

January 15, 2013

TO: THE PEOPLE OF LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 8

OVERLEA HIGH & OTHER AGING COUNTY SCHOOLS NEED AIR CONDITIONING

Governor O'Malley recently announced that the state will spend \$336 million on school construction. That sum includes \$36 million to be spent on air conditioning aging schools. Statewide, there are 180 schools without air conditioning. Of that number, 65 are in Baltimore County. Currently, 36% of the County schools do not have air conditioning.

The plain fact of the matter is that our weather will soon be getting warmer, and children do not learn well in stifling hot classrooms. The Governor has emphasized the importance of investment in modernizing schools to improve learning conditions. Certainly, air cooling classrooms is one vital improvement.

It should be noted that while the Governor's announcement took place at the 51-year old Overlea High School, there was no guarantee that Overlea will be one of the schools to benefit from the new school spending appropriation.

Baltimore County School Superintendent Dallas Dance has stated that air conditioning, in addition to full renovation of Overlea was on the county wish list submitted to the state. Unfortunately, the Agency that appropriates the school construction money to the counties has left Overlea High School off its list. The County is appealing this decision to the Board of Public Works. State Comptroller Peter Franchot is one of the three members of the Board and has paid particular attention to the problem of the lack of air conditioning in Baltimore County schools.

In the meantime, the Baltimore County Delegation will keep the pressure on for improvements to all Baltimore schools.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on this or any other issue of concern to you. I continue to encourage and welcome your input.