NOT IN SERVICE

Why Public Transit Must Aim to Serve Students

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ABOUT THE FUND

The Fund for Educational Excellence is an independent nonprofit organization working to close the equity and opportunity gaps for all students in Baltimore City Public Schools. We believe that a strong public school system is the foundation for the health and success of Baltimore.

Founded in 1984 as Baltimore City’s only education fund, the Fund works as a trusted partner with the school district, students and parents, funders, advocates, and local nonprofits. This unique position allows the Fund to identify educational needs and complex issues, offer honest insight, develop creative solutions, and collaborate with a diverse group of community stakeholders to implement effective change. Our work offers a range of support programs and resources for Baltimore youth from early childhood through post-secondary education.

The Fund is guided by a commitment to systemic change to reverse decades of public policy decisions that have disproportionately hurt and disadvantaged students of color. We are dedicated to making Baltimore City Public Schools a district where every child receives ample resources and support necessary to thrive academically and succeed in college, career, and life.

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There are many ways Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools) students travel to and from school—on Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) buses, light rail, and subways, by private car or ride share vehicle, or on foot. Elementary students who live more than one mile from their zoned school and students with disabilities are eligible for yellow bus service. Approximately 29,000 students—the equivalent of almost three-quarters of the middle and high school student population—rely on MTA public transit to get to and from school every day. \(^1\) With school choice, middle and high school students can apply to any school in the city. If they live more than 1.5 miles from the school they are admitted to, they receive a OneCard from their school to use on MTA. OneCards are laminated reusable passes that students can use between the hours of 5:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. on school days only. \(^2\)

Baltimore City is the only school district in Maryland whose students depend on public transit to get to and from school. The MTA operates 65 local bus routes in the Baltimore region, \(^3\) in addition to one north-south subway line and one north-south light rail line, most of which are designed to get adult workers from outlying neighborhoods downtown to job centers in and around the harbor.

For the past three years (July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2021) as part of the Bridge to Kirwan legislation, the State of Maryland has paid $7.5 million annually to cover the cost of public transportation to and from school on MTA for City Schools students. \(^4\) (The funding associated with the Bridge to Kirwan—including for City Schools’ contract with the MTA—was in recognition that the State has underfunded Baltimore City Public Schools by $300 million per year for at least the past 14 years. \(^5\)) Going back to at least 2012, the Baltimore City Public Schools Board of Commissioners has had a series of contracts with the MTA for student transportation services, usually negotiated annually, ranging from $5.5 million to $7 million.

Under the first of these agreements, distance-eligible students were allotted two one-way fares per day at a cost to City Schools of $1.10 per fare. \(^6\) Students initially received paper ticket booklets from their schools each month and would drop paper tickets in the bus farebox when boarding. The MTA billed City Schools based on the weight of the student tickets collected in bus fareboxes. In 2013, MTA introduced the OneCard. \(^7\) Discounted student fares have increased since 2012 from $1.10 per trip to the current one-way fare of $1.40 to per trip. \(^8\)

In recognition of the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on local budgets, the State of Maryland will continue to cover the cost of the MTA contract for City Schools through the 2021-22 school year. \(^9\)

Student transportation is handled altogether differently in Baltimore City’s neighboring school districts, all of which provide school bus service to distance-eligible students at far greater cost.

City Schools’ reliance on the MTA makes both fiscal and operational sense for a choice district that does not have zoned high schools. Attempting to operate school district bus routes for every possible combination of door-to-door student travel would be extraordinarily costly and difficult. However, there are trade-offs to this arrangement. Although using public transit to get students to and from school in the city makes the most sense overall, many students are faced with long, complicated commutes during which they may not always feel safe. Today, we find ourselves in a situation where the predominantly Black and Brown students of Baltimore City are expected to travel to school using a system that was designed largely without their needs in mind.

With Bridge to Kirwan funding ending, City Schools, the City of Baltimore, and the MTA have a unique opportunity to redesign the transportation model for students in a manner that both takes into consideration and supports the whole student experience.

### County/School District Expenditures for Student Transportation Services, SY2017-18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure Category</th>
<th>Anne Arundel</th>
<th>Baltimore County</th>
<th>Frederick</th>
<th>Howard</th>
<th>Prince George’s</th>
<th>Baltimore City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Transportation Services</td>
<td>$56,750,072</td>
<td>$69,316,982</td>
<td>$21,666,212</td>
<td>$39,011,564</td>
<td>$103,469,529</td>
<td>$42,554,369</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salaries and Wages</td>
<td>$5,291,325</td>
<td>$37,182,507</td>
<td>$15,101,598</td>
<td>$1,458,552</td>
<td>$60,989,050</td>
<td>$4,227,607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contracted Services</td>
<td>$49,878,418</td>
<td>$17,181,129</td>
<td>$700,912</td>
<td>$37,001,643</td>
<td>$41,583,115</td>
<td>$37,246,513*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>84,984</td>
<td>115,038</td>
<td>43,828</td>
<td>58,868</td>
<td>135,962</td>
<td>79,187</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: MSDOE financial data via Anne Arundel County Public Schools Transportation Services Comprehensive Evaluation, January 2020; Baltimore City Public Schools FY20 Adopted Budget; Maryland Report Card.

* In Baltimore City’s neighboring suburban counties, most students travel to school by yellow bus. The costs listed in the Salaries and Wages and Contracted Services lines reflect how those districts provide yellow bus service. For instance, Anne Arundel County Public Schools contracts its bus service out to a private operator. Baltimore County Public Schools manages its own fleet, so the larger staffing cost of bus drivers on its payroll is reflected in the Salaries and Wages line. For City Schools, the Contracted Services line includes its contract with the MTA, as well as school bus service for disabled and distance-eligible elementary school students and cab service for students experiencing homelessness.
OPENING SUMMARY

In Baltimore City Public Schools, students applying to middle and high school can list up to five schools on a centralized school application and apply separately to charter schools and schools that have specialized admissions criteria, such as an interview or audition. These students are eligible for transportation if they live more than 1.5 miles from the school they attend. City Schools has contracted with the MTA to provide most students with OneCard passes to ride public buses, light rail, and the subway.

Students who take public transit to school have to navigate this system in the same way as adult commuters. Before COVID-19 closed schools for in-person learning in March 2020, approximately 29,000 City Schools students relied on the MTA to get to school each day, and it is anticipated that student ridership will return when schools are fully reopened. Before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, City School students made up an estimated 18% of annual ridership on MTA core service (local buses, light rail, and subway), despite riding as students for only 180 days of the year.

While City Schools students comprise a significant share of MTA ridership in Baltimore, the MTA’s development of regular bus routes and schedules does not adequately account for the needs of student riders. Historically, local bus routes in Baltimore have been designed to get adult workers to downtown employment destinations, not to connect residential neighborhoods where students’ homes and schools are located. More recently, the MTA conducted a systemwide origin-destination study from 2015 to 2018 based on surveys of riders on board subway, light rail, and local buses. However, surveyors were not permitted to question anyone under 18 years of age, omitting the perspective of a significant share of ridership from a data set that is key to service development. System design aside, MTA’s heavy reliance on buses and light rail, which share the roads with individual drivers, also means that congestion, construction, accidents, and other incidents may cause delays for students traveling to school. To get to school each day, City Schools students struggle with unreliability, crowded conditions, and safety concerns on a system not designed with them in mind in the first place.

It does not have to be this way. Baltimore’s historical disinvestment in Black and Brown communities may not be fixed or remedied overnight, but those who wield power in State and City government and agencies can be more accountable and provide transportation that meets the needs of students. The passage of the Transit Safety and Investment Act (TSIA) during the State’s 2021 legislative session was a great first step that would benefit students and their communities. TSIA fully funds the MTA’s maintenance backlog and provides an average $46 million increase annually over the next seven years for capital needs. The MTA has deferred maintenance on safety systems, bus shelters, buses, light rail, and subway tracks and switches, and this legislation allows the MTA to bring maintenance up to date, thereby increasing transit reliability and safety. Governor Hogan vetoed the TSIA on Friday, May 28, setting the clock back. City Schools students, like all MTA riders, want and deserve better.

In 2020, we interviewed a demographically and geographically representative sample of 274 current City Schools high school students about their experiences traveling to and from school before the COVID-19 pandemic. Some students walked, and many students received an occasional ride, but most of them relied on public transit. COVID-19 has dramatically altered how students attend school over the past year. However, City Schools has been consistent in its commitment to bring students back to school buildings for in-person learning as soon as it is safely possible to do so. The district has been steadily bringing students back in increments throughout the 2020-2021 school year. It is likely that most students will attend school in-person during the 2021-2022 school year, facing the same transportation challenges they faced before COVID-19.

We analyzed our student interview transcriptions, using an inductive approach, to identify key themes in students’ experience with transportation to and from school, extracurriculars, work, or internships. In descending order based on the density of the most heard topics, the themes from student interviews are as follows:
THEMES

1. **Student safety while traveling to and from school**: Although many students feel safe overall on the trip to and from school, a number of students are uncomfortable or uneasy during at least part of the trip.

2. **How students get to and from school**: Most students rely on MTA buses to get to and from school most of the time.

3. **High school choice decision-making**: Distance and complexity of a potential commute to school are limiting factors many students take into account when deciding which schools they will apply to.

