

## The Campaign to Rebuild Baltimore's Aging School Buildings



*Foundation work for the new addition at Frederick Elementary School in west Baltimore*

It has been three years since the ACLU, Baltimore Education Coalition, BUILD, Strong City Baltimore and many other groups launched the [Transform Baltimore: Build Schools, Build Neighborhoods](#) campaign, rallied elected officials, and won the \$1 billion school construction bill in Annapolis - funding Phase I of the 21st Century Schools program.

Before passing this bill, Baltimore City saw only a few full renovations and one new school built over the past two decades. The inadequate and flawed funding system by which schools are renovated and rebuilt have left most city school buildings in very poor condition - faulty boilers, leaky roofs, and outdated fire alarm systems. To move beyond the status quo, our campaign introduced a new and innovative financing approach to build high quality 21st century school facilities quickly. By 2020-2021, thousands of Baltimore students will attend newly built and renovated schools throughout the city.

But this is just the beginning. Phase II funding will be needed to address the 100+ remaining school buildings that could not be included in this plan.

Read on to learn about progress and new developments for the 21st Century Schools program. And connect with us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for the latest information!

## Update on Baltimore's 21st Century Schools



*John Eager Howard Elementary's plan includes renovation of the existing school building, adding a 2-story addition, and an outdoor classroom. Image: Cho Benn Holback + Associates*

### Improving Efficiency, Communication and Management

The MOU partners\* have reported that communication, project delivery, efficiency, and overall management have vastly improved over the past year. Cost saving measures reduced construction costs from

\$309 per square foot to \$294, bringing the estimated number of schools that can be completed to 23-28 by the year 2020-2021.

Last year, City Schools hired Mignon Anthony to serve as the program's Executive Director; she hired staff to ensure effective communication, project coordination, swing space planning, and project oversight. The school district is also on track to close 26 schools to increase its district-wide utilization average to 86%, as required by the [MOU](#). The [21st Century Schools program also developed a website](#) where information can be found on design and community meetings, status of school projects, and other important decision-making meetings. If you have questions about the program, see the [contact information page](#).

Urged by the ACLU, the MOU partners also held a citywide forum on the 21st Century Schools program last fall. Hundreds of parents, students, and advocates attended the event, received the latest information, and voiced their concerns and suggestions on various aspects of the program. The program's website has a [master calendar](#) where all meetings are posted.

## Year One Schools Under Construction

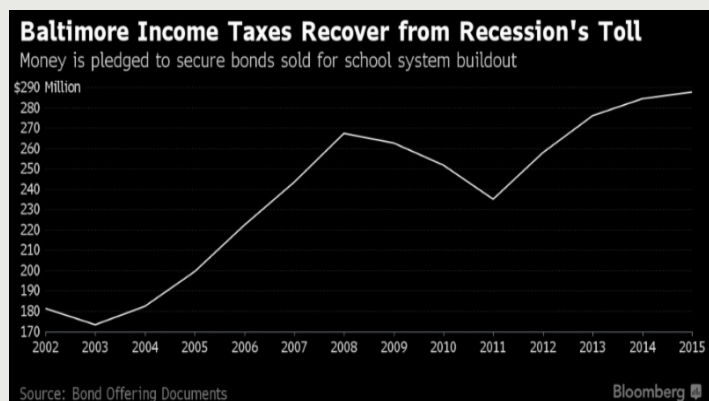
Construction on the first two schools in Year 1 - Fort Worthington and Frederick Elementary Schools - has begun. John Eager Howard Elementary, Lyndhurst Elementary, and the Robert Poole building are about to break ground. Other schools in Year 1 - Arlington, Pimlico, Cherry Hill, and Arundel elementary schools and Forest Park High School are undergoing design. The feasibility study for Patterson High School was recently completed after some delays to allow planning to co-locate Claremont High School into that building.

## Year Two Schools Undergoing Feasibility Studies

Architects have begun the feasibility studies for the Fairmont/Harford building, Calvin Rodwell and Medfield Heights elementary schools, and Cross Country and John Ruhrah elementary/middle schools. Bay-Brook, Calverton, Walter P. Carter and Loise T. Murray elementary/middle schools, as well as Govans Elementary, will begin their feasibility studies during the upcoming months. Feasibility studies will begin later this year and next year for the following schools: Commodore John Rogers PK-8, Highlandtown PK-8, Harford Heights Elementary/Sharp Leadenhall Elementary/Middle, and Montebello, James Mosher, Northwood, and Robert Coleman elementary schools.

## The Baltimore's School Construction Program is a Popular Investment!

[The first series of bonds for the 21st Century Schools program were sold by the Maryland Stadium Authority \(MSA\) last month.](#) David Raith, CFO of the MSA reported that the sale went well and that there was a lot of interest in this investment. A total of \$320 million in bonds were sold and an extra \$66 million in bond premiums were generated. Bonds will be sold as cash is needed to fund construction throughout the process.



