



HOWARD COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

Renee A. Foose, Ed.D.
Superintendent
410-313-6674

Superintendent's Testimony
Howard County Council Budget Hearing – Monday, April 24, 2017

Good evening, Chairperson Weinstein and members of the Council.

The school system greatly appreciates the strong support we have historically received from our county government leaders. That strong support is the reason why our schools continue to set a standard for excellence in our state and nation, why our students consistently rank among the top on many measures of achievement, and why so many businesses and residents choose Howard County. Not only is a great school system the cornerstone of a strong community, it is the engine that drives economic growth in our county.

Each year, our system must have the resources to fully prepare each Howard County child for success. Investment in education is critical both to our children's future and the continued financial prosperity of our entire county. The Board of Education's requested budget reflected the funding to ensure that each and every child in our school system graduates well prepared for college or a living-wage career. The county executive's budget cut the Board's requested budget by \$53.9 million. Before we discuss the impact of these cuts, I'd like to share again the factors that contribute to the large increase in the school system's request for FY 2018.

The most significant impact to the school system's budget is a structural budget deficit due primarily to the teachers' pension shift from the state to the local school boards. The state made this shift to local school systems and local governments with no corresponding funding to provide for these costs. For FY 2018, the school system must budget \$22.4 million to meet this cost.

Pre-kindergarten education has a proven track record in giving students a strong start. Our system is mandated to provide Pre-K education for over 1,300 students at a cost of \$13.9 million in FY 2018. However, these students are excluded from the county and state maintenance of effort funding, increasing the structural budget deficit to more than \$36 million.

Howard County still has the fastest growing student enrollment in Maryland. We have also experienced increases in the population of students who face poverty, homelessness, disabilities, and language barriers. Nearly one in five students is eligible for Free and Reduced Meals – an increase of more than 40 percent in just the last five years. The future of these children – and that of our entire county – depends on our success in preparing them with the skills to build a prosperous life.

Funding is needed for the additional staffing and specialized services that help these students thrive. Rapid enrollment growth and increasing student needs bring significant added costs to the school system, which are yet another cost that is not included in Maintenance of Effort funding. The FY 2018 budget request includes \$8.4 million to meet enrollment growth, bringing the total unfunded mandates in the school system's budget to \$44.7 million.

Our teachers and staff are the backbone of our school system. Our continued success depends upon maintaining and attracting top-notch employees. The school system's budget includes \$22.3 million to honor negotiated salary increases and \$36.2 million to honor negotiated employee benefits.

I understand the great challenge you face in balancing the needs of the entire county. The school system will provide the best educational program possible given the funding provided. However, it is important to acknowledge the short- and long-term impact of funding levels that fall short of school system needs. The Executive's Proposed Budget cuts \$32.4 million in funding for employee health insurance, pensions and other fixed charges; \$8.9 million for operations and building maintenance; \$7.8 million for textbooks and other instructional supplies; \$1.7 million for pupil transportation, and \$3.1 million in other support.

The school system will be forced to defer essential maintenance, reduce funding for health insurance payments and other required charges, postpone purchases of new textbooks and instructional supplies, and shelve important initiatives for improving the instructional program. In addition, these cuts will require staffing and supply reductions in custodial, grounds, office and other areas that directly impact the quality of the learning environment. The cumulative impact of these cuts will inevitably compromise the high standards that our community expects and Howard County children deserve.

The Board's Capital Budget Request totaled \$93.6 million and reflected funding to meet the many capital needs of a growing school system. The County Executive's budget cut \$34.6 million from this request which will defer a number of new construction projects, major renovations, and most HVAC system replacements included in the request.

We are asking the county to continue its commitment to investing in a world class school system. This commitment will require the funding needed to maintain class sizes, ensure well-maintained school buildings, and a high quality learning environment.

I want to pledge my commitment on behalf of the school system to working collaboratively with you and others to protect the education of our students and the quality of our community's schools. As Superintendent, I am committed to ensuring that all decisions are made with our students' best interests as the top priority.

Thank you for the strong support and commitment that you have always provided to our schools and students. We look forward to working with you, as we have in the past, to ensure that our system has the resources necessary to provide the world-class education that every Howard County child deserves.

Renee A. Foose, Ed. D.
Superintendent

Chairman Weinstein, Dr. Ball and members of the County Council,

As you know, I am Bess Altwerger, member of the Board of Education. However, I am speaking tonight as an individual Board member with the support of the majority of my colleagues.

