

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Catherine E. Pugh
Mayor, City of Baltimore

Cheryl A. Casciani
*Chair, Baltimore City Board of
School Commissioners*

Dr. Sonja Brookins Santelises
Chief Executive Officer

January 7, 2018

Dear City Schools Families, Students, Staff, Partners, and Friends,

I want to open by assuring you that we hear your anger about last week's events, and we take your concerns seriously. Our young people and staff members should not be in schools without adequate heat, period. So many of our aging buildings are in bad shape, but we in the district leadership will do better in responding when conditions in schools simply become unacceptable.

Beginning tomorrow, here's what you can expect: Every student will be in a safe, warm learning space, or the school won't be open.

Principals will make sure there are regular temperature checks throughout school buildings, and they will report on status directly to our operations staff. With cold weather continuing today and into tomorrow, it may be necessary to relocate some students temporarily to warmer areas of buildings. But I commit to you that if all students cannot be in acceptable spaces for learning, we will make a prompt decision to close the school. We will also improve processes at the district office to track progress on fixing problems and to make sure school communities are kept updated.

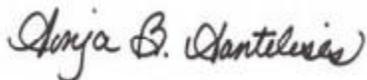
Here is how things are looking for next week. The school closures on Thursday and Friday gave our facilities staff extra time and access to fix problems, and work continued throughout the weekend with generous support from city government agencies, Baltimore Gas and Electric, Knott Mechanical, and other business and community partners. We started with problems at 60 schools, resolved many of them, and had new issues develop in other buildings.

As of this morning, we were still working on approximately 20 buildings, but we do expect most schools to be open tomorrow. If it is necessary to close any individual schools tomorrow or to delay opening, we will notify you as early as possible.

Finally, I want to ask you for your continued support. Your response to the problems we experienced last week says loudly and clearly that there is overwhelming energy across our city for doing better for our young people. We want to take this opportunity to harness that energy. This sustained cold weather has given our whole city a stark reminder about the poor condition of our buildings, which developed over many years and will continue to be the case when milder weather returns. Please look for more communication from the district office and your school in the coming days, as we continue to advocate for the resources not only to fix our buildings, but to provide all our students with the opportunities they need and deserve.

Thank you for all that you do for our students and our schools. Please do not hesitate to call the district office at 410-545-1870 if you have questions or suggestions.

Sincerely,



Sonja Brookins Santelises,
Chief Executive Officer