4. **Employment and extracurriculars**: Students rely primarily on public transit to travel to and from after-school activities, jobs, or internships.

5. **Lost learning time**: Unreliable public transportation is the primary reason students cite for being late to school.

6. **Commute time**: Students often take multiple buses and/or trains to school, and wait times for each ‘leg’ of a commute can result in commutes of 45 minutes or longer.

7. **Observing and interacting with transit operators**: Many students have positive experiences with bus drivers, describing them as friendly, decent, and helpful.

8. **Transit reliability**: Most students find MTA buses unreliable, forcing them to deal with consequences at both school and work.

9. **Negative experiences with adults on transit**: Arguments and physical fights between adults are a regular feature of students’ commutes on public transit.

10. **Measures students take to ensure their safety while traveling to and from school**: Many students feel a need to be cautious and vigilant while commuting to or from school and to be very aware of their surroundings.

The students we interviewed made a number of recommendations for ways the MTA and City Schools could improve their experience, including the following:

1. Run more buses, more frequently.

2. Improve the accuracy of the TransitApp, a smartphone app that MTA riders use to see when the next bus or train is coming.

3. Allow bus operators to be more flexible with students who have lost their OneCard or left it at home.

4. Add more shelters and better lighting to bus stops.

Based on student recommendations, the Fund recommends major investments in the MTA, City Schools, and other appropriate agencies to bring safety, reliability, and clear communication to a level students need and deserve.
HOW WE GOT HERE

All too often in our country, a ZIP code can be predictive of a child’s educational attainment. Although restrictive housing covenants and segregation laws have been unconstitutional for over 50 years, most neighborhoods and schools in Baltimore, like other major metropolitan areas across the United States, remain effectively segregated by income and race. These societal lines create massive inequities in education, health, and overall life outcomes. In Baltimore City, public middle and high school students can apply to the school of their choice, giving them options beyond a neighborhood school. School choice models, like the one realized in Baltimore City between 2000 and 2010, aspire to give students from under-resourced communities access to learning opportunities outside their neighborhoods.

In a district where school choice exists, it is easy to assume that all students have access to great options. But in City Schools, students engaging in the school choice process are hamstrung—not just by the uneven distribution of in-demand schools and programs across the city—but also by flaws outside of the district’s control. City Schools students rely on MTA buses, light rail, and subway to get to schools beyond their immediate neighborhoods, but major transit lines were primarily designed to get adult workers downtown. For students, the trip to school and back home can be delayed, uncomfortable, and sometimes unsafe. These are circumstances that no other Maryland public school students have to contend with.

City Schools students travel on public transit through many neighborhoods to get to and from school. During their commutes, they are exposed to the effects of addiction, homelessness, mental health breakdowns, conflicts, harassment, and sometimes violence. This exposure can lead to heightened stress levels for students and diminished academic performance. Caregivers may also ask their children not to travel by public transit after dark, which can limit or prevent students’ participation in after-school clubs, sports, jobs, or internships. The more fractured the transit system and the more prolonged student exposure is to these conditions, it isn’t at all surprising that the accumulation of these experiences would exact social and psychological costs. The energy students spend navigating and coping is energy that would otherwise be directed to academic and social-emotional development.

If this were all happenstance and not rooted in racist public policy decisions, there would still be ample reason to fix a situation in which students feel stressed and unsafe. But the most insidious aspect of this all is that none of it is by chance.

The City of Baltimore has a long history of institutional, racial discrimination. (The State of Maryland treats Baltimore City as the equivalent of a county.) In the early part of the 20th century, whites made up the vast majority of Baltimore’s population and could easily weaponize local government to marginalize the city’s minority population. In 1910, to prevent Blacks from locating into white communities, Baltimore’s City Council introduced a bill designed to pause the “Negro Invasion.” On December 20, 1910, Mayor J. Barry Mahool signed the bill into law, making Baltimore the first U.S. city to pass a residential segregation ordinance. On December 25, 1910, The New York Times describes the ordinance as follows:

“For this ordinance seeks to compel by law the separation of the white and black races in their places of residence; to prohibit the negro from intruding himself and his family as permanent residents in a district already dedicated to the white race... Nothing like it can be found in any statute book or ordinance record of the country. It seeks to cut off men of a certain class-black in one set of circumstances, white in another...”

In 1911, a new Mayor, James Preston, was elected, and three more residential segregation ordinances followed, further fine-tuning the “Baltimore Idea” of de jure segregation. This segregation by law wasn’t merely a way of keeping the races separate and avoiding social conflict. It was also a way of assigning benefit to one set of its citizens and burdening another.

Even after residential segregation was deemed unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in Buchanan v. Warley in 1917, Mayor Preston used urban development projects as a form of slum clearance to remove Black residents from areas where he did not want them. Confined to subpar housing with dire health and sanitation concerns, Black residents were forced to live in slum-like settings in the least desirable parts of the city. By the 1930s, housing discrimination became fully institutionalized by the private housing industry. Builders created restrictive covenants during home sales to prohibit the resale of those homes to Black residents. These forms of discrimination were
upheld in the Maryland Court of Appeals, because they were private rather than public, State-imposed forms of discrimination. The practice of redlining residential districts—devaluing and denying financial services to residents of Black neighborhoods—further isolated Black families from the opportunity to live in quality housing and establish generational wealth through homeownership.

By the middle of the century, white flight to suburbs outside of the city shifted the locus of oppression from the city to the State, which further enacted transportation policies that compounded the effects of housing segregation. State-funded and managed highway projects connecting suburbanites to job opportunities in the city simultaneously served as slum elimination projects. Most recently, the administration of Governor Larry Hogan has invested heavily in the Purple Line, which will eventually provide light rail service to middle-class and affluent communities in Montgomery and Prince George’s counties, both suburbs of Washington, D.C. At the same time, the Hogan administration canceled the Red Line project and turned down the $900 million in federal funds dedicated to it. The Red Line would have increased access to jobs and development for people in Baltimore City, as well as the environmental sustainability of the city. According to The Baltimore Sun, an estimated 13,000 jobs and $6.5 billion in economic development were promised for the project.

The discriminatory disinvestment in Baltimore’s Black and Brown communities can be crushing—for business, residents, and students. Several research studies have shown that racism causes stress, and the experience of City Schools students on public transit every day is evidence of just how stressed the city is by these ongoing racial inequities. The stress students are already living in is then further exacerbated by the experience of getting to and from school.

The Fund’s previous reports have explored pressing challenges facing Baltimore City students, including the middle and high school choice process and college and career preparation. The state of public transportation in Baltimore City further compounds these challenges for students. Students appreciate being able to apply to schools beyond their neighborhoods, but they also realize that their access to these schools isn’t merely a matter of being granted admission. The city’s inadequate State-run transit system limits school options for many students, thus leaving the promise of true school choice unfulfilled.

Decades of disinvestment will not simply undo itself. This report provides an in-depth look at City Schools students’ experiences with public transportation and re-affirms that those experiences do not exist in isolation. Through interviews with a representative sample of 274 City Schools high school students and analysis of transportation policy and practice, this report will share findings about the challenges facing students and recommendations based on their perspectives and direct feedback. Students deserve reliable transportation that will get them to and from school safely, on time, and free of traumatizing incidents. Students’ stories cannot be ignored, and this report attempts to amplify their voices. In order for Baltimore to heal and grow, the next governor and administration must champion the structural change that Baltimore City and its students have called for and deserve.

THE IMPACT OF STATE AND LOCAL STRUCTURAL RACISM

1910
Baltimore passes into law a residential segregation ordinance, prohibiting Black citizens from purchasing homes in white neighborhoods.

1933
As part of the New Deal, Congress passes the Home Owners Loan Corporation Act to provide mortgage assistance to homeowners in danger of losing their homes to foreclosure in the wake of the Great Depression. Homeowners of color are largely excluded from this program.

1948
The Supreme Court’s landmark ruling, Shelley v. Kraemer, deems racially restrictive housing covenants invalid.

1956
The Federal Highway Act passes, providing billions for the construction of interstate highways through cities like Baltimore that would improve commutes for affluent white citizens while intentionally destroying inner-city Black communities.

2015
Governor Larry Hogan cancels the MTA’s Red Line, a project that would have vastly improved east-to-west transit accessibility for low-income Baltimore City residents.

2021
Governor Larry Hogan vetoes the Transit Safety and Investment Act, failing to address $2 billion in deferred maintenance to fix safety and reliability issues on the MTA.
BY THE NUMBERS

- **32** High Schools Represented
- **274** High School Students Interviewed
- **130** Neighborhoods Represented

- **73%** of total middle and high school student population rely on MTA to get to school
- **68%** of city schools high school students feel safe on the way to and from school
- **18%** annual ridership of MTA core service are city school students
HOW WE DID IT

For this project, the Fund conducted individual interviews with current City Schools students about how they travel between home, school, extracurricular activities, jobs, and internships. Our interviews kicked off in mid-March 2020 and wrapped up in September 2020. Because of stay-at-home orders for COVID-19 during much of our data collection period, these interviews took place over the phone, each on a recorded line. Interviewees were paid a $30 stipend for their time.

To ensure a consistent experience, our team of six interviewers used a defined protocol, which was approved through the City Schools institutional review board (IRB) process.

