FUND FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

40 YEARS

August 4, 2025

The Honorable Wes Moore, Governor of Maryland
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Governor Moore,

We, the Fund for Educational Excellence, a local non-profit and Baltimore's independent public education fund, are writing this letter in response to MDOT MTA's newly released BMORE Bus plan, which provides a vision for improved bus service in Baltimore. Frequent and reliable bus service is crucial for Baltimore City Public Schools students, who rely on public transit to get to and from school on time. However, BMORE Bus is still only a vision instead of truly a plan, due to the ten-year timeline for implementation and current lack of funding.

An estimated twenty-five thousand City Schools students rely on public transit to get to school, with most students relying on buses versus the light rail or subway. One in four buses that take students to school in the morning don't show up on time or at all, and in the afternoon, it can take up to two hours for students to get home from school. If a bus is more than 30 minutes late, many students give up and may not show up to school.[1] Students need and deserve more frequent and reliable bus service, and our 2021 report, *Not in Service*, recommended increased funding for MTA to improve frequency and reliability in Baltimore City. As MTA currently lacks the resources to execute the BMORE Bus plan, there is an urgent need for the State to step in and provide funding for this plan to become a reality and provide students and others with high quality public transit.

While we recognize the State is facing significant budget challenges, you can and should fund the BMORE Bus plan and accelerate its timeline by reprioritizing currently scheduled capital investments. MTA's core transit service has been neglected for too long. MDOT makes billions of dollars in capital investments every year in road and highway expansion but has not made any comparable capital investments in improving MTA since building the light rail in the 1990s. The consolidated transportation program (CTP), which allocates money for all planned transportation projects over the next six years, includes $20.1B in funds. Dedicating just five percent of that money to the capital needs of BMORE Bus would allow better, more frequent bus service in six, rather than ten, years. A 10% increase to MTA's overall operating budget for FY26 – which would mean rebalancing spending from the State's current Transportation Trust Fund to allocate more to transit – would also support implementation of BMORE Bus. Prioritizing funding and implementation of the BMORE Bus plan would provide students with more reliable, safe travel

[1] The Baltimore Banner: https://www.thebaltimorebanner.com/education/k-12-schools/baltimore-city-school-buses-HF3HHWC67ZF7BCRJ66WMB3VWDI/

to and from school and benefit thousands of others who are also dependent on public transit. We ask that you please not hesitate to allocate these funds.

The BMORE Bus plan features several benefits that would have a significant positive impact for students. First, it would increase frequency on weekdays, including outside of peak hours. Buses would arrive every 30 minutes or less on all routes and 10 minutes or less on seven CityLink routes; the routes running every 10 minutes would include service to 21 schools. This additional service would help students who participate in extracurricular activities or work after school as well. Additionally, there would be more one-seat trips and fewer transfers.[2] Students often encounter safety issues, including harassment, robberies or violence, at certain transfer points; avoiding unnecessary transfers would increase student safety.

City Schools students face unacceptably unreliable and infrequent bus service along with safety issues, which affect their attendance and learning at school. The State of Maryland should provide funding to MTA to make its BMORE Bus plan a reality. Investing in public transit to help students get to school both safely and on time promotes their future academic and career success, which in turn contributes to the long-term welfare of Baltimore and the economy of the State of Maryland.[3] We appreciate your time and support for this plan and sincerely appreciate all the efforts you have made to improve transit for Baltimore riders, especially our students.

Sincerely,

Roger Schulman
President and CEO
Fund for Educational Excellence

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[2] BMORE Bus plan: https://s3.amazonaws.com/mta-website-staging/mta-website-staging/files/BMORE%20BUS/Final%20060925/BMORE%20BUS_Final%20Plan_FINAL_06_05_2025_a11y_cond.pdf

[3] From page 7 of BMORE Bus: "Reliable access to employment, retail, and other destinations is not only important for quality of life, but also important for our region's economic vitality, as almost 90 percent of trips on public transit directly impact the local economy. In fact, every $1 invested in public transportation generates $5 in long-term economic returns to the region. And for every $1 billion invested in public transportation, nearly 50,000 jobs are created or sustained across the entire economy. The newest MTA bus division (Northwest) was built in 1987, and the region has changed substantially in the decades since. Now, the bus network needs to expand to meet those changes and better serve today's employment centers."