



Franchot tours Howard High, touts school maintenance efforts



Bruce Gist, School Construction Director for the Howard County Public School System leads County Executive Allan Kittleman, Comptroller Peter Franchot, and County Councilman Calvin Ball on a tour of Howard High School Thursday. (Photo courtesy Howard County Government)

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Maryland Comptroller Peter Franchot visited Howard High School Thursday, touring the results of the school's renovation projects and touting the importance of maintaining aging school facilities.

"This whole concept of school maintenance is going to get a brand new life on the Board of Public Works because Governor Hogan, to his credit, has been incredibly supportive from the first moment of the first Board of Public Works meeting," Franchot said. "It's critical to the state that as we build new schools, we commit to do a better job."

Howard High School, opened in 1952, is the county's oldest school building and has undergone 11 renovation projects over the years.

"Anything we would do as a homeowner, we do for our schools," said Bruce Gist, executive director of facilities, planning, and management, regarding the school system's philosophy on preventive maintenance projects.

During his tour, Franchot commended Howard officials for their track record of maintaining school facilities.

He also noted an expected reintroduction of the statewide school maintenance study, last done in 2009 by an interagency school construction committee. The committee grades school facilities on whether these buildings are adequate for the educational programs offered.

The study is expected to be reintroduced this year.

"Without it, we can't tell, other than superficially, whose taking good care of the schools," he said.

Franchot raised the potential of financial rewards or incentives, proposed by State Treasurer Nancy Kopp, that could be coming to school systems that emphasize school maintenance and renovation projects, although he didn't have any additional details.

"I think it's going to be front and center," Franchot said of school maintenance concerns at the state's Board of Public Works. "I think Howard is perfectly positioned with its superior ratings [from the 2009 study]."

Franchot was joined by County Executive Allan Kittleman, Superintendent [Renee Foose](#), County Council members Calvin Ball and [Jon Weinstein](#), and Board of Education members Ann De Lacy and Ellen Flynn Giles.

County officials stressed the partnership with county leaders that they believe is necessary to prioritize school projects, and Kittleman said his desire is to ensure the county continues moving in that direction.

"Howard High School is a tremendous example for the county and for the state," he said.

After his visit to Howard High, Franchot visited the Dancel Family Center Y, Kupcakes & Co., and the Elkridge Volunteer Fire Department, presenting a proclamation to each organization.

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