WHO PARTICIPATED

In total, 274 current City Schools high school students shared their experiences, ensuring a holistic picture of how students get to and from school. Overall, the student sample was geographically and demographically representative of City Schools high school student population, with Latinx students slightly under-represented. We interviewed students from 32 of the 33 high schools and middle/high schools.

We also heard from students who travel to and from school in a variety of ways including those who take MTA buses, light rail, and subway; those who drive or get a ride with a family member or friend; those who call a Lyft on occasion; and those who walk.

ANALYSIS

The Fund’s Analysis and Engagement team examined the 274 interviews using an inductive approach to identify key themes and findings for City Schools students. In order to generate themes, the Fund transcribed interview recordings and analyzed the transcriptions using mixed methods software. Thirteen people performed the analysis of these interviews. Analysis team members coded excerpts from each transcribed interview with short descriptive phrases. The team lead conducted checks for data quality assurance during the coding process. The team then grouped codes into like categories to assess their density. In this way, the team was able to identify a set of key themes and findings from the interviews.

WHAT WE HEARD

From the interviews, 10 major themes emerged that tell us how City Schools high school students get to and from school. In descending order beginning with the largest, key themes are listed on pages 10 and 11. Each theme is comprised of several findings that detail what we heard from students. The findings express students’ point of view and come directly from the interviews.

In the pages that follow, a closer look at these themes will be illustrated through four students’ experiences as well as analysis of relevant data.
The goal for this project was to interview a demographically and geographically representative sample of City Schools high school students. Therefore, we set targets to talk with students in clusters of neighborhoods that are home to the largest populations of City Schools high school students, as well as other neighborhoods that are geographically isolated from much of the rest of the city.

Where City Schools students live

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RACE/ETHNICITY</th>
<th>CITY SCHOOLS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS</th>
<th>STUDENTS IN OUR SAMPLE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black/African-American</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinx</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOUSEHOLD INCOME</th>
<th>STUDENTS IN OUR SAMPLE</th>
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<td>Less than $20,000*</td>
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<tr>
<td>$20,000 – 35,000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>$35,001 – 50,000</td>
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<td>$65,001 – 75,000</td>
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<td>4%</td>
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<td>$100,001 – 150,000</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than $150,000</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<th>CAR OWNERSHIP</th>
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<td>Family does not have a car</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family does have a car</td>
<td>73%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### THEMES AND FINDINGS

#### 1. STUDENT SAFETY WHILE TRAVELING TO AND FROM SCHOOL
- Although many students feel safe overall on the trip to and from school, a number of students are uncomfortable or uneasy during at least part of the trip.
- Students’ feelings of safety are associated with walking to and waiting for buses in their own neighborhoods, commuting with other students, traveling during daylight hours, and commuting in less crowded conditions.
- Students feel unsafe when they have to travel early in the morning or after dark; navigate car traffic and unsafe driving; or are surrounded by a crowd of unfamiliar people on transit or at transfer points. Transit hubs like Mondawmin and Lexington Market make some students feel uneasy.

#### 2. HOW STUDENTS GET TO AND FROM SCHOOL
- Most students rely on MTA buses to get to and from school most of the time.
- Many students get a ride regularly, if not frequently. Students sometimes call on a family member for a ride or get a Lyft if their bus does not come on time or if a sports practice or match ends after dark.
- Fewer students use the light rail and the subway in their daily commutes. Relatively few high school students walk to and from school.

#### 3. HIGH SCHOOL CHOICE DECISION-MAKING
- Family members often influence students’ decisions about where to apply for high school. Usually, it is parents who are weighing in, but in some cases siblings, cousins, grandparents, and other family members may be involved in student decisions.
- Distance and complexity of a potential commute to school are factors many students take into account when deciding which schools they will apply to. In some cases, students rule out schools that are too far and would require long or complicated trips on public transit.
- Some students choose their high schools despite the distance, saying that a long commute is a given for high school students in City Schools.

#### 4. EMPLOYMENT AND EXTRACURRICULARS
- Many students participate in sports, clubs, and other extracurricular activities after school. Many students also work—after school, in the evenings, on the weekends, or over the summer—to earn money for themselves.
- They rely primarily on public transit to travel home from practice and to and from their jobs or internships, although some students get rides from parents or coaches later in the evening.
- It is often very dark when students leave practice or an evening shift at work. Student concerns about safety on public transit have, at times, meant having to quit a team or a job or not being allowed to participate or apply in the first place.

#### 5. LOST LEARNING TIME
- Many students are late to school at least once, and sometimes multiple times, a week. Public transportation is the primary reason they cite for being late to school.
- Students say that missing even 10 minutes of their first period has a negative impact on their grades.
- While high school students are often absent from school, student absences are not usually caused by transportation issues. Students cite their own health issues and needing to care for another family member as the primary reasons they miss school altogether.
6. **COMMUTE TIME**

- Many students report overall commutes of at least 45 minutes, with some students spending between one and two hours in transit to or from school.
- For most students, travel segments—the walk to the bus stop, a trip on the bus—are not terribly long. It is common for a student’s bus, light rail, or subway trips to take between 15 and 20 minutes. Many students live approximately five minutes from their first transit stop. However, students often take multiple bus and/or train lines to school. Travel and wait times for each leg of a commute add up.
- Students report that long commutes take time away from their homework and, in some cases, limit their ability to take a job to earn money for themselves.

7. **OBSERVING AND INTERACTING WITH TRANSIT OPERATORS**

- Many students have positive experiences with bus drivers, describing them as friendly, decent, and helpful, especially when a driver holds the bus as a student is running to catch it. Several students say that they typically exchange greetings with drivers when they get on the bus. A driver can make students feel safe on the trip to or from school.
- Many other students say that they do not interact at all with bus drivers.
- Bus drivers tend to be more strict than lenient about OneCard use, not allowing students with missing OneCards on the bus unless they pay a full fare. A few students noted that, if they do not have the money to pay, they are in for a long walk or a lengthy wait until they can try again with the next bus.

8. **TRANSIT RELIABILITY**

- Most students find MTA buses to be unreliable. Late buses or buses that do not come at all make students angry and anxious about the consequences they will face at school or at work.
- Students face more delays on days when the weather is bad. They also cite traffic congestion as a factor in the delays they experience.
- Some students feel that buses are more reliable than not, especially the supplemental buses that run on certain routes.
- Fewer students take the light rail and subway. They find the light rail unreliable, while the subway gets better marks for reliability.

9. **NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES WITH ADULTS ON TRANSIT**

- Arguments and physical fights between adults on public transit happen frequently. The driver may bring a bus to a full stop when a fight breaks out, interrupting the trip and causing delays. Students often feel uncomfortable and irritated when an altercation erupts near them on public transit.
- Students report that it is not uncommon to see people who are high—or in the process of getting high—on public transit or at bus stops or train stations. Occasionally, students also see people dealing drugs at or near bus stops.
- A number of female students are sexually harassed by older men on their trip to or from school, making them feel uncomfortable and, at times, frightened. The most common are instances where a man says something to or about a student. Some female students also reported being followed, while others said that they are regularly accosted at their bus stop by male drivers who pull up and ask if they want a ride or tell them to get in.

10. **MEASURES STUDENTS TAKE TO ENSURE THEIR SAFETY WHILE TRAVELING TO AND FROM SCHOOL**

- Many students feel a need to be cautious and vigilant while commuting to or from school and to be very aware of their surroundings. They try to minimize distractions and focus on the trip.
- To ensure their safety, many students also try to keep a low profile and avoid interactions with people they do not know while traveling on public transit.
- Some students intentionally avoid specific areas while walking to or from bus stops or train stations, and a few students say that they avoid certain bus routes or bus stops.
- Some students also put their phones to use to help them feel safer during a commute. They talk, text, or use the ‘share location’ function on their phones with a parent or friend, so the person on the other end will know they arrived at school or home safely.
STUDENT STORIES

The City Schools high school students we interviewed were candid in sharing their experiences. The following pages feature four students’ stories that illustrate how the themes and findings from the interviews often play out in students’ lives.

AMIYA

9TH GRADE • BALTIMORE CITY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL

Amiya went to middle school at Harlem Park Elementary/Middle School, which was a 10-minute walk from where she lived at the time. She now lives in the Rosemont neighborhood in West Baltimore. This is her first year of high school at Baltimore City College (City), and she takes MTA buses to and from school every day.

“It’s very different, because first, I have to rely on two buses and then my safety….I would say that I’m not really used to this transportation thing. Especially when I had to first remember how to get there….But catching the bus, it was very hard.”

She decided on City, because she wants to be a social worker or lawyer. Since both fields require post-secondary degrees, she wanted to attend a college preparatory high school. She had the composite score to attend City, but she did not take distance or the commute into account.

“I didn’t realize that it was that far away, and I had to catch two buses. I don’t know if I would have still went….I don’t like being that far away from home. I’m worried if I get lost or anything, because I’m not really familiar with the East.”

Amiya leaves home early in the morning to get to school by the 7:55 opening bell.

“I leave at 6:30 most of the time. I wait for the bus and then I have to catch two, so I have to be extra early and cautious.”

She catches her first bus on the north side of the Rosemont neighborhood in West Baltimore. Her five-minute walk to the bus stop makes her feel a little uneasy.

