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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**STATEMENT FROM BALTIMORE TEACHERS UNION PRESIDENT MARIETTA ENGLISH ON THE RECENT REPORT NOTING THE INCREASE IN SUSPENSIONS.**

“We are very concerned about the rise of school suspensions. Our students in Baltimore City face a myriad of challenges at home and in their communities that they bring to school. This largely contributes to the difficulties we’ve seen district-wide in student discipline. We also understand that some of these trends increased under the previous leadership so our union is committed to working with current district leadership to minimize the time students spend out of the classroom.

Ultimately, we all want to see the best possible outcome for our students. We know a disorderly classroom cannot facilitate the type of learning our students deserve. We also are aware though, that the more time a troubled student spends out of the classroom, the further they fall behind their peers.

We have worked with a number of community partners and legislators to expand the community school strategy. We’ve seen success at our community schools where trained professionals on staff are best equipped to deal with some of the challenges and issues that lead to classroom disturbances. More counselors, resource officers and extra-curricular options that the community school strategy employs, aid in keeping students in the school while mitigating the distraction troubled students can be in the classroom.

The Baltimore Teachers Union expects to be included in any working group that seeks to find a solution to this problem. It has real implications for students and teachers and will need the input of all vested community partners including administrators, teachers and PSRPs.”

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