

BMORE Demands for Student Safety amidst the School Facilities Cold Weather Crisis

Baltimore City children attending decrepit school facilities without functioning heat and drinkable water is a tragedy that *the state of Maryland created* over decades of underfunding. They have repeatedly neglected their own definition of adequacy by [3 billion dollars](#) over the past two decades alone, much of which would've prevented these circumstances before they happened. It's the state's constitutional obligation to correct this outrageous failure, starting this coming legislative session.

At the local level North Ave. has not properly responded to the challenging cold weather of the past few weeks, leading to inadequate learning environments and endangering the health of all students, especially those with asthma, sickle cell anemia, and other sensitive conditions. There are policy changes that can immediately address this crisis. The Baltimore Movement of Rank-and-File Educators ([BMORE](#)) demand the following of the School Board and CEO Sonja Santelises:

- **BCPSS policy explicitly state that students in school will spend their class time ONLY in spaces designed for learning that are warmer than 60 degrees.** Relocation is an option for individual classrooms ONLY if there is an unused space in the building which meets these criteria. If no such space exists, the entire building should be closed.
- **Principals be empowered to take and report temperatures, with the authority to close their school if the facility does not meet the above policy.** This would decrease the time students and staff spend in harsh conditions while waiting for a small group of people to visit a large number of facilities to make a final decision.
- **The development of contingency plans with city government** to provide students whose schools are closed access to warm meals, safe spaces, and other essential services.
- **A specific communication plan be developed collaboratively with all stakeholders to keep families aware of emergency issues.** Currently, it is up to principals to decide what, when and how to communicate with parents in case of an environmental or safety issue. There needs to be a uniform, and comprehensive system in place at the school and district levels.

We know Baltimore City Public Schools did not create these inhumane circumstances, but there are tools within their control to prevent harm and better meet student, teacher, and family needs. Winter isn't just coming, it's already here, and we need to act now.

Sincerely,