“I’m usually feeling a little unsafe in a way, because there are a lot of grown men…at the corners. We don’t see that they are actually doing anything, but there are…left around beers…..they just standing all in one place, just chilling, like it’s a party or something….I’ll be there with my sister, but we still will be…feeling unsafe….And sometimes we walk to the other closest bus stop, because [the corners] will be overcrowded with men.”

While waiting for the bus, Amiya talks to her sister, but her sense of unease is compounded by impatience and frustration with the bus.

“The first bus that I catch is not reliable at all….I have to wait for either the 79 or the 29 that goes to Mondawmin….So I’ll just be waiting there for like 30 minutes straight sometimes…. [M]y sister uses the [Transit]App…and the bus will say that it’s coming in five minutes and then we don’t see the bus, and then the time will change to like 15 minutes and we’ll be like, ‘Well, wait. What up? What is it doing?’ I’ll be pacing and frustrated, because our bus will be taking forever. Then I’ll kind of feel like, I won’t say anxious, because of the mess around us and the people that are around there. But most of the time, I’m feeling frustrated and impatient, because of the bus….I’ll be thinking that I’m going to be late to school.”

“My first bus [either the 79 or 29], which is to Mondawmin, that’s only like seven minutes…. the 29, I should say takes the longest, I don’t know why, but that’s when I will be on the bus…for like 30 minutes. So I don’t arrive to Mondawmin until 7:00-something….Then I have to wait at Mondawmin…. My second bus ride, which is the 22 to my school, that’s 20-something minutes right there. For my second bus, I know that it will always be there at 7:00 or 6:50. So it gives me a type of schedule to work with.”

Amiya’s anxiety about being late to school is not unfounded. She estimates that she is late 15 days out of 20.

“(My first quarter) I missed [first period] every day….So that’s when all the buses were late a lot of the time. And the other reason [is] if I don’t walk out [the house] exactly 6:30…I will miss the second bus in advance, because I know that they come at like 6:50 to 7:00, so if I don’t get out ‘til like 6:50 or 7:00, then I know that I’m late, and then I have to wait even longer for the next bus to come. When I’m running late…it’s only 10 minutes, [but] I was actually missing a lot to the point that my grades started dropping very low in my first period. But my other grades, it was…OK.”

The arrival of the bus does not bring relief. When Amiya first gets on the bus, she greets the driver, but she’s still feeling frustrated.

“Some [drivers] will be nice and be like, ‘Good morning,’ and they smile at you, and they make me feel good about today. But the rest of them, they be a little… fed up or something. Some of them will be having little attitudes like, ‘Come on, just hurry up and get on the bus.’ I feel a little moody, because for one, the seats will be full. And for two…I don’t like to be around a lot of people, especially that I don’t know. You’re feeling disgust, because there will still be trash, and it will still be dirty.”
She is especially nervous about older men on the bus.

“Then I had crazy experiences on the bus with people, especially older men, so I’ll still be scared. [O]ne time it was this older guy and...he was on the first bus. I noticed him staring at me, and I was really creeped out. And this is where I wasn’t with my sister, I was by myself. ... I wanted to call my parents, but I didn’t have my phone....I just looked away and tried to avoid him...then I got off the bus, because it was the last stop. So then I was going for my second bus, and he comes over there too, and I’m like, that’s weird. So I get on the bus, and he gets on the bus too, and then when I sit down, he actually said something to me. I think it was like, ‘How are you doing?’ And I just ignored him, and I tried to move. I don’t think nobody noticed it, because... they didn’t say anything, but it would have been better if they would have said anything....it’s probably like 15 to 20 minutes in, that’s when he finally got off the bus. I was still a little creeped out, because I was like, what if he was trying to follow me or anything? And then he was way older.”

To keep herself safe, Amiya tries to travel with her sister or another friend.

“It can be either my sister or somebody that I go to school with or a neighborhood friend. Then the second thing, [I] will try to keep my distance, make sure that I’m not around a bad environment...which is why I’ll be moving from bus stop to bus stop in the morning with the first bus....If I had my phone, then I would make sure I’m on the phone with somebody or constantly communicating with somebody.”

Because she doesn’t trust that she would be safe on the bus after dark, she does not participate in after-school activities.

Sexual harassment is the number-one safety risk facing girls and young women.

78% of experts describing it as a high risk or an extremely high risk for girls

77% saying that it occurs either very or fairly often within public spaces in their city

While many cities’ transport systems are safe for girls during the day, almost half (48%) of experts said it’s either unsafe or extremely unsafe for girls to use public transport at night.25
“[A]fter school…the buses will be so full, that it will probably be more than two buses that skip the bus stop, because they can’t take no more students. That causes issues with me coming home on time sometimes….Then it’s extra crowded. Like in the morning, it’s not that crowded at all. Maybe because I catch the bus early. But, after school, that’s when it would really be squeezed up, no seats, and they make [it] really so uncomfortable, because I don’t really like nobody that’s this close to me.

“On my way from school…I was on the second bus. This happened on and off the bus…it was kind of an altercation…between this adult and children…because [the] children, they wasn’t using their manners. So they were kind of pushing and everything. And then it got really loud and really crazy….Then when they had got off the bus, it was really bad, because the kids, they were probably, I would say around eight or nine. And they was really fussing, and the adult was really threatening the little kids and I was a little scared…because she was getting in their face and everything. We really thought something was going to happen, and it was really crazy. [The kids,] they were by themselves.”

“[S]ome will bother me to try to get my number or to compliment me. But it’s to an extent where I don’t feel safe, I actually feel badgered, and they don’t know how to give you space. I don’t really like people touching me, but they’ll tap me, and it triggers me to say things that I don’t want to say, so I normally just try to be like ‘Can you not put your hands on me?’ or ‘Thank you, but I don’t want to have this conversation.’”

—Student at Augusta Fells Savage Institute for the Visual Arts

“You can’t look pretty on the bus…you can’t have your hair done. You can’t even put your makeup on….They try to talk to you or sit next to you and get in your face, and I just don’t like that.”

—Student at Mergenthaler Vocational-Technical High School

“One time I got on the bus, it was me and my friend, and this man, I don’t know how old he was, but…he was drunk. Basically he was just saying stuff about me and her in this disgusting way. Just saying stuff that should not be coming out of his mouth.”

—Student at Bard High School Early College

Just like women and girls all over the world, women and girls in Baltimore City experience sexual harassment while commuting to and from work or school on public transportation. Women are subject to an array of encounters sexual in nature that take place on buses and trains, as well as at bus stops and train stations. Public transportation systems are easy places for offenders to do their harm because of crowding, insufficient lighting, and other structural deficiencies. Sexual harassment can take the form of anything from sexual comments or whistling to indecent exposure, groping, and/or sexual assault. Incidences of harassment are generally under-reported by riders. In one study at San Jose State University, fewer than 10% of victims reported their harassment to anyone.

For those who have to rely on public transportation, like many City Schools students, these incidents can affect their behavior causing them to avoid certain areas or take extra safety measures. Compared to men, women are more likely to take multiple safety precautions such as “limiting travel to daytime hours, waiting for transit only at well-lit places, sitting close to the driver, carrying a self-defense spray, and holding keys to use them for self-defense.”

If we want women and girls to feel safe on the public transportation many of them have to use, we have to acknowledge that sexism and patriarchy play a huge role in our society. Public awareness campaigns have sprung up in recent years, but they aren’t enough. If we want lasting change, we need to ask ourselves: What systems need to partner on solutions? How can we encourage more and better reporting? How do we hold perpetrators accountable, so they are not getting away with their crimes?
Baltimore’s transit system includes options for bus, subway, and light rail for its riders. Bus service has the most lines available across the city with more than 60 bus routes, which include high frequency CityLink routes, LocalLink, and Express BusLink routes. BaltimoreLink bus routes [those named for bold colors] are designed to connect outlying suburbs and neighborhoods to downtown destinations. The numbered bus routes serve as connectors between outlying neighborhoods. The Charm City Circulator is a free downtown bus system to help visitors and residents get around. The Baltimore Light Rail runs north to south, from Hunt Valley to BWI Airport. The Metro Subway runs northwest to southeast from Owings Mills to downtown Baltimore and then curls up to the northeast to the Johns Hopkins Hospital.
Julie went to middle school in Virginia, where she took a school bus to and from school every day. She moved with her mother to Baltimore County and then into Baltimore City for high school. She takes MTA buses between her home in the Wallbrook neighborhood and school every day. She wasn’t used to figuring out the bus on her own.

“[In Virginia] I get [a letter] from the mail [that] would tell us your bus number. This is the time you were supposed to be there and the location of the bus stop. [Here in Baltimore City] everything was new to me. I get to choose my own high school....I just remember [that they were] like, ‘OK, you have to take this bus.’ They don’t tell me a time. You just have to be independent, and you have to figure it out on your own. Then I would have to take another bus.”

Julie transferred in the middle of her junior year to Patterson High School.

“So my first year it’s already hard, because I’m supposed to look for two buses that I don’t even know. So, I got lost four times....for the first few times I was going to [the first high school].

“[T]here was this one specific teacher that I just did not like, and he’s the main reason why I don’t want to [attend that school] anymore. Also, the students. I’ve never seen such discrimination between the Hispanics and the Blacks.... [T]he one teacher that I strongly disliked, he was the one that referred me to Patterson, because it was very diverse. There was Hispanics, there was Blacks, there was people from the Middle East and kids that I would never see at [the first school].”

