

# The Schools Baltimore Deserves

## All Baltimore City Schools Need:

### Curriculum & teaching that's relevant to students lives

To ensure that students are engaged and feel like learning is relevant to their lives, we expect the hiring and retention of homegrown teachers to be prioritized, and for there to be a focus on experiential and culturally responsive teaching and curriculum.

### Healthy school culture through Restorative Practices

To ensure that schools create a positive sense of community, we expect implementation of Restorative Practices. These are a set of practices that improve how young people (and adults) are treated in schools by focusing on building relationships and helping the school community to treat conflict as an opportunity for growth.

### Community school status & wrap around services

We expect schools to be community resources where students and families have access to wrap around supports like health services, enrichment and after school programs that help support the development of the whole child.

### Parents and community as vital school partners

We expect schools to be places where parents, guardians, teachers, students and school community leaders are valued and work collaboratively and democratically to improve schools. This should be evident all the way from how visitors are greeted, to how guardians are included and communicated with, and the degree to which all stakeholders are sought out and respected in decision making.

### Equitable funding for Maryland's public schools

The per pupil amount allocated to each student needs to surpass MD states standards of "adequacy" and include reparations for systemic and racist disinvestment.



# Curriculum & teaching that's relevant to students lives

**The Need:** Students need to be engaged and feel that learning is relevant to their lives.

## What we want:

### Curriculum

- The narratives, perspectives and scholarship of experts who come from students' cultures and social contexts need to be incorporated in the classroom.
- The development of project based, experiential, arts-infused and student-informed curriculum that incorporates diverse, relevant and rich materials.
- Consistent opportunities for civic engagement and community action that are tied into the curriculum.
- Student-led processes that enable students to shape classroom pedagogy.

### Training

- Training, mentoring, and coaching for teachers and administrators on quality culturally responsive teaching strategies. Mandatory culturally responsive PD must be modified to fit the teacher experience.
- Preparedness for addressing instances of serious trauma in addition to how to access community resources to address trauma.

### Recruitment

- Limitations on alternative certification contracts including requirements for hiring Baltimore residents, and teachers of color.
- Design a set of recruitment pathways that attract and retain Black and Brown educators.
- Prioritize recruitment at HBCUs and other institutions that incorporate culturally responsive principles and practices in their teacher education curricula.
- Prioritize and offer early contracts at hiring fairs focused on Black and Brown candidates.
- Provide Baltimore City School graduates financial or other incentives for becoming teachers in the system.
- Implement a program to move high school students, paraprofessionals and committed Baltimore residents with a Bachelor's degree into teaching positions
- Provide experienced, fully certified teachers with incentives to come back to the classroom.

### Certification

- Eliminate PRAXIS and other standardized tests as gatekeepers for determining the most suitable candidates for our classrooms.
- New teacher induction programs that: allow time for reflection and coursework as part of the normal work week, include effective and intensive mentoring, and assess teacher candidates over time, based on multiple measures (not just test-scores) of classroom performance, cultural competence, and potential for growth.
- Communication with local institutions of Higher Education regarding coursework for provisional teachers to make sure that the classes offered toward certification are relevant and significant to teachers who are already in the classroom and include classroom-based support.
- Support for teachers
- Placement of full-time mentors in schools that have the highest teacher turnover rates and the most difficult teaching conditions. This mentoring program could be based on the past successful programs such as the Blum Mentoring Program that was shut down in 2005. Sources of mentors could include retired educators.
- Work with the teachers union on targeted and strategic reach outs to teachers who are vulnerable to leaving the district, determining what is causing them to want to leave, and troubleshoot possible individualized solutions.

## What is required to get there?

- Review of existing processes for certification, training and recruitment
- Determine the cost of training, pipeline programs and teacher mentoring



# Healthy school culture through Restorative Practices



## The Need

Restorative Practices are a way to improve how young people are treated in schools by focusing on building relationships and helping the school community to treat conflict as an opportunity for growth.

## What we want

- Though RP is voluntary, we eventually want RP embedded in every school. We also need a new or revised policy, regulation or set of guidelines that specifically define and guide RP work in the district.
- In order to foster effectiveness and monitor the work in the public sphere, we need to create an inclusive RP learning community that meets monthly and consists of teachers, parents, students, administrators, partners, practitioners and advocates. The group will:
- Define the tiers of restorative practices in schools so that it is clear what exactly schools are implementing (not for punitive purposes but to understand where schools are and what they need).
- Review handbooks and materials that are designed to inform parents, teachers, students and administrators.
- Ensure effective communication strategies about RP exist between principals, teachers, parents and students.
- Create a system for access to user-friendly information online- RP resources should include a whole school approach, a partial community building approach, what an individual teacher can do, a process for getting parents on board and student-led processes.
- Participate in the assessment of progress through school based circles, reflections and check-ins.
- Revise 5-year plan as needed
- Participate in the creation of RP policy

## What is required to get there?

\$100,000 per school x 143 non charter schools= 14.3 Million



# Community schools and wrap around supports

## The Need

We expect every student to have access to wrap around supports and after school programs. In current school year 2017-18 there are 98 fully operating community schools in Baltimore City. There are 73 remaining to be served. There is also a need for community schools to have more vendors, contractors and/or leadership that are part of the school community.

