

This conversation around the tax levy is a very important one, as whatever decision is made will impact all members of our community. (Residents, businesses and schools alike). As Superintendent of KCPS, I am concerned about the well-being of all stakeholders within our community, but first and foremost, I am concerned about and must prioritize the students whom I'm responsible for protecting and growing academically, socially and emotionally. For 25 years, KCPS has lived with a fixed tax levy of 4.9599. Under the protections of The Hancock Amendment, article 11g, KCPS was assigned this fixed amount, after a tax levy increase had been denied 19 times. Now, I am not attempting to debate whether there were valid reasons for this or not. However, we all know that it is nearly impossible to run a quality school district without adequate funding to do so. KCPS covers all operational expenditures, capital outlay and debt service with our local property tax funding. Because approximately 80% of KCPS' budget is comprised of local property tax, this tax levy decision holds greater significance for KCPS and other public schools within the KCPS boundaries, and is not one that we take lightly. What is decided has long-lasting implications on the quality of the learning environment and experiences for the children within the KCPS boundaries.

As we engaged our community in this conversation around the tax levy, the majority of the feedback received was in favor of KCPS maintaining the current rate. Over the last year, we engaged our community in critical discussions around our BP2030 strategic plan, that maps our path forward and outlines our academic and socio-emotional goals and expected outcomes. The BP2030 plan detailed our vision for the future of KCPS, as we very transparently shared our systemic inefficiencies, challenges, and recommendations for beginning that improvement process. One of those challenges that was named and elevated for discussion was our hefty deferred maintenance that we are sitting with as a district. The entire city witnessed the manifestation of its impact, as we were forced to shift to half days during our first week of school, due to inadequate HVAC systems in some of our schools. According to a study conducted by the National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities (NCEF), factors such as adequate

lighting, good acoustics, and controlled temperatures in newly constructed or upgraded schools enhance learning and help in improving academic performance. This is consistent with Glen Earthman's 2004 study findings, which assert that students in new facilities score 5-11 percentile points higher than those in substandard buildings.

With anywhere between \$350 to \$400M of deferred maintenance before us, it is imperative that we prioritize addressing this every opportunity that we have and are able. Our children and staff need and deserve better. Maintaining our current tax levy rate will allow us to allocate 66 cents of the 4.9599 toward addressing our some of this deferred maintenance (particularly the HVAC issues). We cannot in good conscience sit and do nothing, and maintaining our current tax levy rate will be position us to act on these most pressing needs. It's also important to note, that our decision today not only impacts KCPS, but also the charter schools within our boundaries. To roll back our tax levy, as some in our community have requested means directly impacting schools' ability to serve the children with this community. Our children are our greatest investment and they are the future of this city. I contend that they are well worth this investment and more. As such, my recommendation to the board of KCPS is to maintain our current tax levy at the rate of 4.9599. Thank you for your consideration.