Julie likes Patterson, but her trip to school is a long one.

“For my senior year [at Patterson], I [take] two buses...the Gold and the Orange. [It takes] an hour and 30 to get to school. I would have to wake up at 6:00 and leave by 7:14...because that's the first bus that I can catch and get on fine. [I don’t have to walk] that far. [The bus stop] it’s literally... across the street from me.”

*If the weather is really poor, Julie will skip school altogether, rather than stand outdoors waiting for her buses.*

“Since it’s a very long distance, and I guess the weather was really bad, I would not go to school. [O]ut in this weather for an hour and 30 minutes to get to school, it’s just too much. If it’s pouring rain, I refuse to go to school like that....But I guess I would only miss school less than five times (over the course of a year).”

However, she estimates that she is late about three times a week.

*When at the bus stop in the morning, Julie feels tired, like she just doesn’t want to do all of this all over again. She listens to music and looks around while waiting for her first bus to come. There are other students at the bus stop with her but no one she knows from Patterson. Sometimes bus drivers will skip her stop, even though it’s the first stop on the route.*

“[T]he bus drivers clearly see you; they just choose not to pick you up. I’ll be on the bus stop. I’ll be standing. I’m for sure aware that they can see me, but they just keep on going. [That happens] about three times a week.”

The Baltimore Red Line project was planned as a 14.1-mile light rail transit line that would have connected East and West Baltimore and intersected with the City’s current North-South line.\(^{33}\) It was proposed by the MTA, and construction was expected to begin in 2015 with completion in 2022. Neighborhood stakeholders from the many communities across the City that would have made stops available on this line were deeply involved with making sure the project was beneficial, specifically for low-income Black and Brown residents. Julie would have been able to take the Red Line from the West Baltimore MARC Station to Patterson High School off the East Baltimore/Bayview stop, cutting her travel time significantly.

During the development phase, the Red Line project was projected to create more than 9,800 jobs\(^{34}\) and connect neighborhoods such as Woodlawn, Edmondson Village, West Baltimore, downtown Baltimore, Canton, Harbor East, Fells Point, and the Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center Campus areas. The estimated total cost was $2.9 billion\(^{35}\) with a projected benefit of $4.6 billion in economic development.\(^{36}\)

Despite more than a decade’s worth of planning, six years ago Governor Hogan decided to cancel the Red Line project entirely, citing cost savings as his primary reason.\(^{37}\) He turned down $900 million in federal funds that had been dedicated to the project and transferred $736 million in State money programmed for the Red Line to roads in predominantly white counties elsewhere in Maryland. The Hogan administration offered up an alternative, the BaltimoreLink initiative to redesign bus service, featuring bus-only lanes downtown and shortened routes for quicker service.\(^{38}\)

Several civil rights groups filed federal complaints against the Hogan administration, and the U.S. Department of Transportation opened a federal investigation, citing decades of racist transportation decisions.\(^{39}\) Ultimately, the Department closed the investigation without comment on the complaints.\(^{40}\)

Building the Red Line was an opportunity to reverse years of disinvestment and racist policies, and many community members are still dismayed at the blatant disregard for poor Black and Brown people in Baltimore City.
She is glad to be one of the first people on the bus, but once it starts filling up she feels anxious and the things she sees and hears make her feel scared and frustrated. Other people on the bus contribute to her feeling negatively.

“Lucky for me, when I...get on the bus, I’m the first person....I would say, ‘Hey, good morning’ [to the driver]....It’s pretty empty, but along the way, that’s when a lot of people get in and they fill up the whole space to a point where the driver can’t let nobody inside. I didn’t like it one bit. Mainly because of the whole anxiety that I have, and it was always loud and crowded...and the loudness and the crowdedness [of the bus] just kind of makes it worse.

“On the bus, it’s like you see things you don’t see on a daily basis. You hear things you don’t hear every day. People go on the bus intoxicated or like on something. They lean to the side or they lean on you, and it’s just weird. I get scared, but then I get agitated...this is not the place and the time to be acting like that.

She specifically recalls one incident on the bus that stuck with her.

“Going to school, I remember there was a lady and she was screaming...like yelling profanities to this other person over a seat. Then...there was this woman who was very upset with her child and started physically hurting him in front of other people. And then everybody started going off on her. It was huge chaos on the bus.”

Julie does not feel very safe overall on her trip to school. She is OK at the bus stop across the street from her home, but then she feels unsafe when she gets on the Gold bus to cross town.

“I really don’t know [why]. It’s just a natural feeling that I get. More of a gut feeling that I’m so unsure of what’s going to happen.”

She doesn’t feel like there is anything she can do to keep herself safe.

“There’s nothing to do. It’s just do what you do every day. Be cautious of what you say or do. I don’t know.”

Once she gets on the Orange bus to Patterson, she feels very safe.

“Because now that’s like the supplemental bus. It’s where all the kids are.”

The Orange bus that she takes in the morning drops her off right outside of Patterson.

On her way home from school, she says that students sometimes harass other students on the bus.

“I was going back home. I would go on the Orange bus after school, it was like a school bus, so like supplemental. There was this boy [and] this girl approached him and said that she wanted to see the time. She went to everybody’s face and said, ‘Oh, can I see your phone? Can I see your phone?’ Her goal was to take the phone and run away with it. Obviously, she [targeted] the person that couldn’t stick up for himself, because he didn’t speak no English. And she took advantage of him and eventually pushed him out of the bus.

“In the afternoon, it’s just more chaotic from the start to the end.”
Deasia lives in the Cherry Hill community in South Baltimore, and she was able to walk to New Era Academy, where she attended middle school. She currently takes a mix of MTA buses and light rail to get to and from school at Vivien T. Thomas.

“I went to New Era Academy [for middle school]. I just walked there, honestly, it’s not that far from my house. I could just walk to school when I was going there.”

After being accepted to Vivien T. Thomas, she realized she was specifically interested in their EMT program. Her mom discussed the school with her and encouraged her to enroll in that program. The distance did not factor into her decision to attend Vivien T. Thomas because it seemed close to her house.

“Once I found out everything they had, I really started going there for the EMT program. [My mom and I were] talking about the EMT program, and she told me that she think that it was a good idea so I just enrolled in that.”

However, there were two high schools she was interested in but did not apply to because of the distance.

“It was Western and I believe... Poly...They’re a little farther for me so I didn’t [apply].”

Deasia takes two buses to get to her high school. Her whole commute to school takes her 45 minutes to an hour. She leaves home early at 6:30 a.m.

“I usually catch the 26 and it takes me directly up to Mondawmin Mall. From there, I just catch the Navy on down and [the bus] drop me right in front of the school.”

She catches the first bus close to her house and feels safe getting to the bus stop.

“The bus...runs up the street from my house. The bus stop is a good two to three minutes from our house...I feel pretty safe going to the bus stop. It’s not really that far.”

Sometimes, she feels frustrated waiting at the bus stop.

“You know, if I’m waiting for a long period of time, sometimes I get a little mad, because it causes me to be late, but it just depends on how long I’m waiting.”

She usually listens to music or watches Netflix while at the bus stop. There are other students from her school and other schools that wait there at the same time. She uses the Transit App, which she says is reliable, to tell her when the buses are coming. Once she is on the bus, she does not enjoy it.

“Most of the time [the bus] is pretty wild...it’s just loud. I don’t like it at all, because I don’t like a lot of noises...I just don’t like being around crowds of people anyways, so that’s why I usually just listen to my music and turn it up.

“I see a lot of stuff...[T]he craziest thing ever for me...[was] seeing an old lady get pushed off the bus. It was some guy. I think he was drinking or something like that. And he got mad, because she wouldn’t give up her seat or something.”
On a scale of 1 to 10 for safety, Deasia says her overall commute is a five.

“When I first started school, it was at a ten, but over the years, they changed. There have been a lot of people dying and stuff. So, now it’s like a five.”

Deasia takes her safety seriously, because she has been the victim of a robbery.

“If I know I’m going to be out for a long period of time, if I’m waiting on the bus or anything, I really try not to be on my phone as much and be aware of my surroundings. [I] try and keep all my stuff on me, because I had been in a few accidents coming from school, as far as me getting robbed. So I mainly just try to be aware of my surroundings.

“Me and my god-sister... were sitting on the bus stop...and these guys walked over towards us, it was two of them. And he asked me, what kind of phone did I have? When I had looked up, he had pulled [a] gun out on me...and he told me [to] unlock my phone and stuff. And he asked [my god-sister], where was her phone at? [S]o he went through her bag and he found...her phone. Then they wanted us to unlock our phones and reset them. And while they were doing it, they just had the gun pointed at me... because of the way I looked, they thought I was a boy. So they...point everything towards me. We just gave him our phones and stuff, and after that they just walked off.”

Her commute changes when the weather is bad.

“When the weather is bad, I usually get rides to school. Either my uncle or somebody or I just get a Lyft or Uber. It’s not really that expensive. I think the most I paid from home to school was no more than like $15.”

Before COVID-19, Deasia was in multiple clubs and played many sports after school. She took the bus most of the time or got a ride home from her coach.

“My coach, he would try to get us home before it got dark out. So the latest it would end would be like 6:00, 6:30.

“[I] mainly [took] the bus [home]. Or if my coach had enough time, he gave me a ride home. It was pretty easy, but after that whole situation with me getting robbed, I still didn’t feel safe at the time. So I would try to find the quickest way as possible to get home.”

