

Testimony - CR 107-2019
Legislative Public Hearing - Monday, July 15, 2019

Good evening, Chairperson Rigby and members of the Council. I'm Sandra Austin, the budget manager for the Howard County Public School System, and I'm pleased to discuss the school system's FY 2020 Categorical Transfer and Supplemental budget request. This budget request reflects our school system's commitment to financial stability and focus on making student-centered decisions.

As you know, on May 29, 2019, the Howard County Council adopted its operating budget for FY 2020, which included funding of \$607,200,000 for the Howard County Public School System.

Based on this funding, the Board of Education adopted its final budget on June 6, 2019, making decisions to fully fund our the system's obligations and fund our projected health care costs.

These decisions required changes to the categorical appropriation approved by the County Council, which is why we are requesting a categorical transfer of funds by the County Council.

The budget, as adopted by the Board, approved the use of the unrestricted fund balance to provide additional resources for FY 2020, with an additional \$2,000,000 in the General Fund balance for a total of \$12,000,000. Additionally, the funding of \$5,106,703 received from the Kirwan Commission was appropriated by the County Council in Grant Funding, and this legislation will transfer those funds to the General Fund.

The total categorical transfer request and supplemental funding for FY 2020 reflects an increase of \$7,106,703 to cover costs associated with categories such as textbooks and instructional supplies, other instructional costs, special education, student personnel services and student transportation.

The Board's adopted budget also decreased expenditures in categories such as administration, operation and maintenance of plant, community services and capital outlay.

The process of achieving a balanced budget required many difficult decisions by the Board in order to adopt a budget that fulfills negotiated agreements for all bargaining units, maintains class sizes and fully funds employee health care costs without additional growth to the existing cumulative Health Fund deficit. I ask that you approve the budget request, so our school system can better meet our obligations and effectively move Howard County public schools forward.

I thank the County Council for listening today to the reasoning behind the Board's Categorical Transfer and Supplemental budget request.

Sandra Austin
HCPSS, Budget Manager