requirements, so you can proactively plan your student’s pathway from elementary school to graduation and beyond.

View school profiles and compare schools at www.baltimorecityschools.org/o/bcps/page/schools and get more information by asking at your school. Learn about school performance and accountability data here: www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/data. Additional information about school performance is available as part of the Maryland Report Card: reportcard.msde.maryland.gov

School budgets. Early every calendar year, principals ask parents/guardians and community members to share what programs and services are most important to them, so that the budget for the next school year can strive to meet these priorities. Ask your principal how you can participate in building the budget! www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/budget

School buildings. Through the 21st Century School Buildings Program and Capital Improvement Program, we’re continuing to build and renovate school buildings to support 21st-century learning and serve our neighborhoods. As part of these efforts, we’re promoting “green schools” where school communities come together around healthy school environments. Have a problem or concern about your school building? Speak with your principal or call us at 443-984-2000, and check out the status of maintenance and repairs at our website: www.baltimorecityschools.org/o/bcps/page/buildings

TEACHING & LEARNING



Grade by grade: Elementary school

In pre-K through fifth grade, children learn essential academic skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and math and how to apply those skills to real-world situations. While academics have traditionally been the focus in school, students now also learn social emotional skills, fine and gross motor development, fine arts, athletic skills, and basic life skills to prepare them to be contributing members of a supportive community.

Here is what you can expect at each grade level:

Before school age

Judy Centers. City Schools operates 17 Judith P. Hoyer Early Learning Hubs (Judy Centers) that support children from birth to age 5 and their families. Located in elementary schools across Baltimore, Judy Centers provide services such as parenting classes, playgroups, adult education, early intervention support, and connections to community resources to help children enter school ready to learn. For locations and more information, visit: [earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/families/judy-center-early-learning-hubs](https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/families/judy-center-early-learning-hubs).

For children with disabilities or suspected disabilities, see Special Education and Child Find on page 13.

Pre-Kindergarten

Investment in high-quality early childhood education and learning experiences, as outlined by the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, means more equitable opportunities for children across the state to succeed as they begin their school careers. In this spirit, Baltimore City Public Schools has long offered full day pre-K for all families. All children who will be four years old by September 1, 2026, are eligible to apply for enrollment in City Schools' pre-K programs. Still, space is limited within each building, and access to strong foundational education must be offered first to families who need it most. For more information, visit: <https://www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/pre-k-and-kindergarten-registration>.

Pre-Kindergarten program focus on:

- Play-based exploration
- Hands-on experimentation
- Opportunities for social skill, emotional intelligence, and fine and gross motor development
- Thematic learning in many topics including school, family and friends, health and safety, comparing and contrasting, creativity, transportation, insects, plants and animal life.
- Beginning math skills in numeracy and geometry

State and System-Wide Assessments

All pre-K students participate in the GOLDFinch assessments, which measure growth in learning, language, literacy, physical development, and social-emotional skills.

Kindergarten

- Social and motor skills through play
- Recognizing and writing letters, learning new words, and telling stories
- Recognizing numbers, counting, adding, subtracting, and identifying shapes

- Family and community relationships
- Study weather, plants, and animals
- Learn habits for staying healthy
- Develop self-esteem, and how to manage feelings, behavior, and independence
- Share and work with other children

State and System-Wide Assessments

Kindergarten assessments include the Maryland Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA), WIDA ACCESS for multilingual learners, and the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test, which helps identify students who may benefit from advanced learning opportunities.

First grade

- Build reading comprehension skills, distinguish between fiction and nonfiction, and compare characters in stories
- Add and subtract up to 20 and solve word problems
- Investigate light, how plants and animals grow and live, and patterns in space
- Study geography and the environment
- Make comparisons between past and present

Second grade

- Read stories, fables, and folktales from different cultures
- Ask “who, what, where, when, why, and how” questions about reading
- Add and subtract up to 1,000
- Measure and estimate lengths
- Explore changes to our planet and how plants and animals adapt to where they live
- Understand the difference between needing something and wanting something



Third grade

- Retell important details from fables, folktales, and myths from different cultures
- Learn about point of view in writing
- Multiply and divide numbers up to 100, begin to understand fractions, and solve word problems
- Investigate insects
- Study how individuals and groups protect rights and maintain order in our world
- Learn about money
- Study Baltimore's history, culture, and economy

Fourth grade

- Explain differences between poetry, drama, and prose
- Figure out the meaning of words and phrases in writing
- Add, subtract, and multiply fractions, and solve word problems
- Investigate changes to our planet, waves, and energy
- Study Maryland's history, geography, and economy

Fifth grade

- Explain the structure of different kinds of writing
- Learn more about a narrator's point of view
- Analyze how pictures contribute to a text
- Continue to learn about fractions and study decimals
- Study environmental and earth science
- Explain the differences between the British colonies and America

State and System-Wide Assessments (3-5 grades)

Students in grades 3-5 take state assessments in English language arts (ELA) and math each spring. MSDE is beginning the transition from the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) to the Maryland System of Testing Academic Readiness (MSTAR). This spring, there will be new tests in ELA and Math in grades 3-8.

Additional assessments include:

- Maryland Integrated Science Assessment (MISA) in grade 5
- WIDA ACCESS for multilingual learners to measure English language proficiency
- Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) alternate assessments for students with significant cognitive disabilities

To move up to the next grade

Students must either:

- Pass English and math; or
- Pass English, science, and social studies; or
- Pass math, science, and social studies

Making the most of elementary school

- **Extra help, clubs, and more.** Depending on your school, there may be options for before and after-school programs or care that provide extra help with school subjects, clubs, or sports. These programs support learning and allow students to try new things to discover their interests. Ask your child's teacher or school principal about what's available.
- **Summer programs.** City Schools and community partners often sponsor summer learning at various schools around the city. Information about summer programs is usually available in March or April.
- **Get ready for the next steps.** At City Schools, students can choose the middle school they want to go to. Some schools and programs—like Advanced Academics or Ingenuity—have special requirements, so ask at your school or visit baltimorecityschools.org/page/choice to learn more.

Tips for supporting learning at home

- Talk about the school day. Ask open-ended questions about what your child learned, enjoyed, or found challenging. These conversations strengthen communication skills and show that education matters.
- Read every day. Regular reading supports success in all subjects. Visit your local library, encourage independent reading, and model reading at home.
- Use the Family Learning Guides. These guides provides key reading and math milestones and at-home activities for each elementary school grade level, from pre-k through 5th grade. Find them on our website: www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/learning-guides.
- Make attendance a priority. Being present and on time every day helps students succeed. Establish consistent routines, communicate with teachers when absences occur, and submit absence notes to help maintain accurate attendance records.



Grade by grade: Middle school

After elementary school, students continue building skills and applying them in more complex critical thinking and problem-solving areas. These are also important years for learning how to organize work, manage time, set and meet goals, and discover interests and talents that affect decisions about high school, college, or career. Here's a sample of what students will do in each grade's core subjects. To learn more about the courses offered in high school, consult the Middle School Program of Study.

Sixth grade

- Write in different ways for different reasons, like expressing opinions or persuading
- Read a wide variety of literature, analyzing word choice, point of view, and structure
- Study the history and geography of Asia and Africa
- Learn ratios, rates, and statistics
- Explore light, particles, ecosystems, water cycles, and rocks

Seventh grade

- Study writing techniques such as analogy, allusion, and irony
- Compare and contrast written, audio, and video texts
- Analyze primary and secondary sources in history, and explain the impact of geography on historical developments
- Work with equations, graphs, and two- and three-dimensional shapes
- Study matter, energy, weather, and biology
- Learn about managing money

Eighth grade

- Develop skills in reading, writing, and thinking in different subject areas—for example, historical texts
- Study linear equations, two- and three-dimensional space, distance, and angles
- Investigate geological processes, motion, force, heredity, natural selection, and chemical reactions
- Study U.S. history from the American Revolution through Reconstruction

State and System-Wide Assessments

Students in grades 6-8 take state assessments in English language arts (ELA) and math each spring. MSDE is beginning the transition from the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) to the Maryland System of Testing Academic Readiness (MSTAR). The first phase of MSTAR implementation will begin this school year. This spring, there will be new tests in ELA and Math in grades 3-8.

Eighth graders enrolled in Algebra I take the Algebra I MCAP instead of the grade 8 math test. Results show progress toward graduation readiness. MCAP Social Studies 8: Starting in Spring, eight graders take this test to measure their standards in social studies.

Additional assessments include:

- Maryland Integrated Science Assessment (MISA) in grade 8
- WIDA ACCESS for multilingual learners to measure English language proficiency
- Dynamic Learning Maps alternate assessments for students with significant cognitive disabilities

To move up to the next grade...

To advance, students must either:

- Pass English and math; or
- Pass English, science, and social studies; or
- Pass math, science, and social studies

Honors

Honors courses include curricula in English language arts that are above grade level, compacted content in math, and long-term research projects, such as the Morgan State Science Fair and National History Day. Grades in these seventh- and eighth-grade courses are weighted more heavily when calculating composite scores for the [high school choice process](#).