She takes the bus and light rail to get home. Her commute going home is easier than her commute to school and takes about 35 minutes.

“I usually catch...the Navy straight downtown and just hop on the light rail. From school it take[s] me about 35 minutes. Cause [it’s] usually quicker and going through downtown. The trip going home, it’s just faster. Not as many people go or take the same way as me to get home. As far as me getting on the light rail, there’s less people around. It’s more relaxing to me.”

Deasia is not often absent or late to school.

“I never was much absent until...my 11th grade year. I became a little absent from school, because I started working to help out at home. So I missed like a couple of weeks of school from that, but usually most of the time I’m not really absent.”

She has worked many jobs and would take the bus or the light rail to get to work. She has been late to work sometimes because of transportation.

“Yes, actually I had a lot of jobs. That’s mainly what I do is work and school. I got wrote up a few times, but mainly they understood, because, when you riding the light rail, you got times when the light rail breaks down.”

UNSAFE SPACES

Exposure to violence can be common in Baltimore City neighborhoods where students live and neighborhoods where they attend school. Deasia’s experience is an extreme example. However, many students who witness or directly experience arguments, fights, threats, or harassment are forced to navigate the commute to school with their defenses up and bring a heightened sense of anxiety into the school day with them. The average City Schools student goes to a school in a neighborhood where 87 violent crimes are reported during the academic year and lives in a neighborhood where 95 violent crimes are reported. Many students are walking through and waiting for buses in neighborhoods, thereby increasing their exposure to violence.

A growing body of research shows that exposure to community violence can be detrimental to the development of a young person. A study focused on violence exposure, surveying over 3,000 Washington D.C. students between the ages of 14 and 19, showed a strong correlation between exposure to community violence and trauma symptoms such as depression, anger, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress. Another study focused on 6th, 8th, and 10th graders found that exposure to violence and feelings of not being safe lead to more willingness to use physical aggression, a diminished sense of risk, and lower expectations for the future. These exposures also impact academic performance such as low-test scores and graduation rates.
AYOTUNDE
12TH GRADE • BALTIMORE POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

Ayotunde went to middle school at Friendship Academy of Science and Technology where he took a bus to and from school every day. Upon graduating to the 9th grade, Ayotunde was accepted to the Baltimore Polytechnic Institute (Poly). He was intent on attending Poly despite others questioning if he would be able to succeed there academically.

“I was told that I wouldn’t be able to go to any type of top tier schools. That was my motivation to go [to Poly]. When I was in middle school, a lot of people outside of my school would say things like, ‘Oh, you go to Friendship, you can’t go [to Poly].’ I’d tell them that I’m a straight A student…so I would kind of rebut to prove them wrong.”

Distance did not play a role in narrowing down his high school list.

“I feel like I live borderline, deep over east. [M]ost of the high schools are over west, so I…knew there was going to be a travel requirement.”

Ayotunde has used public transit to get to school since 6th grade, and his commute in middle school was longer than his current commute. To get to Poly, he takes two buses. His entire commute takes roughly an hour if everything goes perfectly. He also has a younger brother who he has to ensure is ready in the morning and gets to school on time.

“We have to wake up pretty early to get ready together, to create a schedule, to catch the bus on time. Typically, [we] have to wake up around 5:00 a.m., get ready, and then leave the house by 6:30 a.m. to get to the bus stop around like 6:37 a.m., 6:38 a.m. He’s smaller than me, so he couldn’t walk or run as fast as I would. I had to take him into consideration as we go outside.”

The first bus the brothers take is the 54 toward State Center.

“If you don’t catch the 54 by [6:30 a.m.], it doesn’t come [again] until 7:00….If I missed the bus at 6:30 a.m., I can’t get to school…by the school opening time at 8:15 a.m.”

Ayotunde feels generally safe on the bus stop near his home and less safe on the actual bus ride.

“It’s always crowded. There’s a lot of people who ride the 54. You see…a couple students, but mostly a lot of adults. It tends to be like extremely hectic.”

Ayotunde transfers from the 54 to then catch the 28. Compared to the stop near his home, the transfer stop feels unpredictable and dicey.

“On the second bus stop, it tends to be…a lot of people and in crowded areas. You just have to make sure that you look around to make sure…nothing goes on. You don’t want to…agitate anybody. You try to keep to yourself to make sure that you’re safe.”

This level of chaos increases once the number 28 arrives.

“The 28 is never a good bus ride. There’s typically an overfill, so there’ll be like way too many kids waiting at the bus stop, and we’ll have to wait for…multiple buses that go by. There was a time where like three buses went past us, because they were full, and we had to wait for…the fourth bus in order to get on the bus.”

Bad weather has a tremendous impact on Ayotunde’s waiting times.

“Usually, buses come like every 30 minutes, but, if it’s raining or if it’s snowing, some type of unusual weather…will change it to like an hour to hour thirty.”

(continued on next page)
SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICE

As a way to offset high passenger volumes during peak hours and to accommodate students during their morning and afternoon commutes, MTA offers supplemental service on existing routes, called “tripper” buses. These supplemental bus runs are added specifically with students in mind and run only on weekdays, September through mid-June in alignment with the school year.

There are currently 29 public middle and high schools in Baltimore City that receive supplemental service. These 29 schools are distributed across 18 distinct geographic areas called “supplemental zones,” each with its own set of bus routes most likely to be used by students. According to the MTA, approximately 12,000 students are taking advantage of this supplemental service. Buses might be cut from service at times if there are not enough operators to run them, a practice that is not uncommon in any transit agency. Tripper routes are considered “do not cut” runs and are never removed from a route when alterations need to be made to planned schedules.

Trippers are a great way to get more buses on the road during peak hours, benefiting many students. For example, Ayotunde catches the 28 bus for the second leg of his trip to school, and this route adds three additional tripper buses during peak hours to serve students. However, there are several federally imposed restrictions to these routes that make it a challenge to leverage them in ways that might be more beneficial to students. Trippers were first defined in the Federal Highway Act of 1973:

“FTA [Federal Transit Administration] shall construe the term ‘tripper service,’ as it has historically, to include modifications to fare collection or subsidy systems, modifications to the frequency of service, and de minimis route alterations from route paths in the immediate vicinity of schools to stops located at or in close proximity to the schools. Consistent with that construction, FTA shall interpret the definition of ‘school bus operations’ to include service that a reasonable person would conclude was primarily designed to accommodate students and school personnel and only incidentally to serve the nonstudent general public.”

The legislation goes on to restrict tripper service in what would seem a blatant effort to protect the business interests of the private, for-profit bus companies many school districts contract with to provide school bus service for students.

This legislation, passed nearly 50 years ago, has made it so any federally funded agency such as the MTA has to tread carefully when attempting to create supplemental service that works to serve students for fear of being penalized by the Federal Transit Administration. MTA cannot run routes specifically for students and cannot alter route names to be student- or school-specific. Trippers have to be open carriage and published on public schedules.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>ROUTE</th>
<th>MORNING TRIPPERS ADDED</th>
<th>AFTERNOON TRIPPERS ADDED</th>
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<td>Green Street Academy</td>
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</table>

Source: MDOT MTA Schools, Supplemental Service Schedules
TRANSPORTATION RELIABILITY AND TARDINESS

Students like Amiya, Julie, and Ayotunde report that public transit makes them late to school on a regular basis. City Schools’ 20,653 high school students were collectively tardy to their first period classes 335,470 times during the 2018-19 school year with 79% of high school students arriving late for first period at least once.\(^47\) Those late arrivals can have a negative impact on the individual student’s academic performance. For instance:

“It definitely impacts my first period, because…a lot goes on in five minutes. It’s only 10 minutes, [but] I was actually missing a lot to the point that my grades started dropping very low in my first period. But my other grades, it was OK.”

—Baltimore City College student

“If you’re late a certain amount of times, they drop your grade by one letter, and, to avoid that, I just don’t show up late. And that means don’t show up at all. Even though that’s probably not the best way to handle that….Or they put you in this type of a program where they talk about managing your latenesses.”

—Baltimore Design School student

There are ripple effects to the students who are on time as well. Over time, chronic student tardiness can significantly decrease the time that teachers are able to spend on instruction. For instance, when many students repeatedly arrive late to first period, teachers have to restart class or begin instruction late, because it is impractical to start on time. Tardiness on the part of just a handful of students in one class can reduce the amount of learning time for all students in that class.\(^48\)

Ayotunde also finds the Transit App to be of little use while making his trek.

“Typically, we’ll look at the bus app, it’ll say like, ‘[T]he bus is coming in the next five minutes,’ and the bus would never show up. That happens 100% of the time. Like every day, every time there would be a bus, they’d say, ‘[T]his is in the next two minutes,’ and that bus never shows up.”

This level of unreliability often leads to Ayotunde being late to school.

“I’m late a lot, like quite a lot. So [the] last quarter before the pandemic, I had 23 late [days], and that’s like more than half [of the quarter]. Despite how late I am, even if the bus is messing up, I would wait until I could get on the bus.”

Despite the unreliability of the buses, Ayotunde reports having generally positive experiences with the bus drivers on his routes.