While I fully concur with the testimony of our Board Chair, Cindy Vallaincourt, and strongly support funding for a Diversity Coordinator, I will limit my remarks tonight to one specific area of the budget that I fervently believe requires additional funding in order to optimize teaching and learning in our classrooms. That area is the Category of Instruction.

Although I greatly appreciate County Executive Kittleman's stated commitment to honoring the negotiated agreements with our collective bargaining units, a comparative analysis between the Board's budget request and the County Executive's appropriation indicates a serious shortfall in this Category if we are to fully fund the negotiated agreements, as well as fund the paraprofessional positions added to the 2018 Budget by the Board of Education.

As you well know, the previous Board approved an increase in class sizes due to the fiscal constraints of the FY 2017 budget. At the same time, they dramatically cut paraprofessional and high school media secretary positions. The result of these two simultaneous actions was to create unacceptable burdens on our classroom educators who work diligently to meet the diverse needs of our students, including many with IEPs and 504s. Kindergarten teachers who work with our youngest students were severely shorthanded, sharing a single para with at least one or two other classrooms. Special education teachers who work with our most needy and vulnerable students have struggled to provide them with the education they deserve and must receive by law. Our library media specialists have attempted to fulfill multiple responsibilities to their entire school staff and all of the students while keeping libraries open and accessible throughout the day. The level of stress that this situation has created for our teachers, is matched only by that of the remaining paraprofessionals who were expected to fill all the numerous roles for which they might not have been experienced nor trained. In many schools, administrators were left with no choice but to shuffle paras around from one classroom to another like pieces on a chess board, regardless of their experience and expertise. But, make no mistake, the students paid the highest price for increased class sizes and decreases in individual and small group support from capable and caring adults.

For all these reasons, the current Board of Education voted to restore paraprofessional positions to the more acceptable and reasonable level of 2014. I urgently request that you fully restore funding to the Category of Instruction and join the Board in making teaching and learning our highest priority.



Mavis Ellis <mavisellis@gmail.com>

County Council Budget Hearing.

Mavis Ellis <mavisellis@gmail.com>
To: "mavisellis@gmail.com" <mavisellis@gmail.com>

Mon, Apr 24, 2017 at 6:04 PM

Subject: County Council Budget Hearing.

Good Evening,

My name is Mavis Ellis, member of the Howard County Board of Education speaking as an individual.

This evening I am speaking in support of the diversity coordinator position. Howard County is becoming even more diverse than it was at its inception, it's students are facing increasing issues of racial intimidation, harassment, and bullying. Our staff as well have reported experiencing these same issues. So though on the one hand Howard County Public Schools are some of the best in the nation, but we have individual students and groups of students who don't feel safe mentally or physically in our schools. We can do better.

I must admit that quite a number of individual parents have emailed me the support of the diversity coordinator position as well as groups like the OBRC, the NAACP, the Council of Elders and the African American Roundtable. We all ask that you hear our voices and fund this position.

Tonite I am also requesting you fully fund programs that help to close the achievement gap for students of color and provide a opportunities for all students to have access to innovative programs. I am speaking of the Black Student Achieve Program BSAP and the Mathematics Engineering and Science Achievement program MESA. Initially the Superintendent's budget significantly cut funding for those programs and the Board reinstated most of it. I ask this council to continue your support of our neediest students.



oakland mills
we value connections

April 24, 2017

Oakland Mills Community Association
The Other Barn • 5851 Robert Oliver Place
Columbia, MD 21045
410-730-4610 • oaklandmills.org

TO: Members of the Howard County Council

**FROM: Oakland Mills Community Association,
Jonathan Edelson, Board Vice-Chair and Education Committee Chair**

**SUBJ: FY18 Capital Budget Testimony in Support of Funding for Talbott Springs
Elementary School and Oakland Mills Middle School Renovations**

Good evening, my name is Jonathan Edelson and I reside at 6144 New Leaf Court in Columbia. I am Vice-Chair of the Oakland Mills Board of Directors and Chair of the Oakland Mills Education Committee. I am testifying on behalf of the Oakland Mills Community Association. I would like to begin by thanking our County Council for holding tonight's hearing and for funding important efforts within the Oakland Mills Community. I am testifying in support of two Howard County Public School projects within the County Executive's proposed Capital Budget.