Get ready for next steps

- At City Schools, students choose the high schools they want to enroll in. Some schools and programs have special requirements, like getting good grades, preparing a portfolio or essay, or attending an audition or interview. Sixth grade is the right time to start thinking about high school. If students think ahead, by the beginning of seventh grade, they can confidently take action steps towards enrolling in their top school choices.
- Making a plan means thinking about the subjects and activities students like best at school—and can imagine themselves pursuing in high school and beyond. It's important to experience different things by taking advantage of sports, clubs, and other activities. Ask your school about what's available.
- Learn more about school options at www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/choice. Also, all middle schools have a staff member to help families choose a high school, so contact your school to set up an appointment.

Tips for supporting learning at home

- **Keep talking.** Students learn a lot about the world in middle school, along with skills in describing, persuading, and debating. Talking about anything from the latest hit movie to current events to things to do on the weekend can help students develop and apply those skills in real

life. These conversations also show that parents and family members are interested in what's going on with them.

- **Keep reading.** Students in middle school read, analyze, and create nonfiction and fiction on screen, in print, with images, and more, but there are many opportunities to reinforce literacy outside of school. Reading isn't only about chapter books or novels—it can be websites, magazines, advertising, or newspapers. Think and talk about what you read every day, and share how you get information.
- **Be organized.** Learning how to meet deadlines and manage time is important for success in City Schools, college, and adult life. Keep an eye on your child's school assignments, and help them get things done on time.

Learning beyond academics

Part of getting ready for college and adult life is learning how to work with other people, manage emotions and stress, understand and empathize with how other people feel and think, develop positive relationships, and make good choices. These social and emotional skills are important for creating positive communities for teaching and for making sure students are ready to learn and be successful. That's why social and emotional learning is an important part of [City Schools' Portrait of a Graduate](#). Expect teachers to talk to you about how your child is growing socially and emotionally, and ask at your school about how teachers and school staff are promoting your child's well-being and growth.



High School

In ninth through twelfth grade, students continue building skills and take essential steps to prepare for college or a career. In addition to core programming in English, math, science, and social studies, students earn credits in technology, health, physical education, art, and languages. They can take specialized programming like the options listed below. To learn more about the courses offered in high school, consult the High School Program of Study.

Career and Technical Education (CTE)

Earn hands-on skills and industry certifications in

- Arts, media, and communication
- Business, management, and finance
- Construction
- Consumer services, hospitality, and tourism
- Environmental, agriculture, and natural resources
- Health and biosciences
- Human resources
- Information technology
- Manufacturing, engineering, and technology
- Transportation

Please check with your school for available course offerings. Every program is not available at every school.

Opportunity to earn college credits

- Advanced Placement courses are offered at more than 20 high schools
- International Baccalaureate programs are offered at Baltimore City College
- Earn college credits (tuition free) through dual enrollment and other partnerships with University of Baltimore, Baltimore City Community College, and other local colleges.
- The opportunity to earn an associate degree in dual enrollment programs is offered at Bard High School Early College.
- Pathways in Technology Early College High Schools (P-TECH) allow students to graduate after six years with a high school diploma, tuition-free associate degree, and first-in-line status for jobs in leading industries.

Grading

Every teacher tracks a student's grade in a gradebook, which is accessible to all parents and/or guardians. Parents and guardians have the ability to and are encouraged to monitor the gradebook throughout the school year. Gradebooks should be updated regularly in all courses, and at least weekly in Math, English/English Language Arts ("ELA"), Science, Social Studies, and Career

and Technical Education courses. Families should always reach out to the teacher first if there are questions about the student's grade. If a grading issue is not resolved, then the family should contact the school leader to request a conference with the teacher and school leader. More information is available at this link: www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/grading. See [Board Policy IKA](#), for more information about City Schools' grading policy.

The grading scale for high school classes is represented in the chart below:

Grade Range (percentages)	Letter Grade	Standard	Honors	IB/AP Weight
97-100	A+	4	5	5.5
93-96	A	4	5	5.5
90-92	A-	4	5	5.5
87-89	B+	3	4	4.5
83-86	B	3	4	4.5
80-82	B-	3	4	4.5
77-79	C+	2	3	3.5
73-76	C	2	3	3.5
70-72	C-	2	3	3.5
67-69	D+	1	2	2.5
63-66	D	1	2	2.5
60-62	D-	1	2	2.5
59 & below	F	0	0	0



State and System-Wide Assessments

- MCAP: Required in English 10 and Algebra I.
- American Government MCAP: Required for students in the course; counts for 20% of final grade.
- Biology MCAP: Required for students in Biology; counts for 20% of final grade.
- PSAT: Taken in grades 10 and 11; practice for college readiness and SAT.
- SAT: Taken in grade 11 at school; used for college admission. May be retaken.
- ACT: Accepted by colleges as an alternative to the SAT.
- AP and IB exams: May result in college credit depending on scores.
- Dynamic Learning Maps: Alternate assessments for eligible students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- ELPA (WIDA ACCESS): Annual assessment for multilingual learners in grades K–12.

To move up to the next grade...

- At least 5 total credits. 1 credit in ELA or math; 1 credit in a core course (ELA, math, science, social studies, or a world language); and 3 credits earned through electives or other credit-bearing courses
- At least 10 total credits. 3 credits in ELA, Algebra I, or Geometry, and 1 credit in both social studies and science.
- At least 15 total credits. 5 credits out of ELA, Algebra I, Geometry, and an eleventh-grade math course (i.e., any accredited math course for which the student meets qualifications), and 3 credits in science and social studies, with at least 1 in each.

To graduate, students must have...

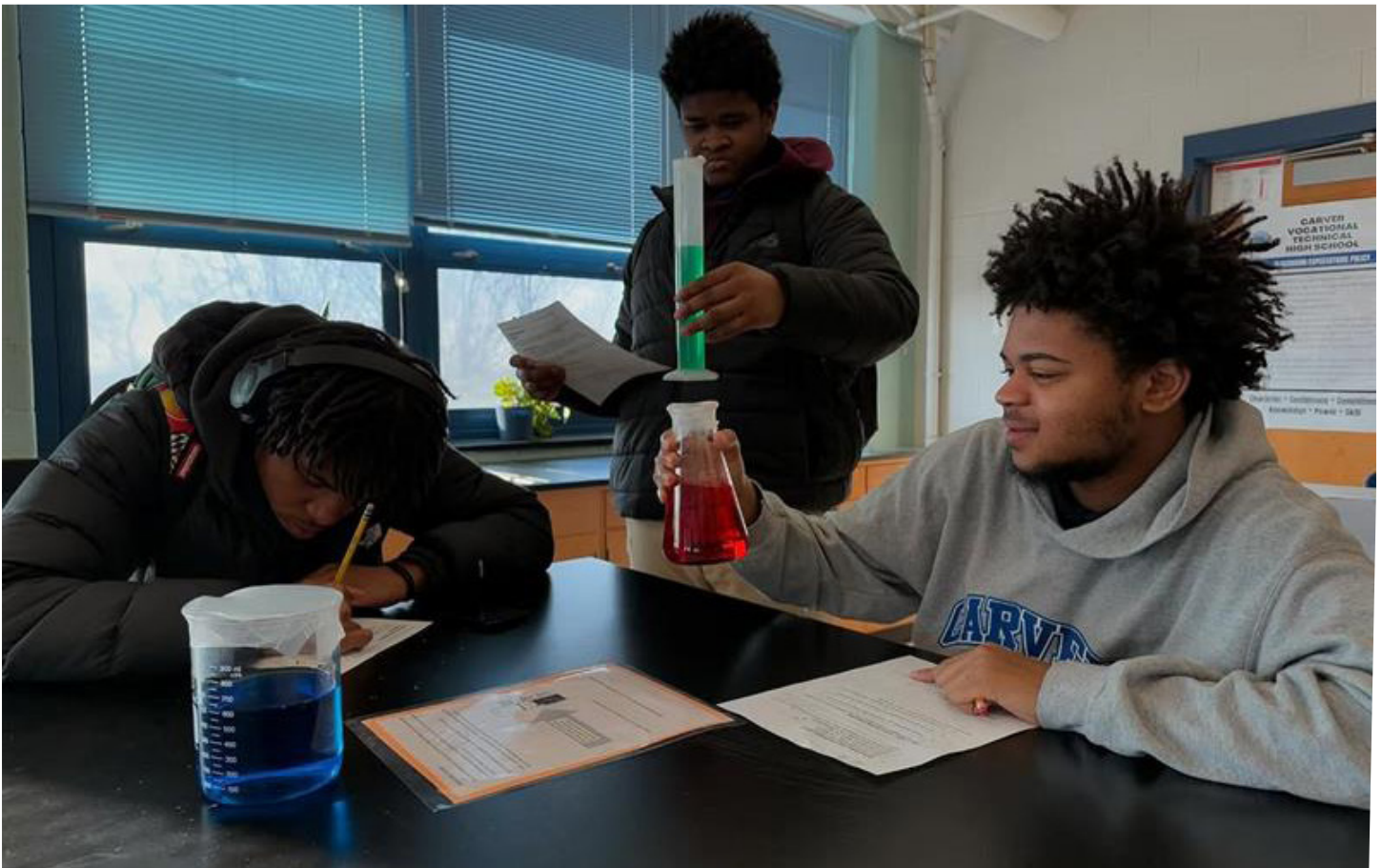
Requirements can differ based on the year a student began high school. Please check with your school counselor about specific requirements for you and review the requirements for graduating "college and career ready." Visit our website for more information: www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/graduation-and-promotion.