“A lot of the bus drivers are kind. If you ask them for directions, they tend to tell you like, ‘[W]here do you need to go?’ They tend to make sure if you asked them, like ‘I need this certain stop,’ they tend to be very, very kind. But then there’s sometimes where you get a bus driver who is not having a great day, which is understandable. [I]t tends to be kind of hard when they don’t have a great day, because they control the ride…..There was a time when we called for a bus stop, and, because of how the bus driver was feeling, the bus driver skipped that stop and went to the next one. And we had to walk all the way back down…to where we needed to get off.

“But a positive would be…my first day of high school. I did not know where the high school was, particularly because I drove there all the time with my parents….I didn’t know where to go….I asked the bus driver for directions to the school, and he gave me perfect directions and even...called for me when it was time for me to get off.”

Ayotunde recalls one incident that really sticks out and helps him to sympathize with bus drivers.

“There was a time where a bus driver was trying to tell somebody that they need to stop certain actions. The person was engaging [in] an action that’s prohibited on the bus. [T]he person wanting to engage in a conflict….with the bus driver. [T]he bus driver kindly asked them if they could stop, and…the person refused to respond or answer. [T]he bus driver said, ‘OK, can you kindly get off the bus?’ And the person retaliated in a negative way and decided to go into the bus driver’s space…tried to induce an altercation with the bus driver. [I]t was around nine o’clock. I was coming back from one of my interviews. I had to wait on that bus until…another bus came, because the bus driver was not allowed to move because of the altercation.”

On his way home from school, the commute is no easier than in the morning.

“It is extremely intense, even longer when you’re going back home, because we were at that school area. [T]here’s times where I would skip the first two buses because of how filled they are and go to….the next three bus stops down just to get on the bus just to go home….When I get a seat, I usually start on my homework. If I’m not able to get a seat, I usually listen to music and just wait it out. Or there’s…times where I have a couple of friends that I could talk to, but it wouldn’t be like extremely long conversations, because people are moving back and forth and it’s hard to speak with concentration.”

On days where Ayotunde stays after for track practices, he is presented with a different set of challenges.

“I run track all season[s]. I typically get on [the bus] around 5:30 p.m., 6:00 p.m. The bus is typically empty, but…if you miss the bus, you have to wait a good 45 minutes until the next bus comes.”
ON-TIME PERFORMANCE

On-time performance (OTP) for local bus service, which the MTA defines as two minutes early to seven minutes late, is variable, both by route and by date. For instance, there is clear improvement across all routes from October 2019 to February 2020. However, on-time performance on the 53 route increased from 57% to 81.2% on weekdays, whereas on-time performance on the 38 route improved from 40% to 45.2% during the same time period. Most routes’ on-time performance hovered in the 75% range in February 2020. The routes included in the chart below are some of the routes that provide tripper service to high schools.

On-time performance for select MTA bus routes used by City Schools students to get to and from school

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

What does a public transportation system that meets City Schools student needs look like? We asked students directly to name the changes that would make it easier for them to get to and from school, extracurricular activities, jobs, and internships. The students interviewed made almost 500 recommendations for ways that the MTA and City Schools could improve their experience. Below, we highlight four of those recommendations that we heard the most from students. Building on the student recommendations, the Fund asks the MTA, City Schools, the City of Baltimore, and the State of Maryland to work together toward a fully funded, safer, and more equitable public transit system in Baltimore that recognizes the needs of its student riders. The following recommendations would vastly improve students’ experiences on the MTA.

IMPROVED SERVICE

STUDENT RECOMMENDATION: The MTA should run more buses more frequently. The MTA has already begun work on efforts to get to more frequent and more reliable bus service in Baltimore City, piloting a program of dedicated bus lanes and transit signal priority in some areas. An expansion of these efforts, paired with enforcement to keep other vehicles from using and blocking the dedicated lanes, would increase the frequency of bus service in the city without a need for more buses or operators. However, expansion efforts could be undercut by Governor Hogan’s recent veto of the TSIA. The Maryland General Assembly must override this veto at the earliest possible opportunity.

A renewed awareness of the benefit of high-quality, frequent public transit is emerging federally as well, bringing the possibility of investment in additional measures that would allow buses to run more frequently. The Biden Administration has made it a goal to provide high-quality transit in every U.S. city with a population of at least 100,000. Congress is working on an update of the Five-Year Surface Transportation Bill. Advocates believe that federal dollars would have the biggest impact if applied to the operating budgets of local transit agencies. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act allocated $25 billion to transit, including for operating needs. MTA should apply any additional funding it can to efforts to increase the frequency of transit service in Baltimore City.

“[B]us and trains should be more consistent, and they should be more considerate about students. Just because we’re kind of annoying…doesn’t mean that we’re not people. Sometimes they really do get frustrated, and sometimes they just take off without even waiting…. City Schools should be more considerate. Who wants to wake up early, like 5:00 in the morning early, just to get to school at, what, 8:15? Some kids have jobs that get them to work overnight, and they can’t get to school early in the morning. It makes it difficult for them to wake up early….I feel like they need to be more considerate, because lately at my school, whenever you’re late, you just get an automatic one hour of detention. And if you don’t go to that detention, it piles up….And that’s not fair because you don’t know the situation the child is in….Maybe they have other stuff to take care of….It was difficult for me going from where I live all the way to John Ruhrah, which is literally across the city, because the schools around my neighborhood weren’t so great. [It] was difficult for me to get up every morning, get my sister ready, get myself ready in time to catch a bus. It just makes it a bit difficult. We got to it, but I feel like City Schools should be more considerate of that. You don’t know where that child is coming from. You don’t know what that child’s going through. You don’t know what consists of their day, other than school.”

—Western High School student
STUDENT RECOMMENDATION: The MTA should improve the TransitApp. Students take issue with the TransitApp’s accuracy. For instance, buses shown as being only a few minutes away are sometimes, in reality, much further away or do not show up at all.

Technology has improved the rider experience on mass transit considerably over the past decade, and the MTA has already taken many steps to improve the accuracy of the app. MTA began using TransitApp about three years ago once it had installed GPS trackers on all of its buses. TransitApp displays the anticipated arrival time of a bus at a specific stop on its route by reconciling real-time data from the bus’ GPS tracker with the schedule for that route. More recently, the agency has done additional training with operators to ensure better cooperation between the live-tracking tool and the bus schedule.

It is important that MTA continues to utilize ahead-of-the-curve technology to improve the rider experience. For instance, TransitApp has recently integrated a feature that allows transit agencies to provide bus occupancy data through real-time crowd counters. The COVID-19 pandemic turned the idea of crowded transit on its head. Social distancing in enclosed spaces may be recommended for some time to come, and it is essential that riders are given as much information as possible to make safe and informed decisions regarding their commutes.

The MTA should take City Schools student riders into account when developing regular bus service, not just supplemental service. City Schools students make up approximately 18% of daily ridership on MTA core service—local buses, light rail, and subway—in the Baltimore area. Yet the 2015-2018 Origin-Destination study conducted by the MTA to determine regular service routes did not include surveys of students. It is unclear how much input from City Schools students was pursued or considered. In any case, student needs are not adequately factored into the development of regular routes and service schedules. Supplemental routes do take student needs into account, but, by law, they are allowed to deviate only minimally from regular routes, which have been determined based on the needs of adult commuters. Student riders are a significant share of transit users in Baltimore. The MTA should appropriately weigh students’ transit needs and preferences in decision-making about regular service development.

The next governor and administration, including the Maryland Department of Transportation and the MTA, should re-start Red Line development and implementation. The time is ripe to revive the Red Line project with a major new federal push to invest in infrastructure development, which includes fixing roads and bridges and expanding mass transit. With a gubernatorial election in Maryland in 2022, residents should put pressure on all gubernatorial candidates and elected officials to pursue the project. Since Maryland is without a regional transit authority, the Governor has a lot of power to support or neglect the Red Line, as we saw when Governor Hogan canceled the project years ago. The next Governor of Maryland must support the project for it to come to fruition. The Red Line would vastly improve the transit experience for many students traveling to and from school in Baltimore City. Many neighborhoods that are currently disconnected and difficult to access by MTA, causing students to take multiple buses or trains, would be easier to navigate. A shorter commute time can result in students experiencing or witnessing less violence, and a more direct route makes it more likely that they will be on time to school. MTA should work with local agencies, the Mayor of Baltimore, and the many transit advocates and community organizations originally involved with the Red Line project to bring it back to life.
ACCESS FOR STUDENTS

STUDENT RECOMMENDATION: Bus operators should allow City Schools students to board buses, even if they have lost their OneCard or left it at home. A school uniform or City Schools student ID should suffice as proof of student status until a replacement card can be obtained. When students lose or forget their OneCards, most bus drivers will not allow them on the bus. When a driver won’t allow a student to board a bus, the student is then presented with a set of bad options—waiting for the next bus and hoping the driver will let him on, walking all the way to school, or skipping school altogether. When a driver won’t let a student board, there may also be implications for the student’s safety if the student must now wait for a longer period at a stop where she feels unsafe.

City Schools, the City of Baltimore, and the MTA should partner to provide City Schools students unlimited free access to MTA to get to school, after-school programming, internships, and jobs. Commuting to school is not a linear experience for most City Schools students. In addition, many students participate in extracurricular programs, work part-time jobs and internships, and/or are responsible for making sure their younger siblings get to school.

