



Education Advocate

September 2014

Dear Education Advocate,

One year has passed since City Schools, the City, State, and Maryland Stadium Authority kicked off the 21st Century Buildings Program. School construction programs of this size require an immense amount of planning before shovels hit the ground, and a lot of progress has been made over the past year. The city has only seen one new school built over the past two decades. Now, Baltimore will see at least two dozen new schools built in the next 6 years! With new schools on the horizon and the arrival of Dr. Thornton as City Schools' new CEO, Baltimore residents have an unprecedented opportunity to get engaged and shape the future of education in the city for decades to come. We hope that you find this annual report informative and inspiring -- we need your energy to move on to "Phase II" to bring all city schools to 21st Century standards!

Architects Begin 21st Century Design on Year 1 Schools

Year 2 Schools Community Engagement To Follow

Work to determine renovation vs. replacement, building size, and grade configurations of the school buildings in "Year 1" is nearing completion. Architects will soon be engaging school communities and neighborhood groups as they design the new schools. Along with community input, the architects have provided cost estimates on various options for each school - including new construction, full renovations, and additions - to inform important decisions that will be made for the full scope of Year 1 schools. The list of Year 1 schools (pending changes by the school board) is:

*Arlington Elementary/Middle - Pimlico Elementary - Forest Park High School - Frederick Elementary - Forth Worthington Elementary - John Eager Howard Elementary - Lyndhurst Elementary/Middle - Patterson High School - ACCE and Independence at Robert Poole - Arundel (PreK-2) - Cherry Hill (3-8) - *REACH! at Lake Clifton**

Schools in Year 2 of the plan will begin to undergo feasibility studies this fall. Upon completion, decisions will be made about the number and scope of Year 2 schools in the plan. These schools are:

Bay-Brook Elementary/Middle - Calverton Elementary/Middle - Calvin M. Rodwell Elementary - Cross Country Elementary - Govans Elementary - James Mosher Elementary - John Ruhrah Elementary/Middle - Northwood Elementary - Mary E. Rodman Elementary - Medfield Heights Elementary - Montebello Elementary/Middle - Canton Building in Southeast - Robert W.

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*Coleman Elementary - Walter P. Carter/Lois T. Murray - Harford Heights/Sharp Leadenhall - *Viven T. Thomas**

* The Maryland Stadium Authority is projecting that the \$60 million annual revenue stream, locked-in by state law for the city school construction program, can leverage an estimated \$977 million and build 23-28 new and fully renovated school buildings, based on the recent feasibility studies. This is moderately less than the original projection. The decrease in the number of schools that can be built is based on the estimated average cost per square feet average for the new schools in Baltimore - \$309, which is in line with the average school construction costs in surrounding counties. To maximize the number of schools, cost saving measures have been recommended, which include the possible deferment or changes in scope to the Lake Clifton (REACH) high school option and Vivien T. Thomas Medical Arts Academy. These recommendations are intended to ensure that the most number of buildings are included in this phase; however, final decisions have not yet been made.

Recommendations and changes will be presented to the city school board on November 11, and voted on December 9. Board meetings begin at 6pm and are held at City Schools Headquarters on North Avenue.

[For more information, read the presentation to the Baltimore City School Board of Commissioners.](#)

For more detailed information, [read the FULL REPORT to the Maryland Legislature](#) and the [supporting documents](#).

[Upcoming meetings for Year 1 and Year 2 schools can be tracked at this site.](#)

[Read the FULL REPORT on 21st Century Buildings to the Maryland Legislature here.](#)

DESIGN - BUILD - OPEN!

Timeline of the 21st Century Buildings Plan

There are many steps in the implementation of a \$1 billion school construction program. The just-released annual October 1st [MOU Report to the General Assembly](#) gives many details about the work done this past year. Many people are still unclear about the steps and timeline for projects to be completed. Detailed timelines for each Year 1 school and time outlines for Year 2 schools can be found in this [supporting document](#).

Generally, each school must first go through a Feasibility Study, Design, and Construction phase. The timeline for certain schools could be affected by the complicated nature of the projects - site issues, size of the building, program needs such as space for career and technology programs, modifications for programs for children with disabilities, co-location of programs, etc.