Get ready for next steps

- High schools offer many different programs to add to regular classroom learning. Athletics, clubs, music, tutoring, internships, and other activities teach important skills—and help students find their own voices through activities that matter to them. Ask at your school about what's available and take advantage of every opportunity! If there is a club your student wants to start, they have the ability to do so. [Learn more in the Students Rights and Responsibility handbook.](#)
- All high school students use an online tool (called [SchoolLinks](#)) to plan for after high school. It helps students in grades 6-12 explore career paths, search for colleges, plan high school courses, track applications, and connect with local businesses or internships. Parents can also use SchoolLinks to track progress from home.

The following are several websites where students and families can find information and resources to help in college and career planning:

- Maryland Higher Education Commission: <https://mhec.maryland.gov/preparing/Pages/default.aspx>
- Free Application for Federal Student Aid: studentaid.gov
- College Career Readiness: baltimorecityschools.org/page/college-career-readiness



Students with disabilities

Students with disabilities are entitled by law to a free and appropriate public education from birth to age 21. City Schools provides a range of services to ensure that all students' needs are met, whether in general education classes, resource rooms or self-contained classes at public schools, or nonpublic special education schools.

To the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities are in classes with children who are not disabled. Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal from the general educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of a child's disability means that education in general classes with the help of aids and services cannot be provided satisfactorily.

If you feel your child may need evaluation for special education services, contact Child Find at 410-984-1011. The first step in providing the right services is to confirm the nature of a child's special needs and to develop a program with the necessary support.

- An Individualized Education Program (IEP) outlines in writing the student's educational needs and the supports and services that will be provided from birth to age 21, so that the student can meet educational goals.
- Section 504 is a Civil Rights law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities. Any student with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities may be eligible for a Section 504 plan. The Section 504 plan is designed to remove any barriers so that a student with a disability can access the same education as their non-disabled peers. If you think your child may need evaluation for Section 504 services, contact Child Find at 410-984-1011.

If your child has an IEP or Section 504 plan and you have concerns about how it is being implemented or believe that your child is not receiving required services, please contact City Schools' Special Education Parent Response Unit at 443-984-1561. Forms for submitting formal written complaints are available on request. Complaints can also be filed with the Maryland State Department of Education. Please call 410-767-7770 for more information or visit www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/special-education

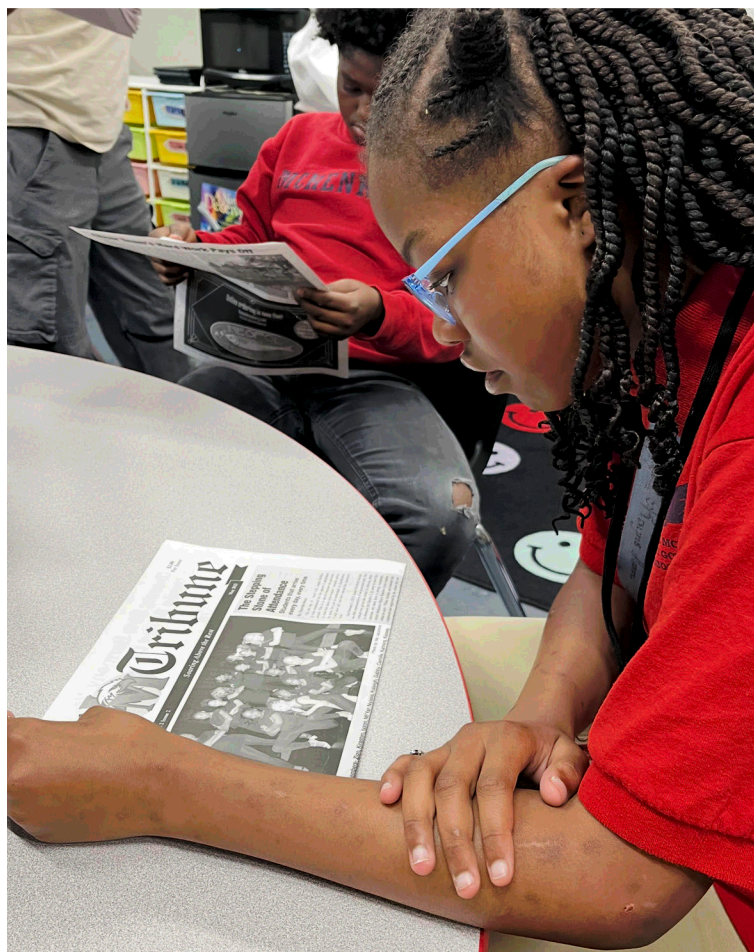
Multilingual learners

English Language Development (ELD) programs develop English language skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The goal of ELD instruction is to develop English language proficiency while also ensuring students can meet the same challenging academic standards as their grade level peers. ESOL teachers implement ELD programs, help newcomers adjust to the culture of U.S. schools, and collaborate with schoolwide teams to ensure the needs of all multilingual learners are met. More information about the ELD program and supports for multilingual learners can be found at www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/english-language-development

Gifted and advanced learners

City Schools has provided guidance to support formally identified gifted, advanced, and talent development learners in every school within the district.

City Schools assesses all kindergarten students to identify children who may be gifted, advanced, or eligible for talent development. If you think your child may be gifted or ready for advanced learning programs, visit www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/gifted-and-advanced-learning and complete the online referral form.





Because families play an important part in student success, we encourage parents, guardians, and other family members to get involved and connect with schools to support your child's learning. Below are a few ideas.

Keep in touch with your school

You can expect to be informed by your child's teachers or school about what students are learning at different times of the year, special activities, or any related concerns. Please complete the [Annual Student Verification process](#), so your school knows how to contact you by phone number, email, and mailing address. Don't hesitate to send a note with your child for their teachers, letting them know the best way to reach you and sharing any concerns you may have.

Remember: If your contact information changes during the year, let your school know. Your school will let you know if you need to bring in paperwork for the change.

Make sure to also follow your school's social media accounts, visit their website, and download the [City Schools App](#) to see notifications specifically from your school.

Access Campus Portal

Campus Portal is your online source for your child's schedules, attendance, grades, and more. You can access it from a computer, smart phone, or tablet- anything thats connected to the internet. City Schools parents and guardians can access the online portal online at: www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/campus-portal. For help, contact your school.

Annual Student Verification

All returning families must complete the Annual Student Verification (ASV) process for each school year by September 30, even if there are no changes. Learn more about this on our website: www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/annual-student-verification.

Visit schools

City Schools encourages parents and guardians to visit schools to volunteer, participate in school activities, and support their students' progress and well-being. If you need accommodations to participate in a school event or volunteer opportunity, contact your child's principal. All schools visitors should familiarize themselves

with City Schools' recently [updated building entry protocols](#) to promote a safe learning environment for all. Visitors to any school, including parents and guardians, must use the designated visitor entrances to enter. Once visitors enter a school building (and after successfully passing through the weapons detection system at a high school or middle/high school serving grades 6-12), they must proceed immediately to the main office or designated check-in point. The visitor will need to present a photo ID, which will be scanned to confirm that the individual is not on the sex offender registry. Next, visitors will get a badge that must be worn while inside. If you volunteer regularly at a school, you may be eligible for a City Schools identification card. Ask at your school office. Visitors without ID shall be allowed beyond the school office at the discretion of the principal, but only when escorted by an employee. City Schools may set reasonable limitations on school and classroom visits, including the time, length and frequency of any visits, and the number of visitors. For more information, see Board Policies [KCB \(Volunteers\)](#) and [KIA \(Visitors to School Property\)](#). Maryland law and City Schools rules prohibit visitors, parents/guardians, employees, and other individuals from recording a conversation or meeting on City Schools property without the consent of the people involved. This includes recording on cell phones and smart glasses with recording capabilities.

Commitments For Visitors to Our Schools

Our schools and learning environments must be inclusive and safe places that honor the culture, experiences, and humanity of students, families, and our community.

We welcome families and community partners to visit our schools and engage with us in promoting student success. To create a climate and culture of support for all students, we are expected to work together to address concerns and challenges related to programs and services before they become a source of conflict.

To do this, visitors to our schools and offices must commit to the following standards while on school property, at school district events, and interacting with City Schools employees, students, and families.

Our Shared Agreements

- Families, community members, and other adults are welcome to participate actively in our school communities.
- All members of the school community must be valued and treated with respect.
- We will always work with a positive mindset in the best interests of students and families, assuming good intentions in others.
- Our students benefit most when there are few disruptions to their learning.
- We must avoid behaviors that escalate emotions during stressful moments and take time to collect ourselves when we cannot.
- Threats, harassing behaviors, discrimination, or personal attacks – verbal, written, online, and in person – have no place in our schools.
- As a community, we must protect our school property against damage.

