

PRESS RELEASE

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Andrés A. Alonso to Retire as City Schools CEO June 30
*Chief of Staff Tisha Edwards to serve as interim CEO,
lead district into new phase of reform*

(Baltimore, MD)—Baltimore City Public Schools CEO Andrés A. Alonso announced today that he will retire at the end of the current school year, after six years of leading an aggressive reform agenda that has yielded across-the-board student achievement gains and positioned the district for long-term progress. City Schools Chief of Staff Tisha Edwards will serve as the district’s interim CEO throughout the 2013-14 school year, while the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners conducts a search for Dr. Alonso’s permanent successor.

Dr. Alonso cited as reasons for his retirement his desire to return home to New Jersey to care for his aging parents and to assume a prestigious professorship at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Dr. Alonso will finish out the 2012-13 school year, with his retirement effective June 30. He will then move back to Weehawken, NJ, and begin a commute to the Harvard Graduate School of Education in Cambridge, MA, where he has been named a [Professor of Practice](#)—a title and position the school extends to individuals of national or international distinction “who have had a major beneficial impact on education practice or policy, or for having been an exemplary leader in education or a closely related field, over an extended period of time.”

“Dr. Alonso sparked the sense of urgency and the collaborative spirit that now has an entire city rallying around its kids in a way we haven’t seen before here in Baltimore. We have changed how we approach public education and watched unprecedented student achievement gains flow from those changes,” said Neil E. Duke, Chair, Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners. “Under Dr. Alonso we have laid a foundation for sustained improvement, and I know I speak for the entire City Schools family when I say that we are grateful for—and a much better school district because of—his leadership.”

“The work here has been incredibly hard but incredibly good, and I feel lucky to have been part of a very capable leadership team, starting with a Board that has been absolutely committed to transformational change; a talented and dedicated staff; and an exceptional community of students, parents, partners and advocates,” Dr. Alonso said. “Together, we have positioned the district to continue to move upward and forward. With the recent passage of legislation that provides funding for our 10-year buildings plan, the work to provide 21st-century buildings for our students is underway. And we have laid the groundwork to roll out new academic standards next year, along with support and evaluation systems for teachers and school leaders to ensure the best possible teaching and learning. In 2013-14, City Schools really enters a new phase of reform, and I will cheer its continued progress every step of the way.”

“Dr. Alonso has used innovative ideas and made tough choices, always keeping the needs of Baltimore City’s children foremost in his mind,” said State Superintendent of Schools Lillian M. Lowery. “His outstanding contributions to Baltimore education will be felt for many years to come. We wish him the very best.”

Starting July 1, Ms. Edwards will assume leadership of the district. According to Mr. Duke, her close partnership with Dr. Alonso during the last five years and her oversight of both key reforms and the day-in and day-out work of running the district make her the obvious choice to lead the district through the transition. Among her many responsibilities, she has led the following pivotal bodies of work in recent years: implementation of the district’s landmark new teacher contract; the portfolio review City Schools does each year to improve school options for families; the development of the new evaluation and support systems for teachers and principals; and the complex work that went into the district’s 10-year buildings plan.

“She knows what it takes to get the work done and, in conjunction with the strong senior leadership team Dr. Alonso has assembled, she will make sure this transition is smooth and productive,” said Mr. Duke. “She is the right person to lead us right now, and the Board is committed to her success and the continued success of our students and the district as a whole.”

“I will be filling very large shoes, no question, and I am honored and humbled by Dr. Alonso’s and the Board’s confidence in me. That said, the course for the district is clear, and we will continue that course strong and with as much urgency as ever,” said Ms. Edwards. “As chief of staff, I have worked closely with Dr. Alonso’s leadership team and other extremely smart and capable staff members. This is an A team, and I look forward to the year ahead.”

At the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Dr. Alonso will help develop future school district and education leaders through the school’s doctoral program in education leadership. He will also teach a course about systemic reform in urban schools.

“In the past six years, Dr. Alonso has transformed Baltimore City Public Schools,” said Harvard Graduate School of Education Dean Kathleen McCartney. “He has closed low-performing schools, reduced the dropout rate by 56 percent, ended a 26-year court oversight in special education and even reached an agreement between teachers and administrators tying compensation to evaluation. His commitment to evaluating what does—and doesn’t—work has allowed him to be one of the most effective superintendents in the nation. I am thrilled that he will be returning to Harvard to share his knowledge and experience with future educators, leaders and policy makers.”

Dr. Alonso arrived at City Schools in July 2007 and is currently in year two of his second, four-year contract. His six-year tenure at the helm of City Schools makes him one of the longest-serving, big-city school district superintendents in the country. During this time, the district has seen the reversal of four decades of enrollment declines; its graduation rate increase and number of dropouts decrease by more than half; marked gains on standardized tests for elementary and middle grades students; a narrowing of achievement gaps among all student subgroups; increased autonomy for schools; the settlement of a decades-long special education lawsuit; a

reorganization of the district office and a shift in its role from command and control to supporting and guiding schools—and a corresponding shift in resources that has put significantly more dollars in schools; and an unprecedented level of partnership with the larger community to increase student achievement. All of this serves as groundwork for what is perhaps the most critical work yet: changes at the classroom level to ensure excellent teaching and learning for every teacher and student in every classroom, in every school.

“Moving forward, we will continue to work together to build on the current momentum—through implementation of the Common Core standards, our effectiveness systems and our 10-year buildings plan,” Mr. Duke said. “The months and years ahead represent the next phase of transformation for our district, and not only do we have an extraordinary amount of work to do, but an increasingly promising future for our kids to look forward to, and to secure.”