



Howard County Council's Budget Hearing April 24, 2017

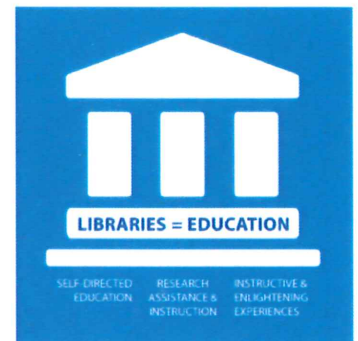
Testimony in support of Howard County Library System

Angela Brade, Chief Operating Officer, Howard County Library System

Good evening. I am Angela Brade, Chief Operating Officer of Howard County Library System. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Howard County's 300,000 residents. (Valerie Gross regrets being unable to be here this evening. She looks forward to talking with you at the work session on Friday.) I will speak to our operating budget. Our Board Chair will address our capital budget.

First, we express our gratitude. We credit you for our continued status as a model 21st century educational institution. Thank you for recognizing that a strong investment in *public education for everyone* is a strong investment in our community's future.

Students of all ages visited our six branches **2.2 million times** last year to borrow **7.9 million items**—the highest borrowing per capita in the state and among the highest in the country. They also received expert research assistance **2 million** times, and attended our award-winning classes and events **308,000** times – classes like Sensory Science for preschoolers; HiTech and Homework Clubs for teens; and HCLS Project Literacy, our adult basic education initiative that teaches English and basic math, and prepares students to pass the U.S. citizenship test and graduate with an external high school diploma.



We thank our A+ Partners for collaborating with us to present the HCLS Spelling Bee and its BumbleBee companion. Some nearly 300 fourth and fifth graders have enrolled in the Rube Goldberg Challenge (the assignment this year is to unfurl a banner). And, as a number of you recently experienced, Battle of the Books comprised 288 teams (that's nearly **1,500 students**—or **one-third** Howard County fifth graders!). Taking a 50-question exam on 13 pre-assigned books, students had a great time competing for Best Score, Best Costume, Best Team Name, Best Team Spirit, and Best Civility. Best of all, they improved their reading, leadership, and teamwork skills.

Lastly, Choose Civility continues strong. We invite you to "The Longest Table" on June 22. Come share a meal and exchange stories with 500 community members from across the County. A first in the region, this event partners with #OneHoward, EDA, the Chamber of Commerce, and HCC. (We're also looking for Celebrity Servers if you are willing!).

We appreciate that the County Executive's proposed FY 18 Operating Budget includes a 3.9 percent increase in County funding. This enables us to place a high priority on our first-rate team of educators and support staff. Our commitment to you—and to this community—is to deliver the best curriculum possible with the funding we receive under each of our Three Pillars: Self-Directed Education, Research Assistance & Instruction, and Instructive & Enlightening Experiences.

Education is more important than ever in this knowledge-based economy. Howard County Library System represents less than two percent of the County's budget—a *smart* investment for a great return. We urge you to fully fund the County Executive's proposed FY 18 Operating Budget for the Library System—and also his proposed Capital Budget.

Thank you for your trust in us, and for the many ways you demonstrate your support. We look forward to providing you with more details at our work session.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela Brade



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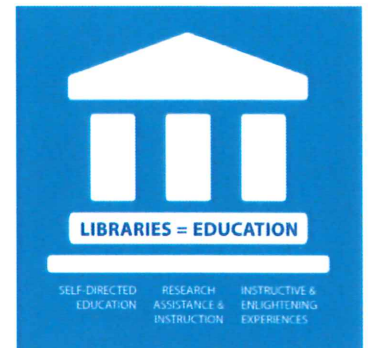
Thomas K. Munns

Chair, Howard County Library System Board of Trustees

Good evening. I am Tom Munns, Chair of the Howard County Library System Board of Trustees. On behalf of the Board, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HCLS—and also for participating in our epic Battle of the Books.

As strong advocates, you know the ways education promotes economic development and contributes to our County's reputation for excellence. The Board is proud that Howard County Library System has become synonymous with high-quality public education for all. We credit you for all that we achieve. It is public funding that makes us possible.

The County Executive's proposed FY 18 Capital Budget totals **\$1.25M** for capital projects at our East Columbia and Glenwood Branches. I am pleased to report that this funding has a *zero overall impact*. This is because of cost savings on our closed capital projects and lower than expected bids for the HCLS Elkridge Branch + DIY Education Center.



Currently underway, the **East Columbia Branch** project doubles the number of quiet study rooms, triples meeting room space, and creates a new teen center. This center will house Teen Time and HiTech classrooms, and a Student Design Center—complete with work counters and supplies—where students can collaborate on school assignments and projects. We especially appreciate County funding for the Express Branch during renovation. The temporary venue is filled to capacity every day. Preschoolers attend classes, students work on homework, and adults conduct research, browse the collection, and apply for passports.

As to the **Glenwood Branch**, it's nearly *two decades* old. The building needs updates. The project adds study rooms, a classroom, and enhanced public space for research. Most importantly, middle and high school students will benefit from a new Homework Center.

The new **Elkridge Branch + DIY Education Center** continues on schedule. The Elkridge community is looking forward to the Grand Opening in March 2018. Countywide, residents are eager to borrow items in the DIY collection (tools for household repair and gardening—and bicycle repair kits) and take Design Institute classes – such as “Build a Bunkbed” and “It’s a Fine Line: Caulking 101.” Thank you for funding the Elkridge Express Branch during construction.

Investing in these capital projects will continue to remedy our space deficits based on the *HCLS Facilities Master Plan* and Howard's growing population. These updated venues will further elevate the County's reputation for high-caliber education.

Please consider fully funding the County Executive's Operating and Capital budgets. Thank you for the many ways you demonstrate your support.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas K. Munns