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**Board of Education Testimony
Howard County Council Budget Hearing
Wednesday, April 25, 2018**

Good evening, Chairperson Sigaty and members of the Council. As Chairman of the Board of Education, I appreciate this opportunity to represent the Board and the school system, and to advocate for the county's 56,000 public school students.

An excellent school system is at the heart of a strong community, and is the engine that drives economic growth in our county. The Board appreciates the support that our schools have long enjoyed from our community and county government leaders. That support is the bedrock of our system, and is the reason why so many businesses and residents choose Howard County for the quality of our schools.

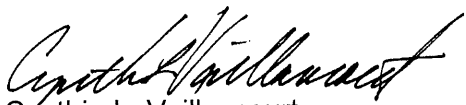
Providing maximum support for students and schools, while addressing the growing Employee Health Fund deficit, were the Board's primary priorities when preparing the school system budget request. We must act now to eliminate the structural imbalance in the Health Fund that, unaddressed, would continue to grow and is already on track to exceed \$50 million by next year. At the same time, we must provide for the resources and services that are essential to student achievement and well-being, but are out of reach for many students and families. These include nutritious food offerings and enhanced student supports and mental health services.

We must also continue to provide new, innovative learning opportunities for all students; move forward in giving all students equitable access to educational opportunity and resources; and invest in well-maintained facilities and infrastructure.

The Board of Education understands the fiscal pressures facing our local government. Preparing our budget request required many tough decisions to balance student and staff requirements with the urgent need to restore solvency to the Health Fund. Limiting student-teacher ratios is an important factor to student achievement, but we have made the difficult decision to increase class sizes for all grades. Other necessary compromises included eliminating the elementary world language program, postponing needed technology and infrastructure improvements, and reducing the numbers of new teachers and paraeducators in special education and other programs. We've pared expenses by restructuring and eliminated positions in the central office, and reducing funding for supplies and utilities.

The Board's FY 2019 Capital budget request provides for an accelerated opening for new High School #13 and completion of new Hanover Hills Elementary School, as well as a replacement for Talbott Springs Elementary School and necessary renovations and additions at Waverly Elementary and Hammond High School. These upgrades will relieve school overcapacity issues and provide for learning facilities well suited to current teaching and learning practices.

We are grateful to the County Council for your ongoing support. We look forward to working with you over the next several weeks to ensure our schools have the funding necessary to maintain the quality education that our students need and deserve, and that our community expects.



Cynthia L. Vaillancourt

Chairman, Howard County Board of Education

Superintendent's Testimony
Howard County Council Budget Hearing – Wednesday, April 25, 2018

Good evening, Chairperson Sigaty and members of the Council. The Howard County Public School System greatly appreciates the strong support we have historically received from our county government leaders. We appreciate your collaboration toward building an inclusive, nurturing environment and close opportunity gaps. This work, guided by our Strategic Call to Action, reflects the fundamental goals shared by our entire community: to educate, nurture and provide the best start in life for the 56,000 students in our system, and to sustain the staff members who are entrusted with our students' care.

We understand the pressures faced by county leaders in balancing the needs and priorities of all county agencies. Mahatma Gandhi said, "The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members." A large and growing percentage of our community and students struggle with poverty, homelessness, disabilities, and language barriers. These students' best chance at a bright future, and the outlook for our entire county, depend upon our success in preparing all children with the skills and opportunities to build a prosperous life.

Our reach in expanding educational programs and services is constrained by the fiscal reality of a structural Health Fund imbalance that is the outcome of unsustainable budget decisions made over several years. As a result, the need to fully fund employee health care costs for the first time in 10 years required us to make very difficult decisions. Ideally, I would choose to devote the entire funding increase toward addressing the Health Fund shortage. In reality, while we work toward re-establishing our system on a firm financial footing, we must continue to provide for the overall well-being of our students, and address growing shortages of school nurses, social workers, and other student supports.

Our investments in services such as daily access to nutritious food, health care and high quality preschool are fundamental to achievement. Investments in school security are essential to the safety and well-being of students and staff. Investments in innovative new learning options, such as the JumpStart dual enrollment initiative and new career academies, widen doors to opportunity for all students. Investments in staff ensure full access to the high quality education, services and skilled care that every child needs to thrive. Investments in facilities support high quality instruction and ensure the equitable allocation of resources throughout our schools and county.