Our Shared Expectations

- Adhere to Maryland law, School Board policies, and visitor building rules.
- Comply with any reasonable order of identifiable school district officials performing their duties.
- Never intimidate, harass, or discriminate against any person based on race, color, national origin, citizenship status, marital status, religion, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, or age.
- Follow entry and safety procedures and directives for visitors, including signing in with proper identification.
- Always avoid the use of profane, abusive, or harassing language.
- Visits to schools should be for official business, volunteering for specific events or activities, and student matters. Those visits should be scheduled whenever possible.
- Refrain from the possession or use of weapons and illegal drugs while on City Schools property.
- Notify the school administrator if you become aware of threats to the school or students.
- Never approach someone else's child to discuss an issue, demean, or chastise them.
- Share your concerns directly with school leaders.

Attend parent/teacher conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are held at least twice each year to discuss academic and social progress. Families do not need to wait for scheduled conferences to connect with teachers.

Remember: you don't have to wait until a parent-teacher conference to get answers to your questions. Contact your child's teachers and ask for a meeting, email, or phone call if you have a concern or if the regular conference schedule isn't convenient for you.

Student Learning Plans (SLP)

City Schools recognizes that every student has unique academic, social-emotional, and personal needs. Student Learning Plans (SLPs) begin with an "About Me" conversation at the start of the school year and are developed in partnership with students, families, and educators. Together, goals are set and strategies are identified to help students succeed and achieve their goals by the end of the year. SLPs are available in the Parent Portal and should be reviewed during Parent-Teacher Conferences to monitor progress and support student success.

Multilingual Families

City Schools will provide information in a language they understand for parents/guardians and family members who speak a language(s) other than English. This includes interpretation of meetings (including IEP meetings). All schools have access to forms and other documents translated into many languages.

Schools also have access to language interpreters and telephone-based interpretation services. Families who need support or assistance in a language other than English may request interpretation from any staff member.



Join parent/guardian groups

City Schools is deeply committed to parent and family engagement, and we encourage parents and guardians to actively participate in their students' education journey. Every school has an organized parent group, along with a School Family and Community Council that supports the principal on topics related to school improvement and engagement. Groups meet regularly. If you want to get involved, ask at your school for the names and contact information of the parent leaders or contact family engagement. Call 410-545-1870 or email engagement@bcps.k12.md.us or visit www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/fce.

City Schools has also established [Family University](#), which creates a three-pronged approach to developing and maintaining school-family partnerships. Through co-created training opportunities and ready-to-use resources, Family University builds the capacity of City Schools families and staff to work together to support each other and our students throughout their lifelong educational journeys.

Volunteer

Whether you're a professional looking to share your time or talent, a community member wanting to give back, or a parent looking to support your child's school, you're welcome in City Schools! To explore volunteer options, contact a specific school directly or call the district's engagement department at 410-545-1870. Learn more about volunteering and register to volunteer via our website: www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/volunteers.

Connect with Central Office

If you have a concern that cannot be resolved at your school or have questions about district policies or practices, please call between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday to Friday. Frequently called numbers are on the inside front cover of this booklet, or you can call 443-984-2000 and follow the prompts to connect with the right department.

Throughout the year, you will receive phone calls, text messages, or emails from City Schools with important updates about things like school year calendar changes, school closures, or special events. Please keep your contact information updated at your school, so you won't miss out on messages from either your school or the district. You can update this via Campus Portal: www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/campus-portal.

Youth leadership opportunities

Students may visit www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/youth-leadership to participate in leadership groups such as the Student Government Association, Associated Student Congress of Baltimore City, and more! In City Schools, every high school is required to have a student government. Other schools are strongly encouraged to form student government organizations.

Board of School Commissioners

The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners oversees City Schools' work to ensure all students receive an exceptional education. Members of the public are welcome to attend the Board's public meetings, typically held on the first and third Tuesday of each month during the school year and once a month during holiday and summer months at the district's main office (200 E. North Avenue, Baltimore 21202) or virtually on Microsoft Teams and YouTube. The public session typically begins at 6 p.m., and each meeting includes time for comments from the public.

Find the Board's meeting schedule and information about public comment [on City Schools' website](#). Meetings of the Board's committees are also open to the public and public comments are accepted at these meetings as well. The Board holds work sessions, forums, and other special public events throughout the year to engage with the public and address concerns. You can provide feedback on Board policies currently under revision. Sharing your insight allows the district to make effective and well-informed decisions while remaining accountable for the concerns shared by our students, staff, families, and communities. To see the list of policies that are up for revision and provide feedback, visit www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/board-policies.

Please note this information is subject to change. Please email board@bcps.k12.md.us if you have questions.

Parent and Community Advisory Board (PCAB)

PCAB is comprised of 14 members from the Baltimore City community. The majority must be parents of current students. PCAB advises City Schools' CEO and the Board of School Commissioners about how parents/guardians, families, the community, and educators can collaborate to help students succeed. Public meetings are held throughout the school year on the third Thursday of each month via Zoom and streamed live on Facebook. All meetings begin at 6:30 p.m. In the event of an in-person public meeting, it would be held at Baltimore City Public Schools Headquarters at 200 E. North Avenue.

For questions, updates, or requests for a private meeting with PCAB members, email PCAB@bcps.k12.md.us or call 443-642-4219. For the most up-to-date information about meetings and events, follow PCAB on Facebook at facebook.com/BCPSSPCAB or Instagram at [@BCPSSPCAB](https://instagram.com/BCPSSPCAB). PCAB's website is www.pcabbaltimore.org. Learn more: www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/parent-and-community-advisory-board.

Baltimore City Special Education Citizens' Advisory Committee (SECAC)

SECAC facilitates collaboration among the Board of School Commissioners, central office staff, and other stakeholders to support positive change in delivery of special education services for students with disabilities. SECAC also supports the Narrowing the Achievement Gap initiative to ensure students with disabilities receive access to the general education curriculum and high-quality instruction and services. Meetings typically are held from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on the second Monday of each month, usually at 200 E. North Avenue.

The SECAC office can be reached at 443-642-4502. Learn more: www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/special-education-citizens-advisory-committee.

Information for parents/guardians and families at Title I schools

Title I, part of the federal education law, provides extra resources for schools serving low-income students. Title I funds can support teachers, after-school programs, supplies, family resources and learning opportunities, and schools that receive these funds must have a plan for engaging parents, and guardians.

If your child attends a Title I school, here's what you can expect:

- At least one meeting a year for parents, guardians, and family members to be informed about Title I, their rights, school performance, student progress data, and ways the school will engage them
- Training opportunities on Title I requirements and tips on implementation throughout the school year
- Learning sessions for parents, guardians, family members, and educators as equal partners to support achievement
- Links to early learning and ways to collaborate with community partners
- School support to implement engagement activities (e.g., training for staff, online resources, capacity building for parents and guardians)
- Workshops and links to resources for parents, guardians to support learning at home

For more information, please contact your principal who will connect you to the Family and Community Engagement Liaison at your school. This individual serves as the link between the school, families, and community for Title I Parent and Family Engagement.

City Schools also provides enhanced services and supports to schools serving Title I parents, guardians, and families to include:

- coaching and guidance to principals, school-based staff, and teachers around best practices for family engagement and strengthening school-community partnerships
- offering resources, training, and professional development for parents, guardians, teachers, staff, and volunteers
- hosting system-wide learning opportunities for parents, guardians, and families
- Community schools. Community schools bring together partners, resources, and services that support students, families, and neighborhoods.

Professional qualifications of educators at Title I schools

Students at Title I schools are expected to receive instruction in core academic subjects (including reading and language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and the arts) from highly qualified teachers. City Schools is working hard to ensure that all teachers in all schools meet state and federal "highly qualified" standards. City Schools is committed to ensuring that teachers and paraprofessionals are highly skilled, and the district monitors teachers' qualifications, certifications, and ongoing professional development.

All parents, guardians, and family members have the legal right to request information regarding the professional qualifications of the teachers and paraprofessionals who work with their children, including:

- Whether a teacher has met state qualifications and licensing requirements for the grade levels and subject areas being taught
- Whether a teacher is teaching under a waiver as an emergency, temporary, or provisional teacher
- A teacher's undergraduate degree major and other education and certification background information
- A paraprofessional's qualifications





SERVICES

Transportation

Elementary school students who live more than 1 mile from their neighborhood school may be eligible for yellow bus service. All City Schools students are eligible to ride the MTA for free. Students 12 and under will not need to present any ticket; students 13 and up are required to show a valid fare media. Students 13 and up are strongly encouraged to use the MTA's CharmPass mobile app. If a student cannot use CharmPass because they do not have a mobile device, a student may show their City Schools photo ID as an alternative. Students may be eligible for transportation services provided by City Schools in certain circumstances, such as if they are experiencing homelessness or qualify in their Individualized Education Program (IEP). To determine your child's eligibility, contact your school and ask to speak with the transportation coordinator. For more information, visit [baltimorecityschools.org/transportation](https://www.baltimorecityschools.org/transportation).