The OneCard currently issued to City Schools students is available only to those who live more than 1.5 miles from their school. By limiting the use of the OneCards to school days only between 5:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., we limit the opportunities students can avail themselves of. Students who participate in athletics or other programming that end later than 8:00 p.m. run the risk of having to either pay the fare to get home or not be allowed to board if they do not have the money to pay for the fare. The one-way fare paper tickets issued for school-sponsored events do not appear to be widely used by schools or coaches, and they are not available to employers to issue to student employees.

City Schools, the City of Baltimore, and the MTA should adopt a model like the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority’s (WMATA’s) Kids Ride Free program for District of Columbia students with year-round unrestricted rides on Metrorail and Metrobus. City Schools and the City of Baltimore should share the cost of providing every City Schools high school student with year-round, unlimited access to MTA in the form of an unlimited OneCard. Without restrictions on when they could ride, City Schools students could avail themselves of all the opportunities this city has to offer without having to worry about not having the fare to get home after a late extracurricular activity. They would also have transportation to internships and part-time work such as the summer program YouthWorks, which provides opportunities that are invaluable for a student’s development and provide early work experience.

City Schools and the MTA should transition student passes from the OneCard to a CharmPass, where possible. The MTA allows elderly riders and those with disabilities to use their reduced fare ID on the CharmPass app. Students at institutions such as the University of Maryland, Baltimore also have the ability to connect their “all-access college pass” to the mobile CharmPass. City Schools and the MTA should give students this same option. Students might be less likely to lose their smartphones than a credit card-sized OneCard. Using the CharmPass could have the added benefit of cutting down on the need for replacement passes.

SAFETY

STUDENT RECOMMENDATION: The MTA, the City of Baltimore, and City Schools should add more shelters and better lighting to bus stops. Many students feel unsafe waiting for the bus early in the morning and late in the evening when it’s dark outside. Responsibility for bus stops and lighting depends on where the stop is located. If a shelter is requested in front of a school, the school would be responsible. If the stop identified is a public right-of-way, the MTA is responsible for shelters.

The MTA cannot add a shelter to a bus stop that does not comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a set of standards that address the slopes of sidewalks and curb ramps at the nearest intersection. Because only 19% of bus stops in the MTA’s system comply with the ADA, the MTA and the City of Baltimore should aggressively seek State and federal aid to bring all bus stops into compliance with the ADA. The MTA’s Regional Transit Plan sets a target to bring 100% of bus stops into compliance with the ADA by 2045.
The City of Baltimore and the MTA should jointly develop an initiative to combat sexual harassment on transit and at or around transit stations and bus stops. Other transit systems around the country have launched initiatives to combat gender-based and racial harassment on and around transit. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) launched an anti-harassment campaign in 2012 that has yielded real results. In a 2018 report, *Sexual Crime and Harassment on Public Transportation*, WMATA found that familiarity with the public education campaign increased the likelihood of reporting incidents of harassment.

The major components of an MTA-backed initiative should include raising passengers’ awareness of the issue, mechanisms for riders to report incidents of harassment and violence, bystander intervention resources, and trainings for transit employees. The MTA and the City of Baltimore could partner with an organization like Hollaback!, Collective Action for Safe Spaces (CASS), or Stop Street Harassment to develop a campaign for the city.

**COMMUNICATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

City Schools and the MTA should strengthen their existing memorandum of understanding (MOU) by defining and outlining expectations and responsibilities for each agency. For instance, any MOU should include an agreement that City Schools will not allow principals to change school bell schedules over the summer. MTA asks City Schools to provide student enrollment information by the end of May in order to establish supplemental service for the following school year. Because of the complexity of changing existing routes and assigning them to bus operators, MTA allots almost three full months to the entire process, with time built in to make the adjustments as well as for public notice or public hearings, as required. When a principal changes a school’s bell schedule after the end of May, it creates an incongruency between the bell schedule and the scheduled supplemental bus service for that school. Principals need to be aware of this May 31st deadline, and the district should hold them to it.

Other examples of expectations that should be included in an MOU might be:

- Data MTA will share with City Schools about student ridership, tripper service, and on-time performance of tripper buses specifically; and
- Data City Schools will share with MTA about student tardiness for first period, by school, that could help the agency determine where more additional service is needed.

MTA should allot seats on its MTA Citizens Advisory Committee to City Schools students in proportion to their share of ridership in Baltimore City. Currently meetings of the Citizens Advisory Committee are held at 1:00 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month, and those serving on the committee must be at least 21 years of age. The timing and age requirement exclude a large share of MTA ridership—City Schools students—who are among the most vulnerable riders and whose needs are already largely ignored in the development of regular service. MTA’s Citizens Advisory Committee should be representative of its riders, and those riders include students. MTA should lower the age requirement for its advisory committee, change the time that the committee meets to a time outside of school hours, and proactively reach out to students to recruit new advisory committee members.

MTA should make more data available to the public through the dashboard on its website. In the interest of greater transparency, MTA should make the following data available to the public:

- Number of riders overall on core service;
- Number of City Schools student riders;
- Number of City Schools students using tripper service;
- Number of buses pulled from runs, by route;
- Number of operators absent;
- Average travel time by route;
- Travel time reliability by route; and
- Number and location of reports of harassment and assault and how these incidents are being addressed.

City Schools should develop awareness among school-based and central office staff of what students are going through to get to school. At the school level, this means training school-based staff on what it is like for students to travel to school on public transit and how to interact accordingly with late students on arrival at school. At
the district level, City Schools should adopt one policy on tardiness district-wide, rather than school by school, that recognizes the challenges students face when traveling to school on public transit and does not penalize them for parts of their commute beyond their control.

City Schools and the MTA should launch a Know Your Ride campaign aimed at helping students and parents consider commute as part of the school choice process and providing schools with materials about the tripper routes that serve each school. The first component would be aimed at training school counselors, choice liaisons, administrators, and teachers to explicitly make transportation a part of school choice discussions with students and families. Students need to consider how they would get to each school they apply to, as well as how long and complicated those commutes might be, and whether they can manage that trip. City Schools can provide students and families with resources to help students navigate the travel aspect of the choice. Regular use of a trip-planning tool to show students and families the time and number of transfers it would take to get from home to a particular school in time for the first bell—as the MTA typically demonstrates at the annual school choice fair—could be particularly useful.

Additionally, at middle and high schools, the MTA and City Schools should have supplemental service schedules readily available for students, so they have a clear understanding of which incoming and outgoing bus routes have augmented service that takes their needs into account and at what times those buses are scheduled to come.
ENDNOTES


2 Baltimore City Public Schools Board of Commissioners Administrative Regulation, May 14, 2019, http://go.boarddocs.com/mape/bcps/Board.nsf/goto?openid=60XPW6Z50CQ.

3 This link provides an updated overview of Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) local bus service: https://www.mta.maryland.gov/schedule/hyperlink-bus.


6 Notes from Baltimore City Public Schools Board of Commissioners Public Board Meeting, July 24, 2012: http://go.boarddocs.com/maje/bcps/Board.nsf/goto?openid=R9Q8YYD8B91TB.

7 Notes from Baltimore City Public Schools Board of Commissioners Public Board Meeting, July 9, 2013: http://go.boarddocs.com/maje/bcps/Board.nsf/goto?openid=AAS5W4CE2FDQ.

8 Email from Thomas Hewitt, Director of Service Development, MTA, May 26, 2021.

9 Ridership is defined by the MTA as a measure of passenger trips on a mode, rather than unique passengers.


12 Interview with Thomas Hewitt, Director of Service Development, MTA, April 22, 2021.


20 Independence Local School I is the only high school whose students we were not able to interview.

21 The inter-rater reliability statistic, a measure of agreement, validity, and consistency among team members was a high of .80 (85%). This reliability statistic of .80, also referred to as Cohen’s kappa statistic, is rated as “good agreement.” Cohen’s kappa statistic is a widely used and respected measure to evaluate inter-rater agreement as compared to the degree of agreement expected by chance.

22 MIT Living Wage Calculator for Baltimore City: https://livingwage.mit.edu/cities/baltimore

23 We use pseudonyms for all students to protect their privacy.


39 Email from Thomas Hewitt, Director of Service Development, MTA, May 13, 2021.


41 Data supplied by Baltimore City Public Schools Office of Achievement and Accountability, May 28, 2021.

42 Ashli Tyre, Laura Feuerborn, and Jennifer Pierce, “Schoolwide Intervention to Reduce Chronic Tardiness at the Middle and High School Levels,” Preventing School Failure, 55 No. 3 (2011): 132-139.

43 Email from Thomas Hewitt, Director of Service Development, MTA, May 26, 2021.


45 Email from Thomas Hewitt, Director of Service Development, MTA, April 22, 2021.

46 Email from Thomas Hewitt, Director of Service Development, MTA, April 22, 2021.

47 Email from MDOT MTA OCCR Citizens Advisory Committee, May 11, 2021.

48 Interview with Thomas Hewitt, Director of Service Development, MTA, May 26, 2021.

49 Data reported from https://www.mta.maryland.gov/schedule.

50 Data reported from https://www.mta.maryland.gov/performance-improvement.

51 Data reported from https://www.mta.maryland.gov/performance-improvement.

52 Data reported from https://www.mta.maryland.gov/performance-improvement.

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70 Data reported from https://www.mta.maryland.gov/performance-improvement.
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