

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Brandon M. Scott, Mayor
City of Baltimore

Ronald S. McFadden, Chair
Board of School Commissioners

Sonja Brookins Santelises
Chief Executive Officer

September 8, 2023

Governor Wes Moore
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Governor Moore,


I am writing in my capacity as CEO of Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools) to express my support for State Superintendent Mohammed Choudhury. In just two years, Superintendent Choudhury has demonstrated an in-depth understanding of the challenges facing Maryland's urban school districts and an unremitting commitment to work in a spirit of partnership to resolve them.

City Schools is especially grateful for Superintendent Choudhury's leadership in issuing the final *Report on Neighborhood Indicators of Poverty*, which followed through on the limitations of using FARMs data as a proxy for income and poverty identified in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. The report recommended using *neighborhood indicators of poverty* that better capture the number of students living in areas of concentrated poverty and more accurately reflect the levels of poverty in which many of our students live. In embracing this task Superintendent Choudhury demonstrated his deep commitment to equity in education, as well as his understanding of the educational needs of children from all walks of life, including poverty. It is an excellent example of his ability to understand the intricacies of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, while also grasping the challenges implicit in its implementation. I think it is arguably the strongest work product ever produced by MSDE.

As CEO of Maryland's largest urban school district, I have found Superintendent Choudhury to be a valuable thought partner who shares my commitment to academic standards and rigor, regardless of the outside forces affecting our students and their families. He prioritizes excellence through his teaching and learning work focused on improving core instruction, while simultaneously recognizing the need to dismantle inequities in education. Most importantly, his previous work in San Antonio enables him to appreciate the on-the-ground experience of the State's school districts as we work to bring the ideals expressed in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future to fruition.

In conclusion, this is a State Superintendent who has taken on the role of promoting legislative policies that push for change when he believes it to be in the best interest of young people – even when such proposals and conversations are challenging to navigate. Superintendent Choudhury brings a level of credibility to the State's Department of Education that has not existed during my tenure as City Schools CEO.

Sincerely,



Sonja Brookins Santelises, Ed.D.
Chief Executive Officer

C: Senate President Bill Feguson
House Speaker Adrienne Jones