

The Baltimore Teachers Union



AFT 340 AFL-CIO
Seton Business Park
5800 Metro Drive, 2nd Floor
Baltimore, MD 21215-3209

August 7, 2019

Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners

200 E North Avenue

Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Board Commissioners,

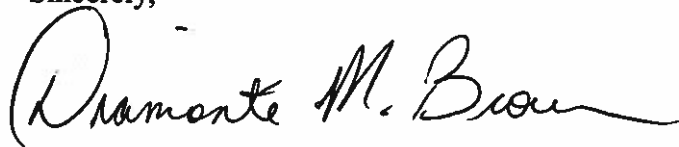
At the July 23rd School Board Meeting, the First Reader of Policy GCO was the focus of a substantial segment of the evening. Our presentation established that over 99% of the 518 teachers surveyed by the BTU opposed the use of unannounced informal observations. Teachers and the union presented testimony and research, and asked the Board Commissioners a number of questions about how this policy will be implemented fairly, and how it will meet its stated outcomes. Those questions were not answered in that meeting, and our membership has, to this point, not received communication from the Board regarding those answers.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Board Commissioner Hassan expressed a need to learn more about how they can build consensus on an issue that appears to be strongly supported by administrators at North Avenue, but is nearly universally opposed by the staff who would be directly impacted by the policy. While administrators from the central office were able to engage in two-way dialogue with the board, clarifying and qualifying their arguments, our members were given no such opportunity to directly get their questions answered, nor did board members ask teachers any direct questions that would have provided them with more clarity and understanding.

I am sending this letter on behalf of the Baltimore Teachers Union to formally request that the Board schedule a Public Board Work Session to continue discussing this controversial matter. The questions the board allowed District leadership to answer should be asked of teachers as well, so that the Board can learn more about the way evaluation and observation are happening in schools in real time. A Board Work Session should be scheduled and announced as soon as possible, so that Board members are able to get clarity before the August 27th vote. It is imperative that our members are given adequate notice so that they can arrange to attend.

Teachers in Baltimore City struggle and persevere through some of the most challenging teaching conditions in the state and do amazing work with students every day. They deserve to be heard about the complexities they face, and they deserve to be a part of determining the solutions to our challenges, because they are the people who know our classrooms best.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diamonté M. Brown". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

Diamonté Brown
BTU President

CC: SB Santelises, J Grant-Skinner, J Papia

1-800-32

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