

PRESS RELEASE

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Dr. Alonso Names Two New Cabinet Members: Jonathan Brice as School Support Networks Officer, Alison Perkins-Cohen as Executive Director of New Initiatives

*Appointments Underscore City Schools' Commitment to Supporting Schools,
Providing Families with Strong School Options*

(Baltimore, MD)—The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners approved tonight the recommendation of Baltimore City Public Schools CEO Andrés A. Alonso to appoint Jonathan Brice as City Schools' Officer of School Support Networks, a new position created as part of the recent district reorganization to better support schools. The Board also approved the CEO's recommendation to appoint Alison Perkins-Cohen as Executive Director of New Initiatives, a position created this spring to lead large-scale reform initiatives, including school portfolio management strategies to ensure that all students and families have access to great school options that meet their interests and needs.

"These new cabinet positions are critical to making the district better at supporting schools and families," said Dr. Alonso. "Mr. Brice knows what it takes to support and ensure student success, and under his direction the School Support Networks will begin to really cement the culture of supporting schools we have begun to cultivate in the district. And Ms. Perkins-Cohen brings important leadership to our efforts to become a true portfolio district with strong school options for all students. She has overseen the conversion of traditional, low-performing schools to higher-performing charter schools and worked in education policy at the federal level. I look forward to working with both Mr. Brice and Ms. Perkins-Cohen in their new capacities."

With the start of the 2011-12 school year comes a reorganization of City Schools' district office to better support schools. At the core of this reorganization is an expansion of the School Support Networks that the district first established in 2009-10. This expansion includes growing the number of networks from 14 to 16, and the number of staff specialists on each network from five to 10. It also includes creating a cabinet-level position to oversee all of the 16 networks. In this position as School Support Networks Officer, Brice will supervise the integrated network teams that will provide schools with support in the areas of instructional and academic content, special education, student support, parent and community engagement, human capital, budget and procurement, data analysis, grants management, transportation and facilities. Brice will also be responsible for ensuring that City Schools' guidance documents support and advance the district's overall strategy and for developing clear protocols to balance school autonomy and district requirements.

"Schools, school leaders and the daily work they perform on behalf of our students is the most important and challenging work taking place in City Schools. I am humbled by the opportunity to work with network staff and assist school leaders and serve as their advocate to enhance the level of support and responsiveness they receive from the district office so that the needs of students are met," said Brice.

As Executive Director of Student Support from March 2008 to July 2011, Brice managed 200 staff members, a \$50 million budget and 12 individual offices that provide support in such areas as attendance and truancy, student placement, student records, safe schools, home and hospital and foster care and homeless students. He implemented new processes for data collection, monitoring and tracking outcomes in the areas of school safety and student attendance; led an effort to align strategies and resources across city agencies to increase positive student and school

outcomes; and he developed and implemented alternative school opportunities for students who are disengaged and over-aged, or who have dropped out or been suspended.

Prior to his post with City Schools, Brice served as Chief Office of the Superintendents Cluster and Special Services for Duval County Public Schools in Jacksonville, FL; Executive Director of Alternative Programs and Nontraditional Schools in for the Christina School District in Wilmington, DE; Executive Director of Program Planning, Research and Assessment in Anne Arundel County Schools; and as a teacher, coach and assistant principal for Baltimore County Public Schools. Brice started his career in education after earning his Bachelor's degree in History from the University of Baltimore in 1993, when he began substituting as a middle school teacher for Baltimore City Public Schools. He currently also holds a Masters degree in Human Resource Development from Towson University and a Masters of Education degree from Harvard Graduate School of Education, where he is also currently a doctoral candidate.

“Jonathan is a leader; shortly after he arrived in Baltimore he led the reform of the district's code of conduct. Currently, he is working to increase student attendance and to ensure that students who are experiencing homelessness will get the services they need and are entitled to. He is comfortable working with a wide variety of partners—both from the school system and from the community—to address the needs of City students,” said Jane Sundius, Director of Education and Youth Development Program at Open Society Institute-Baltimore. “These qualities will be valuable in working across networks, and in maximizing success for schools and students. Jonathan understands the range of supports schools and students need to succeed. I think it is a good appointment.”

While the position of Executive Director of New Initiatives is not part of the district office reorganization, it is a new position that Perkins-Cohen will be the first to fill. As a direct report to City Schools' Chief of Staff, she will serve as a member of the cross-functional leadership team responsible for implementing the district's systemic reform efforts. She will work closely with the CEO, Chief Academic Officer and Cabinet particularly in the area of school portfolio management, to ensure that all students have access to a range of strong school options. These responsibilities include, among others, leading new school creation strategies that include operator and partner recruitment.

“Alison brings a rare and valuable mix of first-hand knowledge of our students and schools, and of federal education policy,” said Chief of Staff Tisha Edwards. “With City Schools' participation in Maryland's Race to the Top grant and its use of federal dollars to implement school turnarounds as a strategy for strengthening school options for students, her insight and experience will be particularly helpful.”

Perkins-Cohen comes to City Schools as a professional staff member of two years with the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee's Labor/Health and Human Services and Education Subcommittee, where she works to develop legislation and committee reports to establish funding levels and policy for programs in the Departments of Education, Labor and Health and Human Services. She works closely with senior White House and executive branch officials to formulate policy, coordinate strategy and negotiate agreements on pending legislative matters for a portfolio that spans higher education, student loans, K-12 assessment and accountability, workforce development, adult and vocational education, unemployment insurance and the National Institutes of Health. Prior to her current position, Perkins-Cohen served as Executive Director of the Baltimore Curriculum Project from 2004 to 2010, where she oversaw the operation of five traditional schools-turned-charter schools that collectively served 2,000 students. And prior to that, she spent several years with the Office of Management and Budget, first as a legislative analyst and then as a program manager. Perkins holds a Masters in Public Policy from Claremont Graduate School, and a Bachelors of Arts degree from the University of Massachusetts.

Brice begins his new City Schools post July 26, and Perkins-Cohen will start her position with the district on September 6.