School meals

Every student can eat breakfast and lunch for free each school day. Schools with eligible after-school programs also offer free snacks and supper, check with your school for availability. See what's on the menu, check out upcoming highlights with Food for Thought, and rate your meal using the City Schools app or by visiting www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/meals. [Board Policy](#) (ADF) limits meal delivery (e.g., via UberEats or GrubHub); students may not order meal delivery to school during the school day.

For information on health-related meal modifications (e.g., due to allergies), families should visit the Nutrition & Allergen Information section of our website. See information about notifying your school about health-care needs under "Health services" on this page.

Free meals are also provided to students during the summer months at sites around the city. For summer meal availability and hours, check with the school nearest you, visit [Maryland State Department of Education's Summer Food Service Program website](https://www.maryland.gov/education/summer-food-service-program).

Linking the cafeteria to the classroom, our Farm to School team brings hands-on food systems education to students both in schools and at our district's own learning farm, Great Kids Farm. To learn more, visit [baltimorecityschools.org/page/farm-school](https://www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/farm-school). Stay tuned for Free Farm Family Hours throughout the year.

Health services

Parents and guardians are responsible for notifying schools of a student's special health-care needs or diagnosis of anaphylaxis, providing appropriate medications, and completing appropriate authorization form(s). School health suite staff shall review student health records to identify students with known medical conditions and conduct a health appraisal, also known as a nursing assessment. Student medications will be kept in the school's health room suite for student's use in case of an emergency. Maryland Law also requires that schools train their staff members to recognize signs of anaphylaxis and maintain a stock supply of emergency use epinephrine (such as EpiPens or neffy) for use in case of an emergency. Designated staff members at each school are trained to administer emergency use epinephrine. Students may also self-carry emergency use epinephrine if they are determined capable of and

responsible for self-administration by the principal, school nurse, parent/guardian, and physician. For more information, please see [Board Policy JLCDB](#) and [Administrative Regulation ADF-RD](#).

Immunizations. All City Schools students must have records of up-to-date immunizations to be enrolled in school. Ask your school about school-based health clinics or other locations where children can receive any missing immunizations. www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/immunizations

Vision, hearing, and dental care. Students must receive vision and hearing screenings when they enroll in first through eighth grade. Teachers or other school staff may also refer a student for screening. Through the special Vision for Baltimore program, many pre-K to 8th grade students can receive additional eye care and, if needed, glasses. Ask your principal if your school is participating this year.

Dental services available in schools include examinations, cleanings, dental x-rays, sealants (when appropriate), and restoration services such as filling cavities. For your child to receive services, complete and return the dental permission form located at www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/back-to-school-resources. (Contact a school nurse or other staff member if you need another copy.)

Telehealth

City Schools offers a number of behavioral health services to students, including telehealth appointments, that can be utilized when a student is in crisis. For example, through **Hazel Health**, students have access to mental health tele-therapy and services support free of cost. Learn more here: getstarted.hazel.co/district/baltimorecityschools. In addition, middle and high school students may have access to telehealth appointments with their own health care provider during the school day with the consent of their parent/guardian, under the conditions set forth in [Administrative Regulation ADF-RD](#).

- Maryland Crisis Hotline. Call 1-800-422-0009, available 24 hours a day, for support related to substance use, abuse, depression, loneliness, relationship challenges, and other concerns.
- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. Call or text 988 at any time for confidential support during a mental health, emotional, or suicidal crisis.
- [ParentGuidance.org](https://parentguidance.org). City Schools partners with ParentGuidance.org, a free and confidential online resource that provides parents and guardians with information and support related to student mental health.
- Safe Schools Maryland. Safe Schools Maryland is an anonymous reporting system that allows students, families, and community members to report school safety concerns anywhere in Maryland. Call 833-MD-B-SAFE (833-632-7233) or visit safeschoolsmd.org.
- Community schools. Community schools bring together partners, resources, and services that support students, families, and neighborhoods.

Resolving concerns

For concerns about academic work, homework, grades, or classroom environment, speak with your child's teacher. If your concern is not resolved after talking with the teacher, contact your school's principal.

For concerns about school climate and safety, facilities, school budget, or staff members, contact the principal. If your concern is not resolved at the school, contact the CEO Ombudsman. The CEO Ombudsman responds to questions and mediates resolutions for concerns or complaints from parents, guardians, and the public that have not been addressed or resolved at the school level or by the responsible district department. Ombudsman services can be accessed by calling 410-545-1870.

To express concern about or report suspected illegal or inappropriate activity on the part of a City Schools employee, you can:

- Call the City Schools Staff Investigations Unit at 443-642-4935 or:
- Call the Fraud and Misconduct Hotline anonymously at 1-800-679-0185. The hotline is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week or:
- [Submit a report online](#). The service is anonymous, safe, reliable, convenient, and available 24 hours a day.

Bullying, harassment, and intimidation

City Schools is committed to providing all students with a safe and supportive school environment, free from bullying, harassment, and intimidation. City Schools takes all incidents of bullying and harassment seriously. Students and families can and should report bullying or harassment incidents by talking to school administrators and by filling out and submitting a bullying report. The form can be found online at www.baltimorecityschools.org/bullying, in the [Student Code of Conduct](#) in the back-to-school packet, and at schools.

Community schools

Local communities all have strengths to contribute to the success of the city's young people. [Community schools](#) seek out those assets and bring together partners and resources to promote student achievement, positive conditions for learning, and family and community well-being. There are more than 155 community schools in City Schools.

Our community school strategy integrates academics with health services, youth development, expanded learning opportunities, and family and community supports to give students what they need to learn in an inclusive, equitable way. As a result, community schools can effectively promote children's success, particularly for neighborhoods of concentrated poverty.

Services for students experiencing homelessness and students in state-supervised care

If you or your child are homeless, City Schools can provide support such as free transportation to and from school, school supplies, and uniforms. Learn about available resources as part of the McKinney-Vento Program or to request assistance, please contact the homeless liaison at your child's current school, your child's original school, or the closest school to you. You can also call homeless services at 443-642-2424 or 410-396-0775. Visit our website for more information: www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/homeless-services. In addition, City Schools works to eliminate barriers and support educational stability for students in [foster care and other state-supervised care](#).

Technology

City Schools provides devices for all K–12 students in traditional schools. Schools may monitor use in accordance with [Policy EGD](#). Charter school students should contact their school for technology guidance. Students receive devices through their school and should not go to Central Office for pickup or support. All district-issued devices are on loan and must be returned when requested.

If a device is damaged or stops working, contact your child's school. Families and students are expected to take good care of district-issued devices. Damage caused by misuse or improper care may result in consequences under the Student Code of Conduct and/or repayment of costs associated with damage, consistent with [Board Policy JKA](#).

Returning School-Issued Devices

Students who are graduating, transferring, or otherwise leaving their current school must return their Chromebook and any related equipment before departing. Devices remain the property of City Schools and will be reassigned to support other students.

Student Devices for School Year 2026–27:

- Pre-K: Students are not assigned individual devices and use shared classroom devices. Students may not take devices home.
- Kindergarten – Grade 2: Students are not assigned individual devices and use shared classroom devices. Students may not take devices home.
- Grades 3-5: Students are assigned individual devices. Students may not take devices home.
- Grades 6-12: Students are assigned individual devices. Students may bring devices home to complete assignments and access learning requirements.

Reducing Screen Time for Early Learners

Beginning this school year, City Schools is implementing updated Academic Instructional Technology Guidance for pre-K through grade 2 classrooms. Grounded in current research and developmental science, this guidance reduces student device use and prioritizes hands-on learning, conversation, play, movement, and teacher-led instruction. For more information about this guidance, visit our website: www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/screen-time.

Access to digital learning

The Clever portal provides your child with access to learning apps and resources. Student usernames and passwords are provided by the school. Middle and high school students will use Canvas, a digital platform that allows students to view and turn in assignments, see class announcements, join class discussions, and monitor grades. Family members can view assignments and grades, communicate with teachers, and view course announcements by logging in with the parent portal username and password.

Designed to keep students organized, focused, and set up for success, this digital hub allows students to view and turn in assignments, see class announcements, join class discussions, and monitor grades. Family members can view assignments and grades, communicate with teachers, and view course announcements by logging in with parent portal username and password.

Acceptable technology usage

Any technology provided to students must be used for educational purposes only and in accordance with [Board Policy EGD](#) and Administrative Regulation [EGD-RB](#), as well as any other applicable laws, or City Schools rules.

City Schools may monitor student technology usage to ensure compliance with its policies and administrative regulations, but when student technology is connected to a personal home network, it may not be configured to filter all of the websites the student may visit. Families should discuss the importance of being safe, responsible, and respectful online. Parents and guardians are responsible for monitoring their student's use of the Internet when student technology is used outside of the school. Students and their families must protect information and technology equipment against theft, malicious damage, unauthorized access, tampering, and loss.

