

Department of General Services
Director Response

Case # 21-0026-I

CITY OF BALTIMORE

BRANDON SCOTT, MAYOR



DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES

**800 Abel Wolman Municipal Building
200 Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202**

March 9, 2021

Isabel Mercedes Cumming, Inspector General
Baltimore City Hall
100 Holliday Street, Room 640
Baltimore, MD 21202

RE: OIG Investigation, Case # 21-0026-I Samuel Morse School

Dear Ms. Cumming,

The Department of General Services (DGS) was copied on your memo to Mayor Brandon Scott on February 9th, 2021 regarding the above-referenced Case. As has always been the case, DGS would like to thank you and your team of investigators for performing this investigation into a matter whose resolution will be of great advantage to our agency.

As your stated in your findings, multiple attempts to secure all the documentation necessary for DGS to work with the Comptroller's Office of Real Estate on the execution of leases have been made. It is not customary for DGS to rely upon the use of long-term Rights of Entry as a substitute for fully executed lease agreements, thus our frequently communicated desire and advocacy for the completion of the lease process between the two occupants and the City of Baltimore. The City continues to incur significant capital and operating expenses of this (and other) former schools, even while they remain vacant, and so having rent-paying tenants in place is our strong preference.

DGS is continuing to work with the Comptroller's Real Estate Office and the Law Department on the execution of the lease agreements with [REDACTED]. It is not within our authority to negotiate lease agreements on behalf of the City. Our lease terms as the landlord, including instructions on the most cost-effective way in which to physically separate the space and allow for co-tenancy, have been provided to the Comptroller's Real Estate Office for their use in negotiation of the final lease contracts and for review of the documentation that has been demanded of both potential tenants. Once fully executed, the terms of both leases will better allow for DGS to perform tenant management and ensure that the terms and conditions are being adhered to as it pertains to the use of the space and any desired improvements. We look forward to providing and managing space for use by entities that are performing services that benefit the residents of Baltimore City.

If you have any questions at all, please feel free to call me.

Very respectfully,

Chichi Nyagah-Nash
Director, Department of General Services