The first is the complete renovation and expansion of Talbott Springs Elementary School. Talbott Springs Elementary was constructed in 1972. It has not had a full renovation in its 45 years of existence. It has had a couple of additions in 1999/2000 and 2008 to bring it up to standards to provide educational programs. These have included adding the gym and all-day kindergarten space.

Talbott Springs is currently well above its capacity, with 501 students attending a school designed to hold 377. This requires that entire grades attend school in 11 portable classrooms outside the building. This also required a redistricting of about 100 children from Talbott Springs to Stevens Forest several years ago, which put the newly-renovated and expanded Stevens Forest above capacity and requires an entire grade at Stevens Forest to be in portables at a newly-renovated facility.

Additionally, much of Talbott Springs' learning environment is still partially open classrooms, which is an educational infrastructure that dates back to the 1970s and has been abandoned in all recent school construction and renovation. Through discussions with the Talbott Springs PTA and administration, I have learned that many aspects of the school are out of date, from the aforementioned capacity and learning space configuration to the physical plant. Many other schools have been constructed or renovated since the core of the Talbott Springs facility was constructed in 1972. The Oakland Mills Community Association believes that students at Talbott Springs and throughout Oakland Mills deserve modern, state of the art learning facilities and we respectfully and strongly encourage the County Council to support capital funds for a full modernization of Talbott Springs and a facility that can house all of its students within its walls.

We also support the full renovation of Oakland Mills Middle School, as indicated in the County Executive's capital budget. While Oakland Mills Middle does not have capacity issues like those of our elementary schools, it has had only one renovation in its 45 years, and the facility lags behind those middle schools built or renovated more recently. Complete renovation of Talbott Springs Elementary and Oakland Mills Middle is much needed and long overdue. Each facility faces a number of programmatic, systemic, and physical upgrades.

Thank you for your consideration. Oakland Mills looks forward to our continued partnership as we work to revitalize our community and continue to improve our County.

HCPSS Budget Testimony to County Council, April 24, 2017
Leslie Kornreich, Lkornreich@verizon.net

Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it. Wise words, which I hope you take to heart tonight and in the coming days as you consider how to handle the HCPSS part of the county budget.

Again this year, HCPSS presented the county executive with a budget request for dozens of millions of dollars more than they knew the county could provide. Again, the county executive has increased his offer of several million dollars over Maintenance of Effort funding, enough to cover teacher negotiated agreements, and fully fund instructional needs and special education for a growing number of students.

Given this information, how does HCPSS justify cutting directly to those categories first? How do they justify cutting paraeducators and media support staff and materials of instruction, when the money from the county was directed to those areas specifically?

HCPSS's irresponsible actions on the budget last year prompted audits by the state Office of Legislative Audits, Financial and Performance Audits legislated by yourselves, and a School System Budget Review Committee formed by the council in the absence of one having been suspended by the Board of Education the previous year. These are unprecedented actions taken by the council to provide needed oversight missing from the Board of Education. Last fall, the community rallied to elect 3 new BOE members. Since then, we have discovered that the problem lies in the superintendent's office.

The Board of Education can only pass a responsible budget with clear answers and specific information from the HCPSS budget staff. Again this year the Board of Education has received non-responses to its questions to staff about the budget. Again specific questions about where the money is going are met with responses that insinuate that Board members do not have a right to the information they seek to pass a responsible budget. Only you can ensure HCPSS spends the money, as directed, only for instruction, special education, and teachers and support staff.

For the last two years, HCPSS has made its budget cuts to hurt students, teachers, and support staff first. They can do this because they know that at the end of the fiscal year, when they have not spent the money in the categories directed originally by the county executive, they can move that money to different categories to spend before the end of the fiscal year. They can do this because you allow it. The only way to keep the money spent for instruction and special education and teacher negotiated agreements is for you to say to HCPSS that there will be no money transferred at the end of the fiscal year. And if they intend to ask for such a transfer, they must provide the most detailed accounting of every dime spent in every instruction-related category to that date. If you are not satisfied with the information they provide, you cannot approve allowing HCPSS to transfer money.

There's another saying: Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me. Fool me three times – well, let's not go there this year.

4/24/17

Chairman Weinstein and Members of the County Council,

I come to you tonight to testify about the HCPSS budget on behalf of Together We Will Howard County, an organization of 1200 members who reside or work in Howard County. I also have two children in HCPSS schools, in fifth grade and ninth grade.

I am here to request that the position of Diversity Coordinator be funded. Specifically I am asking you to place enough funds in the mid-level administration category for this position, about \$150,000.