We recognize that many of our challenges cannot be addressed overnight, and we must take the long view in introducing new initiatives and resolving structural budget issues. We have taken a hard look at our organization and processes, and streamlined our operations to align our work more closely with schools and instruction. We have put forward a multi-year, fiscally manageable and sustainable plan to resolve the fund imbalance, reverse student services staffing shortages, and provide essential services for our students.

For our capital budget, we've taken an innovative approach that relieves classroom overcrowding while expanding educational opportunities for all students and providing learning facilities designed to support 21st century education. We value the input and support of our county leaders in crafting solutions to budgetary challenges that meet the needs and priorities of all stakeholders.

Our school system is uniquely fortunate in having strong community engagement, highly skilled educators, well-maintained facilities, and a county government deeply committed to education. I am grateful for the consistent support you have shown for our schools, and value your continued collaboration in building an even brighter future for our students.

Michael J. Martirano
Interim Superintendent

Good Evening. Thank you Council Members for giving me this opportunity to speak.

We are all here tonight to ask you for funding consideration of many worthwhile projects, I am no different. There is current and projected tremendous growth for HCPSS and there is incredible pressure to find space and provide services so that each and every student can benefit from the outstanding quality education received through the HCPSS. But as a county, we can-**not** forget that our school system is also aging at the same time it is growing. We shouldn't and can't ignore that we need to renovate and keep current schools up to education standards.

In particular I ask that you be mindful of one school that should have had their planned renovations near completion at this time, as they were originally budgeted for completion in 2018. I know that you have heard prior testimony outlining all the reasons Hammond High School is in need of renovations and without even touching on the projected growth in the eastern section of the county , so tonight I will just highlight a few of those reasons:

The Gilbert Study done in 2008, found that Hammond High School did not meet minimum education standards. In fact when you compare the deficiency rating for all the schools in the county, Hammond ranked 3rd worst. Both schools that ranked lower, have been renovated. In fact the schools that ranked 4th, 5th, 6th, 8th and 10th have all already been renovated...

The primary Hammond High deficiencies identified in the 2008 Gilbert study include:

The special education program area is undersized by 63%, the GT program area is undersized by 58%, the student support center is undersized by 42%, the health suite is undersized by 17.3%, there is no space or office for students to receive speech, occupational or other therapy services, there is no auxiliary gym and the current gym's floor cannot be resurfaced again, the report goes on... it is a true testimony to the Hammond staff and community that they are able to make the current building work as seamlessly as they do. There is a reason Hammond has received the Board of Education's teamwork award as many times as they have. It takes unbelievable teamwork to make it all work and yet still be nationally recognized as the amazing school that it is, as a school of opportunity that promotes the best in every student that attends.

We are incredibly thankful to the HCPSS staff and Board of Education for their correction of the oversight of Hammond's renovation, by including and passing an amended FY 2019 Capital Budget and FY 2020-2024 Capital Improvement plan and to Executive Kittleman for including money for planning for a renovation and addition to Hammond High in this budget. I ask that you do the same and fully fund the Hammond High School project.

Thank you,

Jennifer Lastova



Oakland Mills Community Association
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April 25, 2018

Testimony on FY 19 HCPSS Capital and Operating Budgets

Good evening. My name is Jonathan Edelson. I am the Chairperson of the Oakland Mills Community Association Board of Directors and I am representing the Association and its Education Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to provide feedback on the HCPSS Capital and Operating Budgets.

As you know, we are very disappointed that the state is so far not providing the matching funds to replace Talbott Springs Elementary, and that the County Executive's capital budget proposal omits replacement language and instead calls for renovation. As you know, the Board of Education, the school staff, the Oakland Mills community, the Talbott Springs PTA, and the PTA Council of Howard County support full replacement of this aged facility that presents significant functional and even health challenges. We thank Ms. Terrasa and Dr. Ball for their advocacy and assistance in this matter. While we know you cannot change the form of the budget, we ask that you continue working with the County Executive and the state until all avenues of appeal are exhausted.