*Bloomberg reported that strong credit ratings for the bond sale are due to reliable revenue security from the state, city, and city school system.*

"Because of the way the bonds were structured, we were able to generate \$66 million in bond premiums, additional cash to fund construction," said Raith.

### Highlights of the Bond Sale:

- Par Value of the Bonds: \$320 million
- Bond Premium: \$66 million in cash
- Double A bond ratings from top credit rating agencies
- 2.79% interest, 30-year term
- Annual debt service: \$20.8 million/year

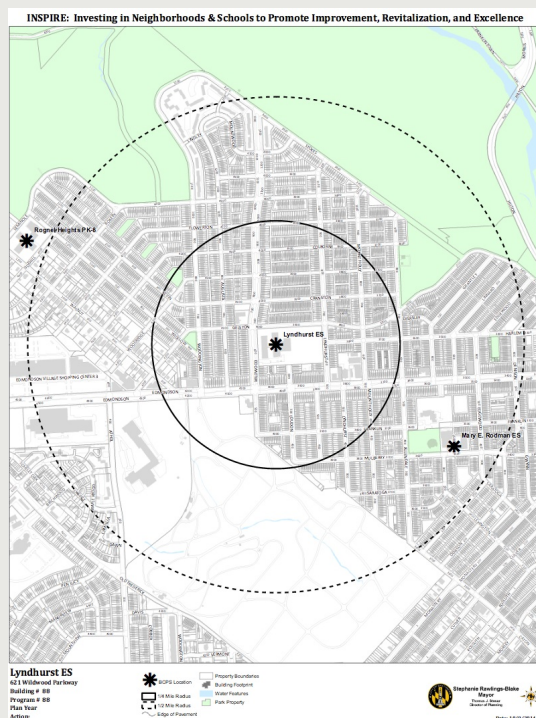
### Local Hiring and Student Internship Opportunities

As required by the MOU, the Mayor's Office, City Schools, and the Maryland Stadium Authority have developed a local hiring plan. The plan leverages the resources of the Mayor's Office of Employment Development's One Stop Career Center and community-based workforce training programs including the Center for Urban Families, Humanim, Jump Start, LiUNA, and Second Chance.

- [Click here to learn how to apply/receive training for a school construction job](#)
- [Click here to find One-Stop Career Center locations](#)
- [Click here to see current job opportunities for the program](#)

City Schools is also developing a pathway for students to work with contractors in the construction trades and related fields such as architecture, engineering, and planning through its Career and Technology Pathways program. [Contact the 21st Century staff for more information.](#)

### Improving Neighborhood Conditions Around the New Schools



*Planning area for Lyndhurst Elementary School located in Edmondson Village.*

To leverage the school construction investment and enhance the connection between schools and neighborhoods, the City's Planning Department has been engaging community residents to develop neighborhood plans that focus on the 1/4 mile radius around each new school. The program is called [INSPIRE - Investing in Neighborhood Schools to Promote Improvement, Revitalization, and Excellence](#).

[The INSPIRE process](#) consists of a series of meetings where city planners, residents, and community stakeholders analyze neighborhood data to develop improvement plans that address issues

related to public safety, open space, land use, sanitation, recreation, transportation, housing, access to resources, and opportunities for development. Most of the plans are in development. See the [draft neighborhood plan for John Eager Howard Elementary and the Reservoir Hill neighborhood here](#).

To aid in the implementation of these plans, the Mayor has committed \$5 million in

capital funding to support INSPIRE projects. Some aspects of each neighborhood plan will receive priority - such as ensuring safe walking routes to school. Other projects such as redeveloping vacant housing will require significant resources, beyond the \$5 million commitment.

## Annual Report to the State Legislature

The MOU partners are responsible for submitting a [progress report on the 21st Century Schools program](#) and presenting to the state legislature each year. This year, the ACLU and the Baltimore Education Coalition brought students from Govans Elementary School's Civics Club to the legislative briefing to educate state lawmakers on the benefits of new and renovated schools for their learning.



*Delegates Keith Haynes, Brooke Lierman, and Barbara Robinson speak to students from Govans Elementary after the briefing in Annapolis.*

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*\* The Memorandum of Understanding for the 21st Century Schools program defines the roles and responsibilities of City Schools, Maryland Stadium Authority, City of Baltimore, and State's Interagency Committee on School Construction (MOU Partners).*

American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland | Education Reform Project

Bebe Verdery, Director

Frank Patinella, Senior Education Advocate

Kimberly Humphrey, Legislative/Education Advocate

Gary Therkildsen, Education Advocate

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