## What we want

- A reconsideration of the methodology for distribution of funds to accommodate smaller community, black-led vendors who provide services, and who are currently excluded from consideration.
- Community School providers need to be vetted by members of the neighborhood community.
- Community school coordinators should play a more active role in bringing in community partners, not just providing after school programs.
- Funding for community schools should be brought back into the public domain underneath city schools.
- Community schools should play a role in engaging community in leadership training and helping community members to develop skills needed to run their own programs.
- The selection and evaluation process for community schools should use authentic circles (with trained facilitation) in order to engage the community on an equal level with providers and funders.

## What is required to get there?

TBD. The cost to implement a community school is being researched.



# Parents and community as vital school partners

## The Need

The problems in communities are inextricably linked with the problems in schools and require effective collaboration between parents, teachers, students and school community leaders to fix. Transformative community engagement is needed so that parents, teachers, students and school community leaders can work collaboratively and democratically to improve schools. District communication to families should reflect this two-way approach to relationship building.

\*We use the term “community” to refer to all stakeholders: teachers, parents, students and community members.

## What we want

### Communication

- Families need personalized communication whenever possible. Information should come through a variety of forms (texts, calls, brochures, flyers, handbooks as well as through information sessions). They need information on:
- Curriculum, instruction and how to support students’ learning outside of the classroom through activities and trips.
- Budget timelines, the district budget and individual school budgets.
- Information should include things like Restorative Practices guidance, Information on behavior plans, student and parent rights related to discipline, School Family Councils, Title 1 information, etc.



### Collaborative planning and problem solving

- Comprehensive Community involvement- We want a process for community, parents and students to lead and participate in reflecting on budget, school effectiveness and planning for improvement. This could mean revising School Family Councils to function more like a charter board or with parent, community and student bodies having a role in school effectiveness reviews and school improvement plans so they can make recommendations on how schools can better serve them and their children.
- A plan for how public discussions, engagement around policy and equity areas happen.
- A communication plan that better reaches parents, teachers and students.
- An articulated public school by school plan for how parents can engage.
- Revamping the purpose of PCAB to represent a parent agenda rather than responding to a district agenda.

# Equitable funding for Maryland's public schools

## The Need

It is important that we ensure that Maryland equitably funds its public schools, providing funding that moves beyond remedial services, but that compensate for years of systemic neglect. Comprehensive funding and support is needed to address systemic inequities, particularly amongst Black students in Baltimore city. The per pupil cost needs to not just meet MD states standards of “adequacy” but to include reparations for systemic and racist disinvestment.

## What we want

### State Level

The Kirwan Commission's recommendation that Black students receive reparations for the \$3 billion dollars of historical underfunding of Baltimore City should be supported. In addition, Delegate Mary Washington's casino lockbox bill, which ensures a restoration of the promised casino funds, should also be a legislative priority.

### Local Level

- There is a need to ensure that future Fair Student Funding development addresses structural barriers to achievement such as redlining, neighborhoods, etc.
- There needs to be a priority list for the capital budget for infrastructure based on current need and historical neglect.
- There needs to be racial equity block grants that the school system can apply for.

# Equity Policy

In order to support these school needs, we are calling for an explicit equity policy to be developed by the Board of School Commissioners. This policy should mandate the annual collection and publication of certain data sets and a process for public review of the data.

## Recommended Data Sets and Reports

### Teacher data

- What is the ratio of Black teachers that come through alternative certification programs vs. traditional?
- Are Black teachers in the most challenged (high Free and Reduced Meals (FARMs)/ priority/special ed) schools
- What is the relationship between race, Praxis (test for teacher certification) scores and high performance evaluation and teacher retention?
- Data collected on why teachers leave and where they go?
- Longitudinal data on retention rates for alternative certification programs vs. traditional
- Are alternatively certified teachers in the most challenged schools?
- Report on the effectiveness of the existing teacher mentoring program?
- Racial breakdown of teachers and students in charters vs. traditional schools
- A public list of the Professional Development (PD) sessions offered and required of teachers having to do with cultural responsiveness.
- Summary of efforts to recruit and retain Black faculty

### Restorative Practices

- A list of Restorative Practices trainings completed at the district level and in schools
- Reflections from RP schools

### Testing

- A list of all tests that students take at each school, the amount of time spent preparing for and taking standardized tests
- Community Schools
- Status of community schools and wrap around services to include: a report from the community schools advisory committee, efforts to move toward community control of CS funding and provider selection; data on partners and resources provided to schools

### Charter impact and same freedoms for traditional schools

- A report on the cost and impact of new charter schools on enrollment and closures in surrounding neighborhood schools
- A report on how charters have shared their lessons learned with traditional schools
- A report on how traditional schools have been afforded the same benefits that charters have (able to use comprehensive, school-wide alternative/innovative curriculum models. Opt out of district assessments, Carry over funding from one year to the next, Pay for actual salaries and benefits instead of the district average amount (with protections for veteran teachers))

### Finance

- Financial reports that detail the amount of Title 1 money allocated to each school
- Data regarding charter school operator and facilities costs
- Impact of the new per pupil calculation; and an updated priority list for the capital budget for infrastructure.

### Equal Access

- What % of schools have music
- What % have visual arts
- How many arts teachers there are
- What schools have special programs (Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Ingenuity Programs, etc.)