Last year the Board of Education created the position of Diversity Coordinator. However, when the County Executive didn't fully fund the requested education budget, the position ended up on the cutting room floor.

And then the current school year happened. It has been particularly traumatic for minority group students, with numerous major racial incidents and who knows how many other major and minor micro-aggressions that don't even get reported. We feel very strongly that we need this position now more than ever.

We can only assume that you have also seen news reports and heard from school personnel about the heart-wrenching activities that go on in our schools as listing them now would leave no time for any other testimony. It is not just the victims of these actions that have taken notice, two countywide initiatives were started as a result of what was happening in HCPSS, OneHoward and Stand Up Howard. Both these initiatives were designed to start hard conversations about race and diversity within our community and to create a space where we could figure out how to improve tolerance and acceptance.

HCPSS should not be turning a blind eye to those actions that made these other public discussions necessary. HCPSS needs to take this issue of racial discrimination and diversity more seriously by leading the way in looking at how to improve the education experience for all students.

Now we are at school budget time again. The \$572.2 million that the County Executive has proposed creates a \$53.9 million shortfall in what was requested by HCPSS. That's a huge gap and we are very worried that yet again the Diversity Coordinator will not be funded.

In the light of all the events that have taken place in this past school year plus the very general need we have for a Diversity Coordinator in a county where 60% of the student body is minority and African American children are 8 times as likely to enter the discipline pipeline, it is imperative that the funding take place for a Diversity Coordinator.

A Diversity Coordinator could look into hiring practices and work to ensure that our students see themselves represented in the people who are teaching them. This would be a win-win for all students and for the community at large as a focus on education makes our County of choice that much stronger.

There will always be tough decisions to make and we do not envy those choices you will need to make in the coming weeks, however the Diversity Coordinator should not even be a consideration of where a cut can be made. Currently, the make-up of our student body is American Indian/Alaskan 0.2% Asian 21.2% Black/African American 22.8% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander 0.1% Hispanic/Latino 10.4% White 39.1% Two or more races 6.2%

In case you didn't add as quickly as I spoke, that means that we have a 60% minority student body (and that doesn't even count our Jewish students who have faced many incidents of anti-semitism this school year). And currently, only 11% of our teachers are minority. This position will be a champion for 60% of our student body and improve the experiences of all our students. Don't leave 6 out of 10 students voiceless in the current climate.

On a personal note, if you would permit me a bit: I was tidying the teenager's room while he was on band trip. He's in 9th grade now and in his treasured possession spot, he still has the good behavior note from his 3rd grade teacher, Mr. Biskey, the first male teacher he had. He still visits him. These things matter. They are impactful.

Curriculum gaps. The oft-most cited problem my son has. Surprise, it started with the American Revolution and the War of 1812 where I had already given him the British perspective, which of course didn't quite fit with what he was being taught in his American classroom. It goes on and on, a wish to more fundamentally learn about Martin Luther King Jr, Malcolm X and the civil rights movement from an African-American perspective rather than from a white one. The list goes on. Hiroshima and Nagasaki, from a Japanese perspective. He believes he'll never get that in his school, that he has to search these things out for himself. But it doesn't have to be this way.

You have a chance to say yes to funds for the Diversity Coordinator so that our young students can see themselves reflected in their teachers. It's a simple thing that could be so powerful. Out of a budget of \$572 million, the \$150,000 necessary to fund this position is not even a drop in the bucket, but its potential for impact is immeasurable.

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/howard/columbia/ph-ho-cf-diversity-coordinator-0225-20160218-story.html>

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/investigations/bs-md-school-segregation-series-howard-20170325-story.html>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/20/opinion/where-did-all-the-black-teachers-go.html?action=click&pgtype=Homepage&clickSource=story-heading&module=opinion-c-col-left-region®ion=opinion-c-col-left-region&WT.nav=opinion-c-col-left-region&r=1>

<https://www.usnews.com/news/education-news/articles/2017-04-05/drop-out-risk-plummets-for-black-students-who-have-one-black-teacher>

Testimony of Rev. Janelle Bruce, Esq.
on behalf of People Acting Together in Howard County (PATH) ~ April 24, 2017

Good evening, my name is Rev. Janelle Bruce and I am a leader in PATH, People Acting Together in Howard. I would like to acknowledge all of the leaders in PATH and HCEA here tonight, many of whom spend their day preparing our children in Howard County to become the next leaders of our community.