City Schools has developed Academic Artificial Intelligence Guidance for staff and students on the use of AI in learning. Teachers and staff decide when and how students may use generative AI on their assignments. For more information, visit our website: <https://www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/ai-guidance>.

Staying safe online

With an increase in digital learning in the classroom and outside of school, families are encouraged to learn more about tools and actions that can be taken at home to ensure that students are surfing the web safely and are accessing appropriate sites. [Common Sense Media](#) provides resources for families to learn about how to protect student privacy and to learn more about the sites and apps that students are using for both learning and for fun.

Social media

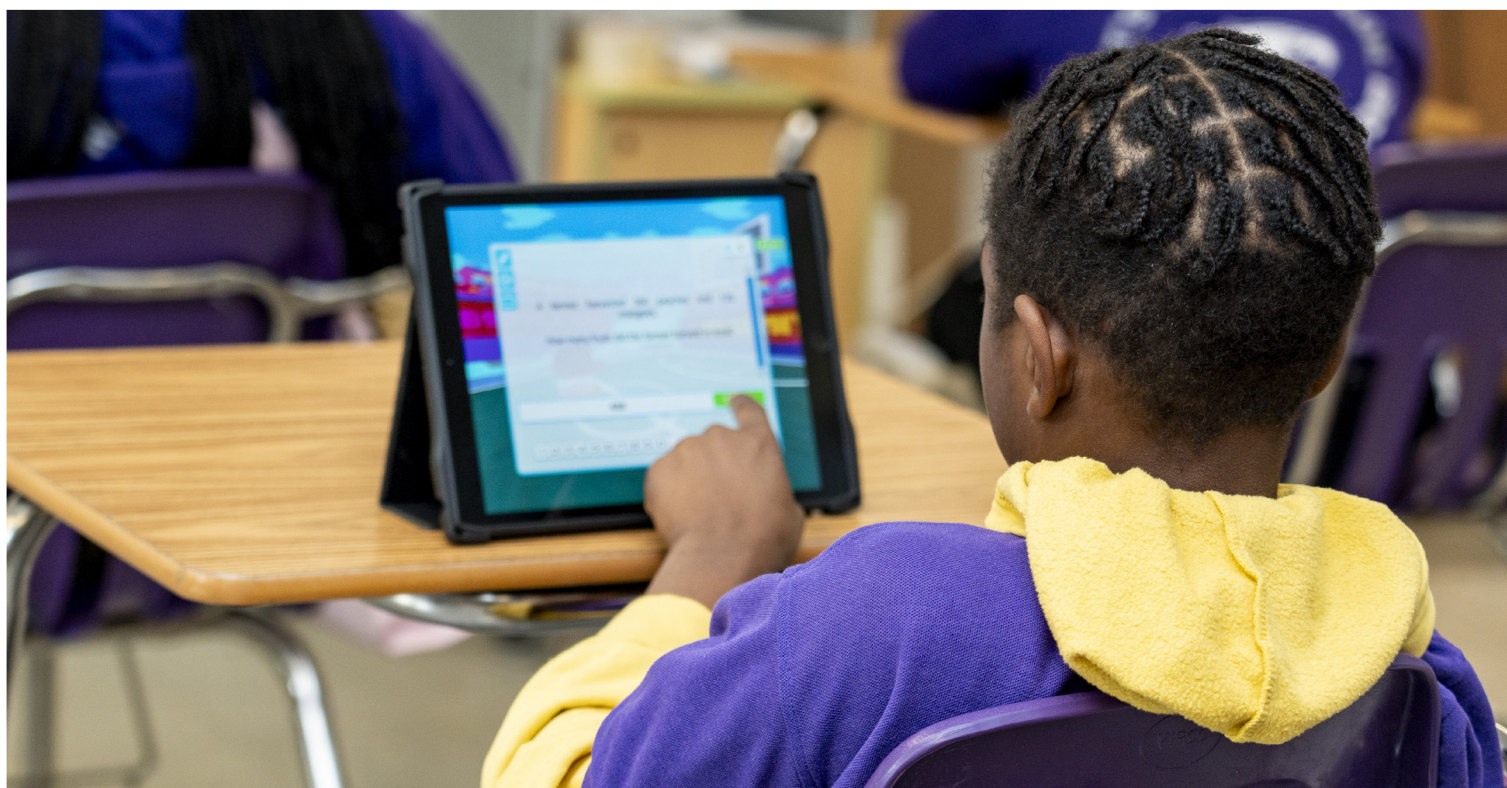
We encourage you to monitor your child's social media use and ensure they avoid platforms that are not age-appropriate. For additional resources and guidance, visit Common Sense Media at: www.commonsensemedia.org/articles/social-media.

If your child encounters cyberbullying or harassment related to their school experiences, they can report it without fear of retaliation. To report cyberbullying please visit: www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/addressing-bullying-harassment-and-sex-based-discrimination. Students may not use or access social media during the school day.

Student cell phones and other portable electronic communications devices

Students may bring personal devices to school, but they must be powered off, away, and secured during the school day (from arrival to dismissal, including recess, lunch, and passing periods). Schools will explain to students and families how devices will be secured.

In the event of a school-wide emergency, students can access their devices with permission by a school administrator or Central Office staff member. If there is a personal emergency, students are able to use a school phone and/or their device to contact a parent or guardian.



Learn more at www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/cell-phone-policy.

City Schools provides educational and other services to ensure that pregnant and parenting students have the support they need to ensure their well-being and continuity of learning.

- To participate in all aspects of their educational program while pregnant and/or parenting, including all physical, academic, and social components. Students may access Home and Hospital teaching services for the last two weeks of a pregnancy and for six weeks after delivery (or longer, if medical issues require it).

- To receive school-based supports and connections to community agencies that have resources to assist pregnant and parenting teens. Every school must have a staff member designated to serve as a point of contact for pregnant and parenting students and to ensure that students get the support they need, including linking them to community resources.

- The opportunity to make up assignments missed during absences due to being pregnant or parenting.

- To not be discriminated against, harassed or bullied based on their actual or perceived status as a pregnant or parenting student. In the event that a student experiences any form of discrimination, harassment, or bullying, this should be immediately reported to the school using the [bullying and harassment reporting form](#). In the event that a report is made, it

Pregnant and parenting students should reach out to the school's designated point of contact for pregnant and parenting students (or another trusted adult) to access the services and supports to which they are entitled. Any challenges or concerns should be taken to the school's administrators, in the event that they cannot be resolved with the point of contact. If concerns are not resolved at the school level, or if you have any questions regarding services and supports for pregnant and parenting students, please contact City Schools' Home and Hospital Office at 410-396-0775.

For any concerns about discrimination based on pregnancy/parenting status or other related accommodations, please contact the Department of Fair Practices and Compliance, which functions as the Title IX Coordinator for City Schools (410-396-8542 or eeo-titleixcompliance@bcps.k12.md.us). For more information, see [Administrative Regulation JBB-RB](#).



POLICIES

& REGULATIONS



In addition to the policies summarized in this Family Guide, you can find links to all [School Board policies and administrative regulations on the City Schools website](#). These City Schools rules are subject to change, and when they do, they override the statements and references in this handbook.

Attendance

Attendance is taken once a day for elementary grades and during every class in middle and high school grades. If your child is absent, you should expect to receive an automated phone call at the end of the day letting you know that your child was not in school that day.

If your child is absent, please send a note within three days of their return to school explaining the reason. In cases of chronic illness or problems with transportation due to homelessness or other concerns, your school can work with you to find a solution or resources to make sure your child won't miss important teaching and learning.

Absences are considered "excused" for the following reasons:

- Student illness or behavioral health need
- Death in the immediate family
- Student pregnancy and/or parenting needs of the student-parent
- Court summons (with the child's name on the summons)
- Observance of religious holiday
- Official school closing (a "snow day," for example)
- Work or other activity sponsored and approved by the school
- Suspension
- Lack of authorized, district-provided transportation
- Other emergencies as determined by City Schools' CEO or designee
- Deployment visitation with active duty/parents/guardians
- Family emergency

Absences for any other reason are unexcused or "unlawful." School staff will follow up with you about unexcused absences, as well as very frequent absences or lateness. City Schools will provide resources to help improve attendance but if the issue is not resolved, the matter may be referred to the Office of the State's Attorney for Baltimore City. Parents and guardians should note that any person with legal custody or care and control of a child between the ages of 5 and 18 is responsible for making sure that child goes to school or receives instruction. Not doing so is a misdemeanor that may result in a fine or imprisonment or both.

Whenever possible, parents and guardians should schedule children's medical and other appointments outside of school hours. When a late arrival or early dismissal can't be avoided, a written note should be sent in with the child that school day. For early dismissals, a phone number must be provided where the parent or guardian can be reached to confirm details of the dismissal. Please note that a child in pre-K to grade 5 must be picked up by a parent, guardian, or emergency contact.

Families who speak other languages may write a note in their preferred language and school staff will get it translated.

For more information, please see [Board Policy JEA](#).

