

# BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Darryl L. Williams, Ed.D. ♦ Superintendent ♦ 6901 North Charles Street ♦ Towson, MD ♦ 21204

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December 11, 2020

The Honorable John A. Olszewski, Jr.  
County Executive  
Historic Courthouse  
400 Washington Avenue  
Towson, MD 21204-4664

Dear Dr. Olszewski:

Earlier today I received your letter and I am responding immediately. Our students, teachers, families, and staff have been immeasurably gracious, patient, understanding, and collaborative in helping us to navigate the recent ransomware attack while, at the same time, responding to a worldwide pandemic. No one takes more seriously and personally the responsibility of educating and supporting our children and school system community than I.

It is unfortunate you have decided to withdraw support and resources from the school system. As you are aware, the school system will not have access to MEMA without the County's intervention. We have appreciated and benefitted from computers your team provided some staff, assistance with printing checks, communications resources, and other acts of support. Your frustration appears to be focused on access to information. I believe the County and Board of Education's legal teams have communicated.

Once again, I would like to thank you for organizing a meeting with representatives from MEMA, the state Department of Information Technology, the Board of Education leadership, you, and members of your team with members of our team and me. I found the meeting to beneficial and appreciated the state representatives commending us for resuming instruction within a week of the catastrophic attack. Instruction and the connection between students and staff are always our first priority.

I believe that our teams have worked collaboratively and productively during this crisis to support instruction. For example, on the morning we confirmed we were indeed targets of a ransomware attack, our school system technology team immediately reached out to their County information technology colleagues to inform and collaborate with them. When you stood up the County's emergency operations center (EOC) and invited us to join, we immediately provided senior staff to include the executive director of information technology and our school safety executive director so that EOC members would hear first-hand what issues we faced. When the EOC commander requested additional staff from BCPS be included, we had them attend. All of this occurred in the hours and days while we were still recovering from the attack and trying to assess the damage.

The Honorable Johnny Olszewski, Jr.

December 11, 2020

Page 2

Our teams have continued to communicate and work with the FBI throughout the process. We have in no way attempted to exclude anyone from or impede the criminal investigation of this attack. We have answered questions when we are able to do so and have referred questions to investigators and legal representatives when we cannot.

I look forward to the day we have fully recovered from the ransomware attack and the pandemic. At that time, I hope we will all take a step back to assess what we did well, where there are areas of improvement, and where we could have supported each other better. Until then, I consider you and your team to be strong partners and hope you will leave open the door of cooperation and collaboration as we manage through these multiple crises.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Darryl L. Williams", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Darryl L. Williams, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

Copies to:

Board of Education of Baltimore County  
The Honorable Kathy Klausmeier, Chair, Baltimore County Senate Delegation  
The Honorable Patrick G. Young, Jr., Chair, Baltimore County House Delegation  
Baltimore County Council