



February 25, 2016

Dear Staff and Families at Afya and Tunbridge,

We are writing to update you on several issues related to charter school funding and the litigation we have with Baltimore City Public School System.

As you may have read in the news, and in the recent email correspondence from the CEO of City Schools, the district is facing a drop in revenue and a significant loss of enrollment. At the same time, the district's expenses are increasing rapidly. We have received information about the 2016-2017 per-pupil amount for charter schools. City Schools is proposing that charter schools will receive \$9,141 per-pupil – a \$246 decrease from this current school year. At the same time, benefits will increase a record \$3,000 per staff person. For context, traditional schools will also see rises in salary/benefit costs—about five percent; however, traditional schools will receive a base per-pupil increase of \$185.

We are in the process of determining how this financial news impacts our own programs, and we will stay in touch with school families as our budget is developed. Our commitment to operating excellent schools is unchanged, but we will certainly have to tighten our belt. Budget meetings at each school are slated for March (dates will be announced by our respective principals), and more information will follow with details.

Real transparency and validity remain an issue and City Schools continues to not follow the law regarding charter school funding. It is very difficult to determine whether charter school funding decreases are consistent with the loss of revenue district-wide.

We continue to pursue our litigation efforts to demand transparent, legal, and correct funding for all of our schools. Tuesday, City Schools lost its third consecutive legal decision in court.

- City Schools asked the Baltimore City Circuit Court to serve a protective order against the litigants in seeking information about their finances. Their request was dismissed.
- City Schools asserted that the case had no merit and that it should be dismissed. The court roundly rejected that claim, too.
- City Schools tried to move the dispute to the Maryland State Board of Education, asking them to accept the City Schools funding formula sight-unseen. On Tuesday, February 23, 2016, that motion was dismissed by MSDE, stating, "The petition filed here presents no concrete facts from which we could declare the law."

At the same time this past Tuesday, after continuous legal defeats to date, City Schools counter-sued many of the charter schools involved in the litigation. The ABI schools were not named in the counter-suit. Their counterclaims against our fellow litigants include accusations of incomplete teacher evaluation processes, failure to maintain accurate records, failure to submit student grades. The school system also claims there are a "host" of other claims, though it refuses to name them.

This counter-suit really is outrageous. In one instance, City Schools claimed an operator had insufficient financial reporting. Just a few short months ago, during a rigorous renewal process, this very same operator received, from the school system, the highest rating available in financial management. This operator also received a full renewal. We believe this counter-suit is a diversion tactic and we are confident that, like all of their other legal claims to date, this will be quickly and roundly dismissed as well.

The ABI schools are strong, despite these challenges. We are continuously growing and thriving in a current environment that is very difficult for ALL schools, including public charter schools. We will continue forward. Legally, we will move forward with discovery on City Schools' finances, with the law on our side, and work to ultimately gain the legal, transparent, and consistent funding formula that our schools deserve. We believe this transparency and consistency will benefit every single public school in our city.

We will share more information in the coming days. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out. Please check our Facebook page for news, as well as our website (ABI Highlights section), where we have begun to archive items related to the litigation and the funding formula as a resource for staff and families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Will McKenna".

Will McKenna, Founder/Executive Director  
Afya Baltimore Inc. • [wmckenna@afyabaltimore.org](mailto:wmckenna@afyabaltimore.org)