We also ask that you, as stewards of the county's finances, seek a satisfactory explanation for how this situation played out along with a plan from HCPSS to ensure this is handled more transparently and timely in the future. I have an MPIA request outstanding for all correspondence on the Talbott Springs CIP, but what we do know to date is that the IAC sent its rejection letter to the Director of School Construction on December 8, 2017. The school system sent a reply on February 8, 2018. The school system held a public meeting on February 20 where the only plan presented was a rebuild. Time and money were still being spent on the rebuild with no disclosure to the residents in attendance that it was in jeopardy. School staff and the community did not learn of the problem until March 29, as the Easter and Passover holiday weekend was getting underway and few were available to gather facts and start advocating for reconsideration.

Our community watched while situations like redistricting and high school 13 were given many hours of public debate, meetings, town halls, and media attention. Yet we were in the dark for nearly 4 months thinking that a school with 2 grades outside, failing HVAC, and repeated mold issues would be replaced. This is unacceptable, and we hope you will seek answers before granting more capital funds to projects that could go awry without transparency and timely communication.

p. 2, Oakland Mills Testimony, April 25, 2018

On the operating budget, we urge you to fund academic programs and staff salaries to the maximum you can. Especially important to Oakland Mills is retention of all day pre-K, which has measurable benefit to less advantaged children like the half who attend Talbott Springs or the two-thirds who attend Stevens Forest. We remain disappointed that other components of the Elementary School Model will be cut, and we hope that you can work with school leadership in the future to ensure equity in schools with challenged populations. Lately, there has been emphasis on school security including a controversial plan to increase police presence in schools. Such a plan also takes money, and we are investing less in programs designed to build a better future for our children while pursuing more programs that could further increase the racial and ethnic imbalance in disciplinary actions if we are not very, very careful. Howard County is known as a progressive county with a top notch education system. Budget cuts should not be regressive with greater impact on those who do not have the means to close the achievement gap through other channels.

Good evening. My name is Becky McKirahan. Our family lives off Mission road and our daughter is a current 9th grader at Hammond High School. I am here tonight to speak as a representative of Why Not Jessup in support of the 2019 Capital Budget for High school #13 and Hammond High School Renovations. The budget significantly accelerates the new 13th high school and the start of Hammond High School Renovation/Addition.

This past fall I started to see a lot of controversy surrounding the new high school. After Rockburn Park was rejected, the argument focused on Jessup with the prisons, mental hospitals, junkyards, sex trafficking and quarry.

On January 5th when Mission Road was taken off the table, we were shocked, as we looked at 77 acres of cleared land. I spent that first Monday calling as many people that I could. I learned the quarry still owned the land. It is zoned mixed use, and anything could go there. Several people told me that they 'didn't think Jessup cared, as no one had spoken up before.' As a family, we decided to speak up and be the change we wanted to see.

We were delighted to have neighbors, friends and community join our effort. Our Facebook group "Why Not Jessup" now has 350 members from all over the county. We read the environmental and air ambient studies. We toured the quarry and spoke to representatives at MDE Mining Program. We have walked Troy Park and met the White Family. We attended meetings, written countless emails, placed over 150 signs in the ground, shared dates and information with our local PTAs and handed out window clings. Our petition had over 595 signatures.

We respectfully acknowledge that Elkridge has a high volume of students and overcrowding at Howard. We are sorry that this same piece of property does not exist in their area. We are advocating for the 77 acres of land that had the MOU signed back in 2016 and was cleared, ready to proceed. We did not want to see anything else go on that land.

We were relieved when the Board of Education voted to approve Mission Road for High School #13. Mission Road will be a fantastic campus for two schools, park/recreation facilities and a water tower. It has passed all the testing and does not require the cost of grading of land.

As a community, we also support the start of the overdue Hammond High School Renovation/Addition to bring it up the standards of other high schools in Howard County. This Renovation is about more than 200 extra seats.

