

# BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Bernard C. "Jack" Young  
Mayor, City of Baltimore

Linda Chinnia  
Chair, Baltimore City Board of  
School Commissioners

Dr. Sonja Brookins Santelises  
Chief Executive Officer

November 10, 2020

Dear Sharp-Leadenhall Elementary School Staff, Students, Families, and Community Members,

City Schools is committed to making sure that every school across the city provides our students with high-quality educational experiences that enables students to thrive, supports their learning and encourages their personal growth. Part of our work in reaching this goal includes an annual review of the district's schools and programs that looks at a broad range of considerations, including academic performance, school climate, school programming, enrollment trends, conditions of school facilities, the range and balance of school options in different parts of the city, and the 21st Century School Buildings Plan.

I recognize that school year 2020-21 is complicated by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the impacts of that pandemic on our communities, and the recognition of the ongoing injustices that impact the communities we serve, our staff and our work. We recognize that changes to school communities can be stressful for school communities. Therefore, this year's recommendations are limited to actions that are part of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Buildings Plan or recommendations where postponing potential actions could cause greater harm than having the Board consider and act sooner on the behalf of our students.

**Based on the results of this year's review and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Buildings Plan, tonight, I am recommending that the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners approve the relocation of the Sharp-Leadenhall Elementary School into its 21<sup>st</sup> Century space at the shared campus with Harford Heights Elementary School in summer 2021, that the Sharp-Leadenhall Building be returned to the city of Baltimore in summer 2021, and that the William C. March Building be returned to the city of Baltimore in summer 2021, as neither facility is needed for educational use, with City Schools retaining the control and use of the land on which the William C. March building sits.** The William C. March building will be demolished per the 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Buildings Plan.

**Additionally, I am requesting the Board consider approving a change of the grade configuration of Sharp-Leadenhall from serving students only in grades 1 to 5 to grades 1 through 8.** Expanding the grade bands served by Sharp-Leadenhall will allow students requiring a separate public day school placement and for whom remaining in an elementary/middle school setting for middle school is the most appropriate based on their needs and development, the opportunity to learn in this environment.

As a member of the Sharp-Leadenhall community, your feedback on this recommendation is critical. A **virtual meeting will take place at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 19**, where you can learn more and get answers to your questions. Details on how to join the meeting are at the end of this letter, will be posted on the district website and shared by your school leader.

**In addition, the Board is providing two opportunities for the public to give comments on all recommendations in the report of this year's review of schools and programs.** As City Schools continues to fight the spread of COVID-19, all Board meetings will be held remotely in the interim. Please check the Board calendar or BoardDocs on the City Schools website for call-in information to observe the meetings which can be found here: <https://www.baltimorecityschools.org/board-meetings>.

- Public hearing: Wednesday, December 2, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

- Special session: Wednesday, December 16, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

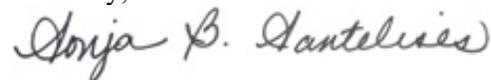
The opportunity for oral testimony will be closed after completion of the December 16 special session. The Board will also accept written comment or data until 5:00 p.m. on Friday, January 8, 2021. Written comment must include full identification of the sender and should be directed to the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners, 200 E. North Ave., Room 406, Baltimore, Maryland 21202, or sent by email to [portfoliorecommendations@bcps.k12.md.us](mailto:portfoliorecommendations@bcps.k12.md.us).

In support of the recommendation, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners (“Board”) has received a report titled Annual Review of Schools: Review and Recommendations, 2020-21 (“Report”). The Report outlines recommendations and the factors the Board must consider in this process. The Report is available on the district’s website ([www.baltimorecityschools.org](http://www.baltimorecityschools.org)), or for review at your school office.

**The Board will vote on this recommendation at a meeting on Tuesday, January 12, 2021.** If approved, this means Sharp-Leadenhall students will starting in school year 2021-22 attend school in their new specially designed space within the Harford Heights Building and the school will be able to serve students in grades 1 to 8 starting in school year 2021-22 depending on individual student need. Additionally, district office staff will be available to meet with you to ensure that the transition process is smooth and meets students’ and families’ needs.

Thank you for supporting our schools and students. We look forward to working in partnership with students, families, and school communities to create a district of high-quality school programs that meets the needs of every student in Baltimore.

Sincerely,



Dr. Sonja Brookins Santelises  
Chief Executive Officer

**Link for the Community Meeting:**

[Click here to join the meeting](#) on Nov 19 at 5:30 pm

**Or call in (audio only)** +1 443-961-1488,756809550# United States, Baltimore  
Phone Conference ID: 756 809 550#

For best experience, join using the link rather than calling in if you are able, so you can see the presentation. You must identify yourself to join and participate in the meeting.