



BERNARD C. "JACK" YOUNG
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

HB 1

January 23, 2020

TO: Members of the Appropriations Committee

FROM: Matthew Stegman, Deputy Director of Government Relations

RE: HOUSE BILL 1 – BUILT TO LEARN ACT OF 2020

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair McIntosh, Vice Chair Jackson, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 1.

HB 1 establishes the Supplemental Public School Construction Fund, which leverages funds deposited in the Education Trust Fund to issue \$2.2 billion in new state bonds for public school building improvements statewide. Baltimore City would be eligible to access 21% of that funding, or \$400 million in additional state school construction dollars. Further, the bill extends the Healthy School Facility Fund through FY 2022 and establishes a Public School Facilities Priority Fund. Both programs provide the possibility of additional investment to address Baltimore's immense backlog of critically needed school maintenance projects.

Despite the tremendous success of the 21st Century Buildings Program, Baltimore City has the oldest portfolio of public school facilities in the state of Maryland. Schools have been closed for failing heating or air conditioning systems. Some buildings are so old that they were built with lead pipes, meaning students do not have access to potable water from sinks and fountains. The 2012 Jacobs Report¹ assessed the total capital needs of the

¹ See Baltimore City Public Schools, State of School Facilities (aka "Jacobs Report") (June 2012), available at <https://baltimore21stcenturyschools.org/sites/default/files/2012june-jacobsreport.pdf> (last accessed Jan. 22, 2020).

City school system at \$2.452 billion. Even with the \$1.1 billion invested into 21st Century Schools, over \$1.3 billion in needs remain unmet.

The Built to Learn Act helps fulfill a promise made by state and city leaders nearly seven years ago to build or fully renovate up to forty-five Baltimore City public school buildings. To date, fourteen schools have opened as a result of the 21st Century Schools program, with a total of twenty-eight to be completed by the program's end. The Maryland Stadium Authority (MSA) has estimated that the additional \$400 million provided for by HB 1 could result in another eleven to fifteen new or renovated facilities.

Projects financed using Supplemental Public School Construction Fund money will be managed by the MSA, and the BCA is eager to continue our productive partnership with them. By moving HB 1 this session, the General Assembly can ensure that Baltimore City and our neighboring jurisdictions can continue to benefit from MSA's expertise developed during the implementation of 21st Century Schools.

Mayor Bernard C. "Jack" Young identified passage of the Built to Learn Act one of his top priorities for the City during the 2020 Legislative Session. Accordingly, the BCA has been planning to ensure that the City can meet the local cost sharing obligations that will be required under HB 1 to fully access the money provided in the Supplemental Public School Construction Fund. Specifically, back in early December of last year, Mayor Young publicly pledged the City's projected \$34 million FY-2020 budget surplus as a down payment on meeting the City's local share of supplemental school construction funding.²

Continued investment in healthy, modern school facilities will improve learning outcomes for students and help Baltimore recruit and retain top teachers. We respectfully request a **favorable** report on House Bill 1.

² See, Talia Richman, *Baltimore mayor plans to use budget surplus for school construction*, The Baltimore Sun (Dec. 4, 2019). Available at <https://www.baltimoresun.com/politics/bs-md-pol-20191204-xczd67bdrjeeld3stcuqhjeq4m-story.html> (last accessed Jan. 22, 2020).