Deficiencies at Hammond High School:

- Special Education program undersized by 63.4%
- Student organization rooms are deficient by 64.2%
- GT undersized by 58.2%
- Staff lounge is undersized by 45.1%
- Student support center is undersized by 42.5%
- Guidance is undersized by 34.2% and is missing two offices.
- Music education program is undersized by 23.2%
- physical education program is undersized by 17.9% and no 2nd gym
- Nurse/health suite is undersized by 17.3%
- Art suite is undersized by 14.6%
- English language arts program is undersized by 10.4%
- We have no security vestibule

I had no idea when 2018 started what we were going to get involved in. We now understand the importance of staying involved in our community and what is happening around us, in all facets of our government. Thank you for allowing us to testify tonight.

We respect the County Council has a challenging task balance the needs of all of Howard County. We appreciate your continued support of education and to approve High School #13 and Hammond High School Renovations in the 2019 Capital Budget.

Respectfully submitted,

Becky McKirahan

Jessup, MD

Thank you all for letting us testify here tonight. I appreciate the opportunity.

My name is Krista Threefoot and I am testifying on behalf of the Stevens Forest Elementary PTA. We'd like to ask that you support Mr. Kittleman's budget allocation to fully fund the Howard County Board of education's request for the 2018-2019 school year.

But we would also like to express in a public forum our concerns that the budget request put forth by the Board of Education demonstrates a lack of support for equity in our schools.

Howard County Schools have a serious equity problem.

According to a university of Maryland study released last October, among ALL Maryland schools, the correlation between the percentage of students receiving FARMs assistance and low PARCC scores is the STRONGEST in Howard County, where a 10% increase in the number of students receiving assistance is associated with a 7% decrease in test scores.

The same is true for Howard County schools with high numbers of minority students: every 10 percentage point increase in the population of African American students in a school correlates with an 8 percentage point DECREASE in that school's PARCC scores.

In the second wealthiest county in the country, with one of the best school systems in the world, we are failing our most vulnerable students.

In the last few years, some efforts have been made to create programs that address the opportunity gap that exists in Howard County schools.

The Elementary School Model, particularly the world languages program, was implemented, with the idea that instruction in a second language would provide enrichment for kids whose families don't have the means to invest in extracurricular educational programs.

After a trial and error period that coincided with county-wide changes to curriculum and testing, world languages has become a valuable program. It provides an opportunity that our kids wouldn't otherwise have and enables schools like Stevens Forest to bridge the gap between our English- and Spanish-speaking communities, providing resources for our most marginalized students.

And now this budget is eliminating the program, on the basis that there was no evidence it was working – without providing any statistically valid reason to support that conclusion. The BOE has taken a program designed to close the opportunity gap and replaced it with *nothing*.

Other cuts the BOE has made in this budget also disproportionately affect Title 1 elementary schools. They added one student to class size limits, voting against a motion to exempt high-poverty schools from this requirement.

They voted to eliminate positions from the diversity and inclusion office.

And they seriously considered eliminating full-day PreK programs in certain Title 1 schools – even though full-day PreK is *proven* to promote equity in education.

Studies show that we have a problem with providing equal opportunities to disadvantaged students, and so does my personal experience.

Three years ago, my daughter's best friend moved from Stevens Forest to one of the wealthiest elementary schools in the county. When I last saw her mom, she told me stories about her daughter's friends and their Kumon classes and private tutors and elite gymnastics and track teams.

And then I told her about the awesome program we got last summer, where kids who otherwise wouldn't eat could come to Stevens Forest for a free lunch and weekend food boxes.

This is the disparity that exists in our county's schools.

As a PTA, it's our job to advocate for our students. I'd be failing my school if I didn't take this chance to put it on the record that we are disappointed with the budget our Board of Education has presented this year and frustrated with what we perceive as a lack of concern for our unique problems.

We appreciate the County Executive's decision to fully fund the request, and we hope the council follows suit, but we will not stop advocating for greater equity for our children and the children in schools like ours.



**Howard County Council Public Hearing
FY 2019 Capital Budget
April 25, 2018**

Testimony

Good evening Council Chair Sigaty and Council members. As chair of the Association of Community Services Public Policy Committee it is my privilege to offer support for several HCPSS projects that are included in the Executive Proposed FY 2019 Capital Budget.

