



CATHERINE E. PUGH  
MAYOR

*100 Holliday Street, Room 250  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202*

January 5, 2018

The Honorable Bernard C. "Jack" Young  
President, Baltimore City Council  
100 North Holliday Street, Room 400  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Dear President Young;

In light of the unacceptable maintenance and infrastructure conditions that have closed several of our City schools and continue to prevent our children from being where they need to be most- in the classroom, I want to update you on the actions we have been taking these past several days.

For the second day in a row, we have opened our City recreation centers to provide a warm and safe place for displaced students, extending the hours until 9 pm, and providing snacks and food throughout the day. I was dismayed to learn that the School system had no plan in place for dealing with what is fast becoming a crisis garnering national attention. The School system's policy is to provide alternate places for children to go, as well as food, only after the schools have been closed for 3 days. Yesterday, I asked Schools CEO Dr. Sonja Brookins Santelises to immediately change this policy in order to provide accommodations and meals whenever schools are required to be closed. In the meantime, we will continue to ensure that our recreation centers provide the safe places our children require and deserve.

I have ordered City engineers, in coordination with our Department of Public Works, to assist the School system and expedite repairs. According to Dr. Santelises, there are many more problems than they are able to fix. This is particularly troubling given yesterday's *Baltimore Sun* article which alleges that the School system has returned millions in state funding for construction projects, "including four projects involving heating systems at schools."

It is also important to note that for the current school year we have allocated \$17 million in funding for maintenance issues and have increased that amount to \$19 million for next year. Suffice it to say, we are working around the clock to connect essential resources, identify additional contractors and importantly, get our children back into the classroom as soon as possible.

I am particularly grateful to Calvin Butler, CEO of BG&E, who has volunteered to work with Rudy Chow, Director of the Department of Public Works and Keith Scroggins, COO of the Baltimore City Public School System to aid in the re-opening of the schools.

I wanted you to be apprised of the actions we are taking to address as expeditiously as possible these critical circumstances. We will continue to provide you with further updates.

Sincerely,

Catherine E. Pugh  
Mayor  
Baltimore City