

# BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**Brandon M. Scott**  
Mayor, City of Baltimore

**Johnette A. Richardson**  
Chair, Baltimore City Board  
of School Commissioners

**Dr. Sonja Brookins Santelises**  
Chief Executive Officer

February 24, 2022

Dear New Era Academy Families, Students, and Community Members,

As shared last month, at its meeting on January 25, the Board voted to close New Era at the end of next school year, in June 2023, to relocate the PTECH and Seagoing CTE pathway at New Era to Digital Harbor High School and the AJROTC program to Benjamin Franklin High School at Masonville Cove, all for the 2023-24 school year, and create a high school preference for students from the Cherry Hill and other nearby communities at Benjamin Franklin High School at Masonville Cove and Digital Harbor High School starting for entry in the 2023-24 school year.

**The purpose of this letter is to make you aware that today, the Board issued a written report that documents this decision. The report can be found on the City Schools website: <https://www.baltimorecityschools.org/annual-review> and is available at your school for viewing.** In making its determination, the Board considered the CEO's rationale, testimony provided at public hearings and submitted in writing, contents of the official record, and the factors required by COMAR and listed in Board policy FCA Closing of Schools (student enrollment trends, age or condition of school buildings, transportation, educational programs, racial composition of student body, financial considerations, student relocation, impact on community and schools which students would relocate).

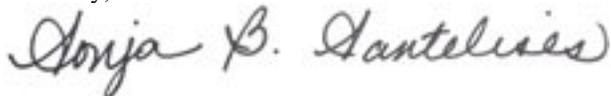
As described in the notice on the back of this letter (which also appeared this morning in the Baltimore Sun and Daily Record newspapers), members of the public can appeal the Board's decision in writing to the Maryland State Board of Education within 30 days of today's date.

The major reason the Board approved these changes is that the facility that houses New Era Academy has major challenges. While the facility is able to support Covid protocols, including air filtration, the heating system is failing and in need of a total replacement. The district has continued to make repairs to ensure the heating system works for now, but these solutions are only temporary fixes that will not work long term. A replacement of New Era's heating system is a Capital Improvement Project, and New Era's utilization does not meet state requirements for Capital Improvement Funding due to its small size. Therefore, the district cannot get approval to fix the existing facility. The heating issue is not the only issue with the Southside building. Additionally, New Era Academy is one of the district's smallest high schools, which impacts our ability to offer comprehensive academic programming and staffing. Providing students with access to Digital Harbor High School and Benjamin Franklin High School at Masonville Cove, when these school facilities have been readied for these changes, will provide students at New Era with strong high school programming and in facilities that more fully support learning. Students will still be able to make other high school choices based on their interest and need.

Look for additional information this year. Next year, staff will work to support you and your student in building relationships with the Digital Harbor and Ben Franklin school communities in advance of the transition and will provide additional supports to make the transition as smooth as possible. Please let Principal Newkirk know if you would like to be part of the transition committee and watch for more information about the schedule of events. For more information on this you can reach out to the Angela Alvarez ([adalvarez@bcps.k12.md.us](mailto:adalvarez@bcps.k12.md.us)) or Lindsey Anderson ([leanderson@bcps.k12.md.us](mailto:leanderson@bcps.k12.md.us)) in the Office of New Initiatives or reach them by phone at 410-396-8550.

Thank you for supporting our schools and students. We look forward to working in partnership with students, families, and your school community.

Sincerely,



Dr. Sonja Brookins Santelises  
Chief Executive Officer, Baltimore City Public Schools  
Secretary, Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners

## **NOTICE OF THE BALTIMORE CITY BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS' DECISIONS REGARDING SCHOOL CLOSURES, SCHOOL RELOCATIONS, AND BUILDING SURPLUS**

At a public meeting on Tuesday, January 25, 2022, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners (“Board”) voted on recommendations regarding school closures and disposition of unused school buildings (“surplusing”), in Baltimore City Public Schools. Written reports of the Board’s decisions have been compiled in the School Closures and Building Surpluses Addendum Report, available at the Baltimore City Public Schools website, [www.baltimorecityschools.org](http://www.baltimorecityschools.org), or by contacting City Schools at 410-396-8550. Copies of written reports are also available for inspection at each of the closing schools named below. The Board’s decisions are summarized as follows.

### **Closure of traditional schools and building surpluses**

**Eutaw-Marshburn Elementary School:** The Board voted to close Eutaw-Marshburn Elementary School effective June 2023 and surplus its building to the city of Baltimore in summer 2023. Students will be rezoned to either Dorothy I. Height Elementary School, Samuel Coleridge Taylor Elementary School, or Furman Templeton Preparatory Academy. The zones for these schools will be expanded and adjusted to include divided portions of the Eutaw-Marshburn zone.

**Steuart Hill Academic Academy:** The Board voted to close Steuart Hill Academic Academy effective June 2023 and surplus its building to the city of Baltimore in summer 2023. Students will be rezoned to Franklin Square Elementary/Middle School. The Franklin Square zone will expand to include the Steuart Hill zone, and a 35% Geographic Attendance Area for Frederick Elementary School will be created for the Steuart Hill zone.

### **Closure of a traditional school and retention of building**

**New Era Academy:** The Board voted to close New Era Academy effective June 2023 and retain the Southside building where the New Era program is housed. Preference for students from the Cherry Hill, Maree G. Faring, Curtis Bay, Bay Brook, Westport, and Lakeland zones will be created at Benjamin Franklin High School at Masonville Cove and Digital Harbor High School starting for students applying for entry for the 2023-24 school year. The PTECH program and Seagoing pathway from New Era Academy will be relocated to Digital Harbor High School, and the AJROTC program from New Era Academy will be relocated to Benjamin Franklin High School for the 2023-24 school year.

**RIGHT TO APPEAL:** An appeal to the Maryland State Board of Education may be submitted in writing within thirty (30) days after February 24, 2022, the date of issue of the Board’s written decision. The appeal should be sent to Office of the Attorney General, Maryland State Department of Education, Attn: Jackie La Fiandra/State Board of Appeals, 200 St. Paul Place, 19th Floor, Baltimore, Maryland 21202