

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 Harford Heights Elementary School Staff, Families, Students, 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 21st Century School Buildings Plan and recommendations where postponing potential actions could cause greater harm than having the Board consider and act sooner on the behalf of our students.

Tonight, based on the results of this year's review and the 21st Century School Buildings Plan, I am recommending that the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners approve the relocation of the Sharp-Leadenhall Elementary School into its renovated 21st Century space at the Harford Heights building in summer 2021 and that the William C. March building be returned to the city of Baltimore in summer 2021 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 21st Century School Buildings Plan.

As you know, your school will be moving into its renovated 21st century building in summer 2021, and after this, the William C. March building will no longer be needed by the district for educational purposes. Given the importance of the William C. March school name and desire to maintain the history of schools, if the surplus is approved, this school name will be part of work staff is doing to continue to honor the history of schools named after important persons, particularly those rooted in the history of our students and Baltimore and/or Maryland, in our portfolio of schools.

Additionally, I am requesting the Board consider approving a change of the grade configuration of Sharp-Leadenhall from serving grades 1 to 5 to serving students in grades 1 to 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 separate public day school, the student population fluctuates based on student need. On average Sharp-Leadenhall serves just under 30 students spread across the five grade levels it serves.

If the recommendations are approved, the Sharp-Leadenhall program will move in summer 2021 to be co-located at the newly renovated 21st Century Harford Heights building in its specially designed space and will serve students in grades 1 through 8 starting in school year 2021-22.

As a member of the Harford Heights community, your feedback on these recommendations is critical. **A virtual meeting will take place at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, November 16**, 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>.

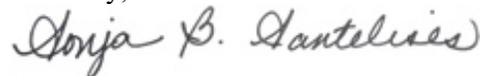
- Public hearing: Wednesday, December 2, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
- Special session: Wednesday, December 16, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

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.

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) and upon request for review at your school. **The Board will vote on this recommendation at a meeting on Tuesday, January 12, 2021.**

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 16 at 6:30 pm](#)

Or call in (audio only) +1 443-961-1488, 490430593# United States, Baltimore
Phone Conference ID: 490 430 593#

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.