Student and school safety

The safety and well-being of students, staff, and entire school communities is City Schools' highest priority. City Schools uses a multi-layered approach to school safety, aligned with best practices and nationwide models, to provide secure and welcoming school environments that are conducive to learning. This multi-layered approach includes security cameras, deployment of the Baltimore City School Police Force (School Police), consistently high expectations for student behavior, and a systemwide focus on equity, restorative practices, and the development of positive and supportive student relationships with school staff.

Equally important are effective protocols for managing the entry of students and visitors into our school buildings. City Schools encourages parent involvement and community support, and we ensure that students are not restricted from access to educational opportunities in our schools, except through the fair and equitable application of our student discipline policies and other applicable laws. Yet City Schools also has legitimate interests in avoiding disruption to educational programs and school operations, protecting the safety and welfare of City Schools' students and staff, and safeguarding City Schools' facilities and equipment from misuse and vandalism. To these ends, [City Schools' school building entry management protocols](#) seek to ensure that all individuals have valid reasons for accessing school buildings, and neither students nor visitors bring weapons or other dangerous items into school buildings.

Please note that students and others generally do not have a right or reasonable expectation of privacy when they are recorded or photographed by City Schools security cameras. These cameras are typically located in hallways, cafeterias, gymnasiums, auditoriums, and exterior school grounds, as well as school buses. Classrooms are not considered public spaces, and City School does not have video cameras in classrooms. Students may be disciplined based on evidence of misconduct gathered through audio or video surveillance. In addition, Maryland requires School Police to use body-worn cameras. These cameras will be turned on when School Police are responding to an imminent threat of



serious harm to students, staff, or others. Under [School Police General Orders](#), cameras may be turned off in some situations when they interfere with students' privacy or dignity, so please discuss any concerns with the School Police officer or school staff.

Administrative searches

To provide a safe and secure learning environment, certain school officials are authorized to conduct a reasonable search of a student and the student's personal belongings while on school property or during any school-sponsored activity. Searches shall be conducted only with proper authority and justification, with due recognition and deference for the human dignity of those being searched, and in accordance with the U.S. Constitution, all other applicable legal standards, and the core principles of equity set forth in [Board Policy ADA](#). Any search of a student must be made in the presence of a City Schools employee or an operator of a charter or contract school. Every effort shall be made to conduct searches in a manner that will minimize disruption of the normal school routine and minimize embarrassment to students affected. A locker, storage cubicle, desk, City Schools-issued technology, or other school property assigned to a student for school use are not considered a student's personal possession, and an authorized searcher may search such property at any time.

However, student possessions within a locker or storage cubicle (e.g. backpacks, coats, purses, etc.) may only be searched subject to a reasonable belief of a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct](#), any Board policy or rule, City Schools regulation, or federal, state, or local law. For more information, please see [Board Policy JIH](#).

Dress code

The [City Schools Dress Code](#) promotes a safe and positive school culture and climate for all students. Students have a right to consistent and fair enforcement of the [City Schools Dress Code](#). That means that students should never be told that they are violating the City Schools Dress Code because of their race, religion, body type, body size, gender identity, gender expression, or stereotypes based on their personal characteristics. Students cannot be suspended, "sent home," or excluded from class for a dress code violation. City Schools supports schools using other consequences aligned to the [Student Code of Conduct](#) to enforce dress code violations. School staff should use student-positive, body-positive language and should not touch students when correcting dress code issues. School Police should not be enforcing the dress code.

At most schools, students wear a uniform — usually a polo, or t-shirt, skirt and pants or knee-length shorts. Check with your school for detailed information. If needed, please ask your school for financial assistance. There may be uniform vouchers, uniform exchanges, or low-cost purchasing options. Learn more at www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/dress-code.

Emergency preparedness

All schools and Central Office have plans to keep students and staff members safe in an emergency. The districtwide plan is reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis. Emergency teams at each school review and update their school emergency safety plans, which are then reviewed and approved by the district's

Environmental Health and Safety department. Schools are required to practice fire drills and other drills throughout the year, so that staff and students (including students with disabilities) are prepared to respond depending on the situation.

In the event of an emergency, City Schools will communicate with parents through all appropriate channels, depending on the situation. These channels can include phone calls, text messages, website and social media updates, or announcements from local TV or radio stations. Please make sure your school has up-to-date contact information for you at all times, including emergency contact numbers, so you can be reached in an emergency. For more information, see [City Schools' Family Guide to Emergency Communications](#).

Additional things to keep in mind:

- Talk to your child about emergency preparations, and make sure they know that there are plans in place at your school to ensure all students' safety.
- If you learn that there is an emergency situation, please do not go immediately to your school to pick up your child. In many cases, students are safest inside the building, or the building may be locked. Also, please do not call the school, because staff may need to keep phone lines open. Instead, wait to hear from City Schools about the situation and what you should do.
- If you are asked to come to pick up your child, either at the school or a different location, please follow instructions about pick-up locations, parking, etc. Remember to bring a photo ID with you, since children will be released only to adults authorized to pick them up.
- In situations involving the police, communications may come from the Baltimore Police Department and be sent according to that agency's policies and procedures.

Learn more here: www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/school-safety-security

Responding to Immigration Enforcement

Our schools will always be welcoming spaces where every child, regardless of immigration status, is valued, respected, and supported. City Schools does not ask about or disclose immigration status and we are committed to protecting the privacy of all students and their families, as required by federal and state law. City Schools has robust protocols, consistent with federal and state law, for how schools must respond when interacting with immigration officials or external law enforcement agencies. As required by Maryland law, City Schools prohibits law enforcement access to school property for the purposes of conducting immigration enforcement, unless a limited exception applies. City Schools has also developed a Know Your Rights resource to inform all students and families about their rights when interacting with law enforcement. For more information, including resources for students and families potentially impacted by immigration enforcement, please visit our website: www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/immigration.

Pest Management

City Schools facilities are monitored at least once a month to determine the need for pest control and to properly identify any pest problem; grounds are monitored on a regular basis by staff during routine maintenance. If it is determined that pest control is necessary, the first methods used are alternatives to chemical (pesticide or herbicide) applications.

When chemicals are used, the least toxic effective chemical is applied. Applications are made in places and at times that limit the chance for human exposure. No chemical application is made without identifying and meeting a threshold for the pest problem, and after exhausting nonchemical means of pest management.

If a chemical application is found to be necessary, City Schools will notify parents or guardians and staff in the affected facilities 24 hours prior to treatment. For exterior uses of a chemical—that is, outdoors and not within a school building— Maryland state regulations allow a postponement of application not longer than 14 days after notice is sent to parents/guardians due to weather or other extenuating circumstances. If application must be postponed more than 14 days, written notice must be reissued, informing families of the new date of application.

Safety Data Sheets for each chemical or bait used on City Schools property are maintained at Central Office. Integrated Pest Management notebooks are available for review on request through the main office of each school.

Below are pesticides and herbicides likely to be applied in City Schools buildings or on school grounds following determination of need, exhausting nonchemical options, and notification as described above. *(Note that unanticipated pest problems may arise during the school year that could require the use of a pesticide or herbicide not listed.)*

Trade Name	Common Name
Maki Mini Blocks	Bromadiolone (7173-202)
Maki Pellet Packs	Bromadiolone (7173-188)
Drax Ant Gel	Boric acid (9444-131)
Maxforce	Hydramethylnon (432-1259)
CB-80	Pyrethrin (444-096)
Lesco Prosecutor Pro	Isopropylamine Salt (524-536-10404)
Indoxacarb	Arilon EPA (352-776)
D-trans Allenthin	Wasp-Freeze (499-362)
2-phenethyl propionate	EcoPco AR-X (67452-15-655)

If you have questions about pest management, contact City Schools at 200 E. North Avenue, Room 407A, Baltimore, MD 21202 or email Environmental Compliance at Facilities@bcps.k12.md.us.

Asbestos management plans

Under the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act of 1986, comprehensive regulations were developed to address asbestos issues in schools. These regulations require schools to inspect for friable and non-friable asbestos, develop asbestos management plans that address asbestos hazards in school buildings, and respond in a timely manner.

City Schools' program for fulfilling these responsibilities is outlined in the asbestos management plan for each school. These plans, located in each school's administrative office, contain the inspection reports and the appropriate response actions, along with plans for periodic re-inspection and post-response activities.

The 21st Century Schools, Graceland Park O'Donnell Heights EMS #240 and Holabird Academy #249 are buildings with an US Environmental Protection Agency Asbestos Exclusionary Letter.

A copy of each plan is also located at Central Office and is available for public review during regular business hours.

The plans may not be taken from the building. For additional information, contact City Schools at 200 E. North Avenue, Room 407A, Baltimore, MD 21202 or visit: www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/asbestos-management.

