The Ethics Panel of the Baltimore City Board School Commissioners is issuing this advisory opinion pursuant to Policy BCA Code of Ethics Section III(B)(5), which provides that "[a]ny Board member, student commissioner, official, employee or other person subject to the provisions of this policy may request an advisory opinion from the Ethics Panel concerning the application of this policy."

On August 28, 2019, the Ethics panel received a request for an Advisory Opinion regarding [redacted] attendance as a panelist at the [redacted] Research Organization conference. The Panel was asked to consider whether a [redacted] honorarium could be accepted. Below are the Findings and Recommendations from the Ethics Panel meeting of [redacted].

**FINDINGS**

Per Policy BCA Code of Ethics Sec. III.6.d.ii. "...an official may accept:... h) An honorarium for speaking to or participating in a meeting, provided that the offering of the honorarium is in no way related to the City Schools or Board position of the official". Clearly, [redacted] would not have been invited to be a panelist at the conference if not for [redacted] position in City Schools.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Therefore, accepting the honorarium would be in violation of Policy. However, per BCA Sec. III.6.d.ii. "...an official may accept: ...d) Reasonable expenses for food, travel, lodging, and scheduled entertainment of the official at a meeting which is given in return for the participation of the official on a panel or for speaking at a meeting." Therefore, it is acceptable for City Schools to recoup reasonable and customary expenses related to travel and meals from the event sponsors.

This advisory opinion is based solely on the facts as presented. The Panel expresses no opinion as to matters that may exist now or in the future that have not been presented. Panel decisions are based on a case-by-case examination of the relevant factual information and applicable regulations.

Date: September 10, 2019

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Domanic A. Smith, M.Div.
Chairman, Ethics Panel