

COMPTROLLER

JOAN M. PRATT, CPA  
Room 204, City Hall  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202-3461



OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER

Department of Audits  
Department of Real Estate  
Municipal Post Office  
Municipal Telephone Exchange  
Harbor Master

January 22, 2020

The Honorable Maggie L. McIntosh, Chair  
House Appropriations Committee  
Maryland General Assembly  
House Office Building, Room 121  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis MD 21401

Dear Chairwoman McIntosh:

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 1, the “Built to Learn Act of 2020,” which will be heard by the House Appropriations Committee on Thursday January 23, 2020. I join with Baltimore Mayor Bernard Jack Young and other elected leaders across the state in urging you to pass this vitally important legislation. The Baltimore City Public School System (BCPSS) urgently needs to upgrade aging facilities so our students can focus fully on learning. HB 1 will establish a framework for permanently funding capital improvements, and it will help to ensure that the oldest buildings as well as those serving communities with concentrations of poverty are prioritized in terms of receiving state and local resources.

On January 8, 2020 the City Board of Estimates voted to approve the City’s 2020 Loan Authorization Program, which included \$38 Million in bond funding for improvements to City schools. In my capacity as a member of both the Board of Estimates and the City Board of Finance, I strongly support this financial commitment to our schools. HB 1 will strengthen and expand the sources of State support for capital improvements such as those addressed in the 2020 Loan Authorization.

In my conversations with students and parents across the City, I consistently stress the importance of education as the foundation for economic development and personal success and prosperity. A strong school system closes the opportunity gap by producing informed, engaged citizens who can flourish in stable and sustainable careers. High-quality, safe school facilities are a key component of a better overall system.

For all these reasons, I urge the Appropriations Committee to give House Bill 1 a favorable report. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this matter in greater detail, please contact me at 410-396-4755.

Sincerely,

  
Joan M. Pratt, CPA  
Baltimore City Comptroller