As you know, PATH listened to over 1,400 parents, students, and educators about their hopes and concerns in Howard County to form the PATH United Agenda. We are proud to say that after committing to work with PATH, the Board of Education included many of these priorities in their budget recommendations. Specifically, they stand with the community in working to restore the nearly 90 paraprofessional positions that have been cut over the past 4 years and to hire a new coordinator of Diversity and Inclusion to manage training, curriculum, and incidents of racism. We're pleased that our new Board members are committed to the priorities of the community, and we need you to make those commitments a reality in this budget. We urge you to work with them to find the necessary funding to ensure our schools continue in excellence.

It's hard to believe we're still asking for the budget to fully fund our Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator Position. With the recent developments in our nation, state and county, the need for a Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator is even greater today than it was before and must be prioritized! There was a time when racism was reserved for the home and now people, including students feel emboldened to engaged in hateful acts, remarks and racial slurs.

We must ensure that our minority students whether Black, Latino, African, Asian, Muslim, Jewish or Caribbean are protected and feel safe in their classrooms! Our youth are also tired of seeing the hatred within their schools. In fact, an interfaith group of teens who are Christian, Muslim, Jewish & Unitarian Universalist have been meeting the last few months to learn about one another's faiths so they can build their own system of allies within Howard County Schools. While this is commendable, students shouldn't have to meet to determine how they'll protect and defend one another against racist and hateful acts, school should be a safe environment for all!

I'm tired of hearing little children and teenagers, within my church, who look like me tell me they've been called the "N Word" at school or at practice and nothing is done about it! Not only did we hear these stories over and over during our listening sessions, but one of my African American students, Michael, recently told me after the Presidential election, white students began using the "N word" so much that he stopped speaking up. The look on his face was one of hopelessness when he described how tired he was of having to address it every day and as the only black student in some of his classes, having to address it alone. I fully understood when he said he was tired, but at fifteen, he shouldn't be tired from dealing with racism in school, he should be tired from homework or staying up chatting with his friends too late.

I'm tired of hearing students who previously wore their hijabs say they're afraid to wear them now because they'll be called a terrorist or have it ripped off! I'm tired of my fellow Jewish clergy having a new story about one of her Jewish children being tormented for being Jewish every time I see her! I'm tired of hearing minority children saying there's no point in fighting,

it's not like they're doing anything about this. The Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator has been supported by the community, supported by the Superintendent, previously voted on unanimously by the Board of education and yet it still may not be funded?! This is unacceptable, it must be funded!

Regarding our Paraprofessionals – they are critical educators who were cut from Kindergarten classes, Media Centers, and Special Education classrooms. Hundreds of students told us how they needed more attention, while hundreds of educators told us how they were overstretched because of the paraprofessional cuts. With rising class sizes in our county, it is critical to have trained people who work hands-on with our young people! Imagine having 30...4 and 5 year olds and losing an adult who previously helped you manage them!

The monetary investment is minimal compared to the huge dividends for students and in terms of retention and educator satisfaction. If we want to keep the best educators in Howard County their needs must be supported! If we want to continue to produce students that excel and lead the nation, we must ensure our students' needs are met!

Community members have spoken and the Board of Education has listened. We want our Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator and we want our Paraprofessional positions restored in this budget!! We owe it to our children and we owe it to our educators!

Thank you.

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF FUNDING DIVERSITY COORDINATOR POSITION

John L. Caughey (Emeritus Professor of American Studies, UMCP)

5344 Racegate Run, Columbia, (Howard County) Maryland 21045 443-472-2104

Good evening. My name is John Caughey and I've have been a resident, a voting resident, of Howard County for 18 years and a professor at the University of Maryland College Park for 38 years. A remarkable characteristic of both the United States and Howard County is cultural diversity. It is also a notable characteristic of my American Studies Department. We study diversity and we embody diversity. A majority of our graduate students and our faculty are from minority groups – with African American, Latina, Asian American, International, as well as White American faculty and students. Together we study the cultural diversity of the United States with a variety of methods. We attend to the difficulties of diversity including racism, prejudice, discrimination, hate crimes and other forms of injustice. We also attend to the successful strides this society has made to accommodate diversity and to benefit from diversity. How much we have learned doing this together as a diverse department! How much we have learned about each other and from each other! Exploring diversity can be a wonderful educational opportunity with a multitude of benefits for students and educators.

