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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Mayor, City Schools Board and CEO Applaud Final Passage of Construction Funding Legislation**

***Legislation creates new partnership among city, state and district;  
allows implementation of City Schools' 10-year buildings plan to begin***

(Baltimore, MD)—After a week of amendments and debate in both chambers of the Maryland General Assembly, the House of Delegates put the finishing touches yesterday on legislation that establishes funding and oversight for Baltimore City Public Schools' 10-year buildings plan. The final passage of the bill, which now goes to the governor to be signed into law, will result in an approximately \$1 billion investment in new and modernized school buildings and allow the district to move forward with implementing the plan.

The bill and its passage represent unprecedented collaboration on behalf of and renewed dedication to the children and neighborhoods of Baltimore City. Following a series of amendments, House Bill 860 was overwhelmingly approved by the full House of Delegates (107-30) and full Senate (40-7). A large majority—three-quarters—of the state's lawmakers stood behind the commitment to provide City Schools' 85,000 students and 6,000 teachers with classrooms that have the modern technology, heating and ventilation, natural lighting and drinkable water they need for teaching and learning.

City Schools now begins the work of creating those classrooms. The district is developing general guidelines for what defines a 21<sup>st</sup>-century school—the parameters for what every new or renovated school should have. Rooted in these general guidelines, the design process will bring together architects and school communities to create individual school specifications for those schools slated for renovation or replacement in the first years of the 10-year plan. The district will also enter into a four-way Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Baltimore, the Interagency Committee on School Construction (IAC) and the Maryland Stadium Authority that lays out the roles and responsibilities of each of the parties involved in funding and implementing the 10-year buildings plan. Construction should begin in the 2014-15 school year.

"I think we can honestly say that never before have people from communities all across the city and allies from all across the state and from so many walks come together on behalf of Baltimore City's children," said Neil E. Duke, chair of the Baltimore City

Board of School Commissioners. “The many months of hard work by so many have paid off and are now playing out. The 10-year plan now begins to unfold, thanks to the leadership and commitment of our legislators and numerous partners. On behalf of the Board and the district as a whole, I extend our deepest gratitude to all.”

“Today is indeed historic. Most important, the day’s events mean we are able to advance—in a critical way—the reforms we’ve put in place to date, so that our students can build on their progress and get that much closer to truly learning at their potential,” said City Schools CEO Andrés A. Alonso. “With passage of this bill, we affirm, as a state, our high expectations for Baltimore City’s kids.”

“The Maryland General Assembly has renewed its commitment to Baltimore City public school students by approving legislation that will allow us to modernize the city’s public school buildings,” said Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake. “I want to thank Governor Martin O’Malley, Senate President Mike Miller and House Speaker Michael Busch for their support of this landmark city-state partnership. Their commitment shows a deep concern for the well-being of Baltimore City students. Together, we will ensure that every city student will sit in a clean, modern and safe building.”

Last month, Mayor Rawlings-Blake proposed a city budget that provides \$38 million for city school buildings, more than double the city’s past school construction contribution and a historic funding commitment. This contribution—which includes proceeds from the city’s new beverage container tax, state formula aid leveraged by the city, a general obligation bond allocation and table-gaming revenue—was essential to the new school construction funding bill.

House Bill 860 provides an innovative approach to school construction, with multiple funding streams coming together to raise additional dollars through the sale of bonds. Under the legislation, the Maryland Stadium Authority will oversee the financing of the 10-year buildings plan and partner with City Schools to carry out the actual building renovations and replacements. The Stadium Authority will receive \$60 million a year, which it will, in turn, use to leverage additional funds to support construction costs. The money will come in equal amounts from three different sources:

- The State of Maryland will contribute \$20 million in state lottery proceeds.
- The City of Baltimore will contribute \$20 million a year:
  - \$10 million in beverage container tax and table-gaming proceeds;
  - \$10 million a year in education funds received as a result of city payments of school retiree health costs.
- Baltimore City Public Schools will contribute \$20 million, a combination of funds it currently budgets for building maintenance and cost savings that will be generated by efficiencies in the newly renovated buildings.

The funding will be phased and reach \$60 million annually in three years. The city’s contribution will start in 2013-14, to allow the district and the Maryland Stadium Authority to take early steps toward implementation of the 10-year buildings plan. The state will begin its annual \$20 million contribution in 2014-15. And City Schools’

contribution will be phased, starting in 2015-16 with \$10 million and increasing to \$20 million a year after that. The combined \$60 million per year will be used to raise approximately \$1 billion in construction funds through the sale of several issuances of bonds, and to pay back bond debt. It is expected that this investment will allow for the renewal of 45 to 55 buildings identified for renovation or replacement in the first phase of the 10-year plan.

The passage of HB 860 marks the culmination of years of grassroots organizing for better school buildings by dozens of community partners, including the Baltimore Education Coalition, Transform Baltimore, the American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland and Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (BUILD). It also is a direct extension of the close working relationship between each of these organizations and the district throughout the reforms of the past six years. These partnerships, based on a deep and shared commitment to Baltimore City's children, have helped keep the public conversation focused squarely on what is best for kids, even amid difficult decisions like the closing of 26 school buildings as part of the 10-year buildings plan.

"The school district, the mayor, the city delegation and our state leaders heard the cry of the parents, teachers and students of Baltimore for better buildings. This is the single biggest investment in neighborhoods in the history of Baltimore," said Bishop Douglas Miles, clergy co-chair emeritus of BUILD. "It truly marks a watershed moment."

"The vision of 21<sup>st</sup>-century schools for Baltimore's children, combined with new financing solutions, helped us build a strong coalition made up of education advocates, community groups, the school district and elected officials," said Bebe Verdery, director of the ACLU of Maryland's Education Reform Project. "It is testimony to what can be done when everyone comes together in the best interests of children."

"I am so proud and honored to stand with the members of Baltimore City's Senate and House Delegation, as we join forces with colleagues from across the state to create a real solution to address this issue," said Senator Verna Jones-Rodwell. "The passage of this bill is a powerful sign of what we can accomplish by working together, regardless of geographic representation or party affiliation, for our state and our state's future: our children."

For more information about HB 860 and City Schools' 10-year buildings plan, please visit [www.baltimorecityschools.org/betterbuildings](http://www.baltimorecityschools.org/betterbuildings).