Water quality

City Schools regularly samples and monitors water quality at schools and offices to follow local, state, and federal safety laws and ensure safe-to-drink water for students and staff. If we find elevated lead levels in a sink or water fountain, we temporarily shut it off as a precaution and post "DO NOT USE" and "DO NOT DRINK" signage. We provide students and staff with bottled water as needed during this period. The water is still safe to use for handwashing, bathing for student-athletes, and other non-consumable purposes. Parents and/or guardians of students at the school will receive a letter notifying them of the elevated test result. For more information about monitoring water quality, visit our website: <https://www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/water-quality>.

Student Privacy

City Schools takes student privacy very seriously, and we will not release or disclose any student information unless required by law. As a parent/guardian of a City Schools student, you have certain rights regarding your child's education records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), applicable federal regulations, and the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13A.08.02. These rights are summarized below and described in more detail in City Schools' [Administrative Regulation JRA-RA](#) (Procedures for the Maintenance and Release of Student Records).

1. **Review of Student Records.** You have the right to inspect and review your child's education records no later than 45 days after the school receives your written request. It is the goal of City Schools that schools should comply, whenever practicable, within 10 days after receiving a written request and prior to any hearing relating to the identification, evaluation, or placement of the student. The school will make arrangements for access and notify you of the time and place where your child's records may be inspected. The principal/designee will be present during this review.
2. **Amendment of Student Records.** If you believe your child's records are inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of your child's privacy rights, you have the right to make a written request for the school to amend the records. [Administrative Regulation JRA-RA](#) outlines procedures for addressing these requests including hearings, as appropriate.
3. **Disclosure of Student Records.** You have the right to provide written consent before City Schools discloses personally identifiable information from your child's education records, unless federal law or state law specifically authorizes disclosure without consent.
 - Under certain circumstances, City Schools is authorized to release directory information that is generally not considered an invasion of privacy to release. City Schools designates the following pieces of information as directory information: a student's name, address, email address, and telephone number; parent/guardian's name, address, email address, and telephone number; student's date of birth; major field of study; grade level; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; degrees and awards received (including honor roll); most recent school attended; enrollment status; dates of school enrollment; photographic image, or other likeness; the weight and height of members of athletic teams; and the most recent educational institution attended prior to City Schools. Parents/guardians may opt out of the release of directory information through the [Annual Student Verification](#) process at the beginning of the school year or by completing City Schools' [Media Opt-Out Form](#).
 - In addition, please note that consent is not required for disclosures to school officials with legitimate educational interests,** including administrators, teachers, or other or

support staff member (including health or medical staff and School Police personnel) or a person serving on the Board of School Commissioners. A school official also may include a volunteer or contractor outside of the school who performs an institutional service or function for which City Schools would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of City Schools with respect to the use and maintenance of personally identifiable information from education records (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, vendor, nurse, or therapist); or a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

- Upon request, City Schools also discloses education records without consent to officials of other schools, school districts, or institutions of postsecondary education, if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment in or transfer to that school, school district, or institution of postsecondary education.
 - City Schools may lawfully disclose personally identifiable information from student records, without your prior written consent, for other reasons authorized by FERPA, including to specified governmental agencies, for approved research projects, in compliance with a judicial order or a lawfully issued subpoena, or in a health or safety emergency.
 - Additional information may be found in [Administrative Regulation JRA-RA](#), [on the City Schools website](#), and at your local school.
4. **Complaint to the U.S. Department of Education.** If you believe your rights under FERPA have been violated and efforts to resolve the situation through City Schools appeals channels have not proved satisfactory, you have the right to file a complaint with the Family Policy Compliance Office in the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-5920 or call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327).
 - * Rights of Eligible Students. The rights described above transfer to a student who is 18 years old or is attending a postsecondary education institution. City Schools is still authorized to provide educational records to parents/guardians if an eligible student remains a dependent of the parent/guardian, or under other circumstances set forth in 34 C.F.R. 99.5.
 - ** School officials have a legitimate educational interest if the officials need to review an education record in order to fulfill their professional responsibility.

Notification of rights under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment.

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment affords parents certain rights regarding City Schools' conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

- Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education
 1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent
 2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family
 3. Sexual behavior or attitudes
 4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior
 5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships
 6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers
 7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents, or
 8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility
- Receive notice and opportunity to opt a student out of
 1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding
 2. Any nonemergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law, and
 3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others. (This does not apply to the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the exclusive purposes of developing, evaluating, or providing educational products or services for, or to, students or educational institutions.)

Inspect, upon request and before administration or use

1. Protected information surveys of students and surveys created by a third party.
2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the preceding marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes, and
3. Instructional materials used as part of the educational curriculum

The rights described above transfer to a student who is 18 years old or is attending a postsecondary education institution. City Schools is still authorized to provide educational records to parents/guardians if an eligible student remains a dependent of the parent/guardian, or under other circumstances set forth in 34 C.F.R. 99.5.

City Schools has developed and adopted policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes.

City Schools will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. City Schools will also directly notify, such as through U.S. mail or e-mail, parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt them out of participation in the specific activity or survey. City Schools will make this notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if it has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below, and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. Following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for marketing, sales, or other distribution
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education
- Any nonemergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above

Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave. SW, Washington, DC, 20202.

VIRTUAL LEARNING **OPPORTUNITIES**



The Board of School Commissioners has approved the strategic use of virtual learning days for City Schools' students when schools are closed due to inclement weather or other disruptions. Learn more: www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/inclement-weather.

How these days occur

If inclement weather requires the district to close, City Schools will first implement three traditional snow days, meaning schools are closed for students and staff. However, students will have the opportunity to engage in asynchronous online learning. This includes self-paced learning activities at home while school staff works closely with families to support student learning plans. Your child's school will define the learning activities for the day, which may require a device, such as a laptop or tablet. City Schools will pivot to synchronous online learning days on the fourth inclement weather day and beyond. On synchronous online learning days, students log on to a device for instruction and engagement with their class. Your school will provide class schedules, links, and platforms.

Prolonged emergency

In case of a prolonged state of emergency declared by the Governor under Title 14 of the Public Safety Article that prevents regular, in-person attendance at a public school for at least 14 consecutive school days, City Schools will follow a Prolonged Emergency Plan that can be found at www.baltimorecityschools.org/page/inclement-weather.

Family preparation

When virtual learning days are in effect, families will be notified and prepared with devices and/or learning materials.



Notice of Nondiscrimination

Baltimore City Public Schools (“City Schools”) does not discriminate in employment, educational programs, or activities based on actual or perceived personal characteristics, including race, ethnicity, color, ancestry, national origin, nationality, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, pregnancy or parenting status, family structure, ability (cognitive, social/emotional, and physical), veteran status, genetic information, age, immigration or citizenship status, socioeconomic status, language, or any other legally or constitutionally protected attributes or affiliations. Discrimination undermines our community’s long-standing efforts to create, foster, and promote equity and inclusion for all. Some examples of discrimination include acts of hate, violence, harassment, bullying, or retaliation. For more information, see Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners Policies [JBA \(Nondiscrimination – Students\)](#), [JBB \(Sex-Based Discrimination – Students\)](#), [JICK \(Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation of Students\)](#), [ACA \(Nondiscrimination – Employees and Third Parties\)](#), [ACB \(Sexual Harassment – Employees and Third Parties\)](#), [ACD \(ADA Reasonable Accommodations\)](#), and [ADA \(Equity\)](#), and the accompanying City Schools Administrative Regulations. City Schools also provides equal access to the Boy and Girl Scouts and other designated youth groups.

For inquiries about these non-discrimination policies, please contact:

Director of Fair Practices and Compliance;

Title IX Coordinator
200 E. North Avenue, Room 208
Baltimore, MD 21202
Phone: 410-396-8542
Fax: 410-396-2955
Email: eeo-titleixcompliance@bcps.k12.md.us

OR

Coordinator – Section 504

Special Education and Student Supports
200 E. North Avenue, Room 210
Baltimore, MD 21202
Phone: 443-462-4247
Email: 504support@bcps.k12.md.us

If you believe that you have experienced discrimination in City Schools’ employment, programs, and/or activities, or if you are requesting a reasonable accommodation, please use one of these forms, as appropriate, which also include filing instructions:

- [Student Discrimination Reporting Form](#)
- [Student Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form](#)
- [Equal Employment Opportunity Complaint Form](#)
- [Reasonable Accommodations Request Form](#)

Discrimination complaints also may be filed with other agencies, such as:

- U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Baltimore Field Office, City Crescent Bldg., 10 S. Howard Street, Third Floor, Baltimore, MD 21201, 1-800-669-4000, 1-800-669-6820 (TTY); or
- U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Lyndon Baines Johnson Dept. of Education Bldg., 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-1100, 1-800-421-3481, 1-800-877-8339 (TDD), OCR@ed.gov, or www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintintro.html;
- Maryland State Department of Education, 200 West Baltimore St. Baltimore, MD 21201, (410) 767-0100, or marylandpublicschools.org/about/pages/education-nondiscrimination.aspx

This notice of nondiscrimination is available, upon request, in languages other than English and an alternate format under the Americans with Disabilities Act, by contacting the City Schools Communications Department, 200 E. North Avenue, Room 317, Baltimore, MD 21202, communications@bcps.k12.md.us, 410-545-1870.



BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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