This is what I want for the Howard County Public School System. A good diversity coordinator will help our schools alleviate the difficulties of diversity including the ignorance, misunderstandings, and micro-aggressions that have become all too common. A diversity coordinator will also help the school system take advantage of the educational benefits of diversity. The coordinator will assist the school system in producing culturally literate students who get along well with each other and who will become Howard County citizens who understand and value cultural differences and who know how to work together to make this county flourish.

It's great to have a Diversity Coordinator position on the books. But without funding the position is useless. I urge you to fund this position which will be a truly important benefit to Howard County. Thank you!

**Testimony presented at Ho Co Public Hearing on April 24, 2017 for Education
Capital and Operating Budget in favor of funding position of Coordinator for
Diversity and inclusion**

Name: Joy Patricia Martin

Address: 5344 Racegate Run, Columbia, MD 21045.

I am here today to urge Mr. Kittleman, and each of you council members to fully fund the position of Coordinator for Diversity and Inclusion.

I have never engaged in local issues before. However, this past year, along with the rash of hate incidents in our community, has been a game-changer for me.

My husband and I moved to Howard County as THE place to raise our bi-racial daughter who graduated high school eight years ago. In a university application essay she wrote, "Oakland Mills High is a uniquely diverse place that produces students with a deep sense of inclusion and justice. My friends were Haitian, Filipino, African-American, Japanese, Mormon, Baha'i, Jewish, Muslim, and Unitarian. . . . At Oakland Mills, affinity groups formed naturally, but there was a fluidity and ease between people of different races and classes." No doubt, my daughter had an wonderfully eye-opening and thought-provoking experience.

Now ... fast forward to the wrenching moments last November, when our students told a very different story — of hate incidents, bullying, and daily torment. One student turned to Mr. Elijah Cummings and other officials and pointedly asked, "What are you going to do about it"?

Hiring a Diversity Coordinator would be one concrete response. . . .

1. to expand cultural proficiency training of teachers and staff,
2. to deal with not just racial and religious, but all other discriminatory acts, and
3. to make our hiring practices and curriculum better reflect the diversity in our county.

Yes, you have competing budgetary concerns. But . . . in terms of "bang for your buck", please consider how our students would benefit if we hire a coordinator with vision, expertise, and leadership to address issues of diversity and discrimination.

Our children's world is becoming increasingly interconnected. We have to move forward, not backward into provincialism and intolerance. When we really get to know the "other", we find that they are more like us than not! I want our students, like my daughter, to see our differences not as something to fear or ridicule but as something enriching and to be celebrated. Thank you!

Dear County Executive and Members of the County Council:

My name is China Williams and I moved to Howard County in July specifically for the schools. We love it here. My son attends Triadelphia Ridge Elementary and he is doing great. His classes are interesting and challenging and the music education is superb. Please keep it this way by adequately funding the public schools. There is a lot of criticism of the school's proposed budget and the relationship that the superintendent has with the school board but please do not use the budget as leverage in this power struggle. It will only hurt the children.

HCPSS spends \$14k/pupil per year and the system is expected to take on 1000 additional children in 2018. This would require at minimum a \$14 million increase but the county executive has proposed only a \$10 million increase. That simply isn't enough to accommodate growth much less normal cost increases.

The public, the board and even the county council may not know every inch of this budget but the proposed amounts are not far-fetched. For the 2018 budget, non-county funding – from state and other sources -- has remained flat. Between 2016 and 2017, these revenue sources increased by about \$13 million. That is not the case for 2017 to 2018, state funding has increased by only \$3 million and other sources have declined. It is a moral imperative for the county to make up the difference. If the county can't sustain this extra burden, then it is the responsibility of the elected officials to amend school funding in the state budget for next year. But lack of budget priorities at the state level should not be passed on to Howard County children.

HCPSS budget has increased an average of \$36.1 million since 2013. While the proposed school budget is a larger increase than this average, the County Executive's counter-offer of an additional \$10 million is uncharacteristically low – the lowest in his career as county executive. Why so low now when other sources stagnating or declining?

In the school's proposed budget the largest expenditure increase is in instruction with a \$14 million increase. Since 2013, HCPSS's average increase in instruction has been \$11 million per year. It is a reality that costs rise and enrollment is increasing and funding must follow suit. From a bird's-eye view of the school's budget, the numbers support the right priorities – increases in classroom spending. These numbers are based on HCPSS's previous and current budgets assembled in the spreadsheet that I've provided.

There may be other conflicts but do not use the budget process to resolve these issues. Our children and the health of the school system should not bear the consequences of adults' conflicts.