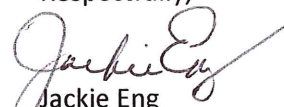
With our community's heightened awareness of the intrinsic link between quality schools and the availability of a full range of housing options, ACS is pleased with the extensive number of School System FY 2019 projects proposed in the Capital budget. The renovation, repair and replacement projects are critical to maintaining a strong system infrastructure.

In light of the legislated restrictions on housing development in the recently enacted Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance, you will not be surprised that ACS is particularly supportive of **Projects E1045 and C0352**. The former will enable the System to manage the disbursement of "Relocatable Classrooms" to help ensure elementary, middle and high schools are within capacity to the degree possible. The latter project will enable purchase of property so the System can move forward with planning and design for the much needed high school that will serve our county's southeast population. Similarly, **Project C0359** will enable the County to acquire in FY 2019 the land necessary for construction of a new elementary school in the Turf Valley neighborhood of Ellicott City. Each of these projects, as they progress, will help the system manage school capacity thereby enabling Council consideration of housing, including affordable housing, development in these selected areas.

Admittedly not having the details of the rationale, we would like to express a concern about zeroing out FY 2019 funding for **Project E0989—Barrier-Free Projects**. There has been an investment (\$5.6 million) since 1989; and the investment picks up again in FY 2020 at \$200,000 per year through 2024. We have two questions. First, is there perhaps leftover funding to enable some projects in 2019? Second, will a long-term investment (FY2020-2024) of \$200,000 be sufficient to assure, as the project states, "school buildings and school sites accessible to the public, students, teachers and staff"?

It has been my privilege to offer this testimony on behalf of our 145 nonprofit member organizations and community advocates who help provide the safety net for thousands of vulnerable residents in our community. Thank you.

Respectfully,



Jackie Eng

ACS Public Policy Chairperson

China Williams
3425 Huntsmans Run, Ellicott City

I am here today to say as loudly and as clearly as possible that our public schools need to be fully funded. That means reducing class sizes, paying down deficits, building more capacity, and offering programs that help every child to succeed.

The current proposed budget from the County Executive is a 3.8% increase from last year. This is about \$50 million less than what the Superintendent requested and is the amount that is needed to pay down the balance of the health-fund debt by 2018.

The county council does not have the authority to increase spending but my ask for the record is for a one-time allocation of \$50 million to address the deficit. By eliminating this obligation, the school system would be fully funded. It is a big ask, but our students and teachers are worth it.

The Superintendent has proposed increasing class sizes by one, which will provide a savings of \$5.4 million. At my children's school, increased class sizes means that kindergarten will swell from 25 to 26 children. That is a lot of little people to teach to read, write and do math, as well as break up arguments, zip up coats, and give them love and attention so that they grow and learn. The teacher, no matter how skilled, is not able to deliver high-quality instruction and preparation. Crowd control replaces teaching. This is not just anecdote; data supports this perspective.

Additionally, our school will not be able to hire a much-needed third night-time custodian due to staff reductions. Our two night-time janitors would be unable to complete all of their regular duties in addition to clean-up after special events. This means that the extra steps taken to ensure hygiene and cleanliness in the school is reduced. When the janitors can't wipe down all the surfaces, the health of our children and staff suffers.

In the wake of the Parkland shooting, the Superintendent held a town hall meeting in which he outlined steps to ensure the safety of the children. He identified important emergency preparedness and crowd management issues but he did not mention our most important tool: teachers. Small class sizes allow for teachers to engage with ALL students, including those who are isolated, ostracized, and potentially violent. If the county is committed to school safety, then small class sizes should be a budget priority every year.

2019 HCPSS Budget

	Superintendent Request	\$ Increase	% Increase	\$ Amount toward debt
Operating	\$644.97 million	\$72.1 million	12.60%	\$50.5 million
Capital	\$79.73 million			

	County Executive's Budget	\$ Increase	% Increase	\$ Amount toward debt
Operating	\$594.5 million	\$21.6 million	3.80%	\$11 million
Capital	\$63.7 million			

	Difference
Operating	\$50.47 million
Capital	\$16.03 million