Here is a summary of the timeline:

Year 1 Schools Timeline

- By Dec 2014: Feasibility Studies completed and approved for all

- outstanding Year 1 schools, with preliminary schematic designs
- Fall 2014: Full designs for first Year 1 schools begin - Frederick ES and Fort Worthington ES
- 2015: Full architectural designs completed for all Year 1 schools
- First two schools begin construction in early 2016, completed by August 2017
- Three schools begin construction in Spring 2016, completed in December 2017
- Remaining six schools completed by August 2018

Year 2 Schools Timeline

- Fall 2014 - Winter 2015: Feasibility Studies completed and approved
- First group of Year 2 schools begin full design in Summer 2015
- Last of Year 2 schools complete full design in Winter 2016
- First group of Year 2 schools constructed and open in Summer 2019
- Remaining Year 2 schools open in 2020

Designing New Schools to be Community Anchors

Community Space Planning for Year 1 Schools Moving Forward, Year 2 Awaits Funding

The new 21st Century Schools must not be about the status quo. Having \$1 billion to invest in new and renovated schools in 2 dozen neighborhoods presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make schools more responsive, strategic, and effective in addressing the needs of students, families, and neighborhoods. To that end, the ACLU and partners have been working to ensure that these schools become anchors of communities, with partnerships that offer services and programs to help children, families, and neighborhoods.

Last fall, Mayor Rawlings-Blake joined City Schools and the Family League of Baltimore City to outline a process that connects the importance pieces of establishing partnerships in schools during the design phase of Year 1 and Year 2 schools.

Over the past year, the Family League has engaged schools and neighborhood groups to assess student, family, and community needs. As architects begin Year 1 school design, community-based organizations will be funded to continue engaging communities regarding what kinds of partnerships are most needed for their schools and neighborhoods. This work will inform the design of the new schools so that there is adequate and well-designed space for programs such as daycare centers, health suites, community gardens, various after school and cultural activities, and community use and recreational space. The work also includes developing a plan for sustaining these partnerships in the schools.

The Family League has the funding to complete the work for Year 1 but City funding for Year 2 schools has not yet been secured. The ACLU is working with the Baltimore Education Coalition to ensure that the City funds are available for this critical work.

Build Schools, Build Neighborhoods

Leveraging the School Construction Investment to Revitalize Neighborhoods & Provide Local Jobs

Transform Baltimore! A new or fully renovated 21st century school building can have benefits beyond educating and preparing children for college and careers. Each school that is built is a multi-million dollar investment in a Baltimore neighborhood, which should be seen as a potential catalyst for community and economic development. This year, the ACLU has been working with neighborhood groups, through the **Transform Baltimore: Build Schools, Build Neighborhoods campaign**, to urge the City to establish a process to identify needs and create neighborhood improvement plans around the new schools.

Mayor Rawlings-Blake has charged the Department of Planning to develop neighborhood improvement plans extending one quarter of a mile around each school. Under this initiative called [INSPIRE](#), city planners will work with neighborhood organizations and advocates to organize community-wide planning sessions and walking tours to identify capital needs in the areas surrounding the new schools. The Mayor committed \$5 million in capital funding for these improvements, which is likely to cover small projects such as traffic signs, crosswalk painting, minor sidewalk repairs, etc. The first meetings are being planned for this fall. [The next citywide meeting on INSPIRE is scheduled for Wednesday, October 15th, 9am at the City Department of Planning, 417 E. Fayette Street, 8th Floor.](#)

Members of the Transform Baltimore campaign are pushing for a more extensive neighborhood planning process beyond the scope of the INSPIRE plan. Opportunities to address vacant housing and invest in commercial and economic development projects should be fully explored and incorporated into a more holistic plan for the neighborhood to maximize outcomes for children and families.

The 21st Century Buildings Plan also includes an effort to connect city residents and minority businesses to job opportunities in the school construction program. The Mayor's Office has been leading this effort with input from workforce development advocates and stakeholders. [The FULL REPORT of the 21st Century Buildings program](#) includes information on this effort and the Mayor's Office announced that a draft of this work plan will be made public for comment by the end of November.

Preparing for Phase II Funding

Improving maintenance and accountability

Many people have asked whether new and existing schools in Baltimore City can be adequately maintained, given the neglect and lack of funding over recent decades. The answer is yes, but at what cost?

City Schools and the State have collaborated over the past year to develop a Comprehensive Maintenance Plan to guarantee proper

maintenance of city school buildings in future years. Significant portions of the plan were approved by the State in September, which requires the city school system to:

- Increase maintenance funding from \$15 million to \$31 million within 5 years (increase of \$3 million annually)
- Increase maintenance staff from 98 employees to 182
- Restructure staffing to improve efficiencies
- Develop a computerized maintenance management system

While the ACLU agrees that City Schools needs a much better maintenance program, the state must consider the strain that this will put on the school system's operating budget. National reports have consistently shown that school buildings in low-wealth districts have been underfunded, compared to wealthier suburban jurisdictions, for decades. Baltimore City is no exception.

So as not to compromise the reform efforts and needed funding for city classrooms, the state must consider the pervasive funding disparities that have played a large role in the current facility conditions of Baltimore's schools. Eliminating this disparity must include funding for Phase II of the city school construction program as well as adequate funding for maintenance in the future.

American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland Education Reform Project

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