

Baltimore mother calls on someone, anyone, to fix city schools

by Chris Papst

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Baltimore mother calls on someone, anyone, to fix City Schools(WBFF)

BALTIMORE (WBFF) — A Baltimore City mother is calling on someone, anyone, to fix city schools. And she says major changes need to happen now, or she's leaving.

"There's nothing up there for them. Nothing. They go there to get babysit for eight hours and come home," said Nichelle Watkins, the mother of a Baltimore City student. "I feel like they don't care. It's not their children; they don't care."

Watkins is exhausted after years of pleading for help from Baltimore City Public Schools.

"Look around, I'm in public housing," she said. "I can't afford no thousand-dollar tutor from Sylvan. But that's what he needs, a tutor."

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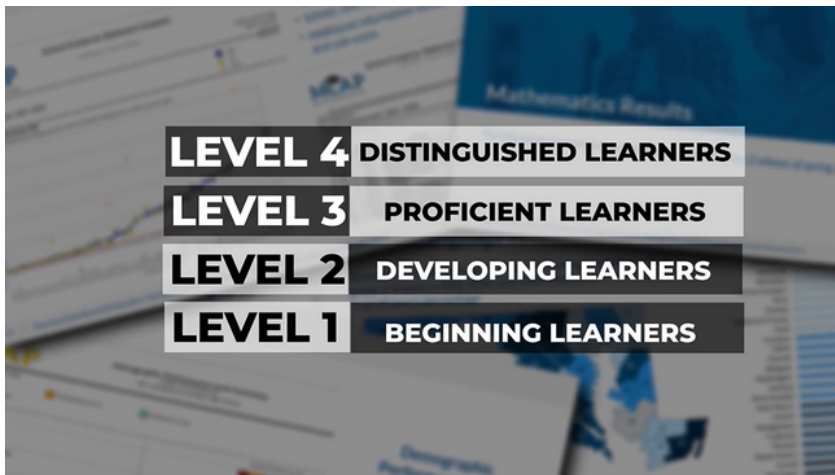
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Her son is in fourth grade at Johnston Square Elementary. For years, she says, she's been asking the school system to hold her son back to give him time to learn the material instead of pushing him through the grades. Five months ago, in October, she even wrote Project Baltimore asking for help, saying her son is not getting the education he needs.

ALSO READ | [23 Baltimore schools have zero students proficient in math, per state test results](#)

"He can't even read he's in the fourth grade," Watkins told Project Baltimore. "How is he supposed to be productive if he can't read?"

Earlier this week, Project Baltimore combed through the 2022 state test results known as MCAP, Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program. Every Maryland student is tested in third through eighth grade and again once in high school in both English and Math. Scores place the students in one of four levels. Levels one and two are considered not proficient, while three and four are proficient.



MCAP Proficiency Levels (WBFF)

Project Baltimore found in 23 Baltimore City schools, there were zero students who tested proficient in math. Not a single student. Johnston Square Elementary is on that list of schools.

"When I saw the name Johnston Square on there, I knew what I was doing, and what I was saying was absolutely correct," said Watkins. "I wasn't surprised. Yeah, they get a whole lot of money, and it's coming out of my check. I see it."

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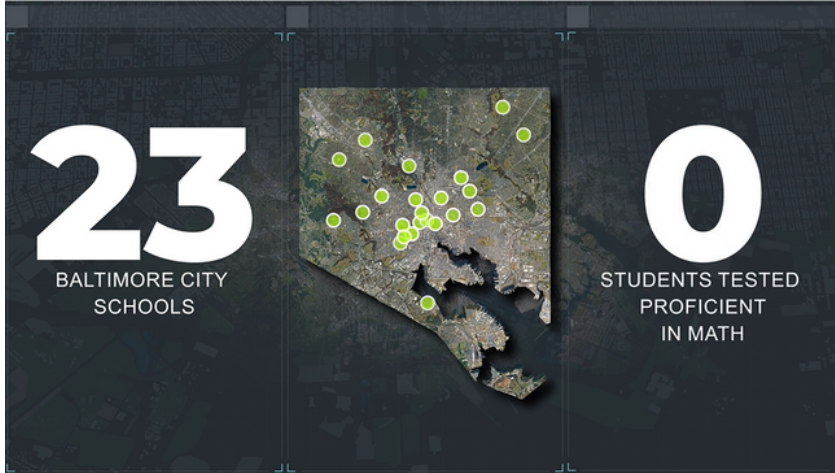
Baltimore City funds nearly 20 percent of City Schools. This year, that amount hit \$309 million. So, Project Baltimore sent an email to every City Council member and Mayor Brandon Scott, asking three questions:

1. Who is _____ accountable for these concerning test results?

2. How can we raise scores and improve student outcomes?

3. Will you ask for further investigation to determine why this many schools have so few students proficient in math?

17



Project Baltimore found, in 23 Baltimore City schools, there were zero students who tested proficient in math (WBFF)

Councilman Eric Costello quickly replied, saying he was “dismayed” by Project Baltimore’s findings. He added, “This is not the performance that we expect for Baltimore’s children.” Costello also said that City Council has “virtually no control over” the schools. He explained, “The council can do very little when it comes to school performance and can’t even withhold funds.”

Project Baltimore didn’t hear back from the mayor.

Project Baltimore asked Watkins if she wants to hear from the mayor, as the mother of a student at one of the 23 Baltimore City Schools.

After a long pause, Watkins replied, “No. Not really. I don’t. What is he gonna say? What is he gonna do? But make a whole bunch of promises that he’s not gonna fulfill. So, I just feel like that’s pointless. I need somebody that’s gonna do something.”

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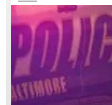
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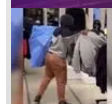
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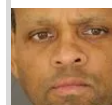
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Project Baltimore didn't hear back from Mayor Scott for this story (WBFF)

City Schools also declined an interview to discuss these 23 schools but explained in a statement the steps it's taking to improve math scores, including professional development for teachers, summer learning and an extended learning period at the end of the day. The district said it's "confident" these steps will work. Watkins is not.

"I have a black son who's gotta grow up in Baltimore City. That's why. That's why I'm so emotional," Watkins told Project Baltimore. "That means in Baltimore City, you having a black child, a male child who at that, there is only two ways out. You're either gonna be dead or locked up. And I don't want that for my son."

Watkins told Project Baltimore she has no hope the school system will ever improve. Her plan is to continue working and save money. As soon as she can afford it, she says, she's leaving this city.



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"That is the plan. That's the only thing I can see," said Watkins. "They gotta grow up. They gotta be able to go the grocery store. They gotta be able to afford bills, a roof. They gotta survive. I'm not gonna always be here. When I close my eyes, then what?"

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When asked if she doesn't think her son is getting the education he needs to survive, Watkins replied, "Absolutely, he's not."

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93% of students are not proficient? Surprising? No.

What percentage of teachers would test proficient? Probably not a lot more than 7%.

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Tell me lady....who did you vote for last election?

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SCHOOL CHOICE will help fix it. The \$20,000 PER STUDENT should follow the student to whatever school they choose.

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What is a student/family supposed to do when they value education but are stuck in a school system that is bad beyond description? They can, of course enroll their student in a private school, e.g., Catholic School, but what if they are poor? We cannot as a society wait until everyone values educa...

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How could a child get to the 4th grade and not know how to read? What kind of teacher passes a kid along so that he is even further behind? What are they teaching or is it game time and watch tv all day?

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P **.mbo1963**

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Kids have been routinely passed from grade to grade most eventually graduating from high school, in part, so the schools and school districts can show higher graduation rates. A similar thing happens with academic testing. Years ago, standardized tests were "re-centered" and made more "equitable", ...

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If the son is in the 4th grade and can not read he should be in a non-public education school so he can catch up. There is state funding through "due process" that is afforded to each and every student.

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This woman says everything anyone needs to know about the failed education monopoly. It's toxic and corrupt beyond repair. There is a better way to deliver the quality education our kids desperately need, but the Dems will never allow it to see the light of day. The reason is that democrats are in ...

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She must spend a lot of time helping him with his home work
Master
Or she has no idea he can't read until he fails a state test and then its on the news
Parent of the century

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