

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Stephanic Rawlings-Blake
Mayor, City of Baltimore

Marnell A. Cooper
Chair, Baltimore City Board of
School Commissioners

Gregory E. Thornton, Ed.D.
Chief Executive Officer

July 9, 2015

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Summer is underway, and I hope that you and your family are able to take time to enjoy some summer activities. Here at City Schools, we have a lot going on, and I encourage you to visit www.bmoresupersummer.org to find out about summer learning, summer reading, and sites where children and teens can drop in for a free meal.

We're also already at work planning for a successful new school year for all our students. Part of that work involves an in-depth look at how well individual schools have done in past years, so we can provide the right support to improve teaching, learning, and achievement for students. The Maryland State Department of Education has recently provided data about your school from the 2013-14 school year, and based on a review of that report, I have some important news to share with you about your school.

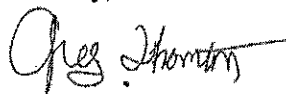
Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Maryland is required to identify Title I schools with large gaps in student achievement between the highest and lowest performing subgroups of students, along with high schools with graduation rates under 60 percent. These schools, called "focus schools," receive extra support from the school district and the state in the subject areas where the gaps occur or where students are performing below standards. ~~Focus schools are identified for a period of three years.~~

Focus schools do not require specific or whole-school interventions; instead, these schools and the district implement strategies to support the performance of one or two subgroups that are low achieving and to increase support for students with disabilities, who are English language learners and face cultural barriers, and who face other unique challenges. These schools also are expected to analyze data from assessments in order to identify the areas of teaching and learning that would most benefit from additional support. The schools and the district then address these particular areas through professional development, parental involvement, instructional teams, and development of other specialized strategies. The school district, in turn, monitors focus schools to make sure they are making progress in closing achievement gaps and improving performance.

The state has identified Southwest Baltimore Charter School as a focus school, and City Schools will be working closely with school staff to improve student achievement. For this effort to be as successful as possible, your school community will need your participation, so I urge you to be part of this opportunity. To learn more about how you can be involved, please contact your school's principal.

Thank you for your commitment and dedication to our students and schools. I wish you and your family a good summer, and I look forward to welcoming you back to school on August 31 for the start of the new school year.

Sincerely,



Gregory E. Thornton, Ed.D.
Chief Executive Officer