

County Council of Howard County, Maryland

2019 Legislative Session

Legislative day # 11

RESOLUTION NO. 112 - 2019

Introduced by: Christiana Mercer Rigby, Opel Jones, and Deb Jung

A **RESOLUTION** requesting the Howard County Public School System to draft, approve, and implement a lawful multi-year Integration Plan to ensure that Howard County Public Schools are integrated by socioeconomic factors.

Introduced and read first time on _____, 2019.

By order _____
Diane Schwartz Jones, Administrator to the County Council

Read for a second time and a public hearing held on _____, 2019.

By order _____
Diane Schwartz Jones, Administrator to the County Council

This Resolution was read the third time and was Adopted ____, Adopted with amendments ____, Failed ____, Withdrawn ____ by the County Council on _____, 2019.

Certified by _____
Diane Schwartz Jones, Administrator to the County Council

NOTE: [[text in brackets]] indicates deletions from existing language; TEXT IN SMALL CAPITALS indicates additions to existing language. ~~Strike out~~ indicates material deleted by amendment; Underlining indicates material added by amendment.

1 **WHEREAS**, in the post-slavery period of the United States, we as a nation have had a long
2 troubling history of attempting to justify “separate, but equal” public facilities and
3 accommodations as a way to deal with our ever-complex issue of race relations;
4

5 **WHEREAS**, in 1896, Plessy v. Ferguson legally upheld the notion that “separate, but equal” did
6 not violate the U.S. Constitution's Fourteenth Amendment, thus becoming the law of the land
7 until 1954 when the U.S. Supreme Court issued a decision in the Brown v. Board of Education of
8 Topeka, Kansas, case declaring that “separate educational facilities are inherently unequal”;
9

10 **WHEREAS**, Brown v. Board of Education, although met with much resistance and moving at
11 an ever so slow pace, ushered in the peak years of school desegregation efforts in the 1970s and
12 1980s resulting in a rapid narrowing of the K-12 racial and social-economic achievement gap;
13

14 **WHEREAS**, Howard County did not fully integrate its public school system until 1965, 11 years
15 after the Brown v. Board of Education decision, when the segregated Harriet Tubman High
16 School was closed and the students were sent to integrate Howard County public schools;
17

18 **WHEREAS**, according to an analysis of data from the National Center on Education Statistics
19 the number of segregated schools in the U.S. (defined as schools where less than 40 percent of
20 the student population is white) has doubled between 1996 and 2016;
21

22 **WHEREAS**, even in Howard County, Maryland, where diversity and inclusion are touted by
23 many, there is growing evidence that these desirable characteristics have declined in individual
24 schools in the Howard County Public School System;
25

26 **WHEREAS**, there are four Howard County Public School System high schools with percentages
27 of students who participate in the Free and Reduced Meal (FARM) program that are at or above
28 40 percent, nearly twice the countywide average of 22 percent, and there are five high schools

1 with percentages that are at or well below half the countywide average of students who
2 participate in the FARM program;

3
4 **WHEREAS**, the Howard County Public School System’s report, *Equity: Responding to*
5 *Performance and Opportunity Gaps in HCPSS* (June 2019) shows that achievement gaps in
6 Howard County Public Schools have grown over the last three years as evidenced by the
7 following data:

- 8 - Graduation rates for students who participate in the FARM program have dropped 5
9 points from 83% to 78%;
- 10 - Graduation rates for students who participate in the FARM program are 17 points lower
11 than non-FARMS (95% vs. 78%);
- 12 - Graduation rates for African American students are 6 points lower than for white students
13 (95% vs. 89%);
- 14 - Graduation rates for Hispanic students are 18 points lower than for white students (95%
15 vs. 77%);

16
17 **WHEREAS**, the Howard County Public School System affirms that there are concerns about
18 access and equity in the school system by declaring in their Equity report’s “Strategic Call to
19 Action” a charge to “...ensure[s] academic success and social-emotional well-being for each
20 student in an inclusive and nurturing environment that closes opportunity gaps.”;

21
22 **WHEREAS**, past development patterns in Howard County have lacked a diversity of housing
23 types throughout the county, compounding socioeconomic inequities seen in the school system;

24
25 **WHEREAS**, the County is building upon policies to expand housing affordability, diversifying
26 housing types and their distribution throughout the county;

27

1 **WHEREAS**, as succinctly stated in the Century Foundation’s article, entitled, “*The Benefits of*
2 *Socioeconomically and Racially Integrated Schools and Classrooms*” (April 2019), “*We know*
3 *that diverse classrooms, in which students learn cooperatively alongside those whose*
4 *perspectives and backgrounds are different from their own, are beneficial to all students*
5 *including middle-class white students because these environments promote creativity,*
6 *motivation, deeper learning, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.*”; and

7
8 **WHEREAS**, the Howard County Public School System is currently undergoing a school
9 boundary review process, presenting an opportunity to lawfully integrate the school system and
10 address the achievement gap issue through proactive integration plans.

11
12 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the County Council of Howard County,
13 Maryland, on this _____ day of _____, 2019 supports the Howard County Board of
14 Education and Howard County Public School System in their lawful efforts to integrate Howard
15 County Public Schools through the redistricting and boundary review process and focus
16 additional efforts and resources on addressing the achievement gaps and racial and
17 socioeconomic disparities in the Howard County Public School System.

18
19 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the County Council of Howard County, Maryland,
20 calls on the Board of Education and the Howard County Public School system to draft, approve,
21 and implement a lawful multi-year Integration Plan to ensure that Howard County Public
22 Schools are integrated by socioeconomic factors and remain integrated in future years.

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