

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~~

A RESOLUTION supporting the school board's efforts to address the achievement gaps by racial and socioeconomic factors in the Howard County Public School System, and committing the Howard County Council to examine land-use and zoning policies, housing goals, transportation access, and funding priorities to help support actions taken by the Howard County Public School System.

Introduced and read first time on September 3, 2019.

By order *Diane A. Jones*
Diane Schwartz Jones, Administrator to the County Council

Read for a second time and a public hearing held on September 18, 2019.

By order *Diane A. Jones*
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This Resolution was read the third time and was Adopted , Adopted with amendments , Failed , Withdrawn by the County Council on October 7, 2019.

Certified by *Diane A. Jones*
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**, “The Benefits of Racial and Economic Integration in Our Education System: Why
19 This Matters For Our Democracy” report (2009, Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and
20 Ethnicity) states that “We know from decades of scholarship that racially and economically
21 integrated education can promote individual lifelong success, stabilize communities, and secure
22 the economic viability of the nation. Unfortunately, deep and pervasive race and class-based
23 segregation is undermining these benefits that can accrue from an integrated education and is
24 compromising the very nature of our democracy.”; and
25

26 **WHEREAS**, according to an analysis of data from the National Center on Education Statistics
27 the number of segregated schools in the U.S. (defined as schools where less than 40 percent of
28 the student population is white) has doubled between 1996 and 2016;
29

1 **WHEREAS**, this history has created socioeconomic disparities nationwide and in Howard
2 County. As stated in the Howard County Office of the Local Children’s Board’s report “Access
3 to Opportunity in Howard County: Making the Case for Equity” (Winter 2019) “Like many other
4 affluent areas throughout Maryland and the United States, Howard County’s prosperity has the
5 effect of obscuring many of the historical and systemic factors that contribute to social and racial
6 inequities in the present day. After all, in Howard County, which now has one of the highest
7 performing school systems in the country, public schools were segregated until the mid-1960s,
8 nearly a decade after the Brown vs. Board of Education Supreme Court ruling. Other racially
9 prejudicial practices that limited opportunities and access to resources for people of color in
10 Howard County included redlining and restrictive housing covenants.”; and

11
12 **WHEREAS**, the Howard County Office of the Local Children’s Board’s report *Access to*
13 *Opportunity in Howard County: Making the Case for Equity* (Winter 2019) states that “Howard
14 County is often regarded as one of the best places to raise a family. The county is affluent, has
15 great schools and programs for young people, and a high standard of living. ... The county is
16 home to diverse communities of residents who come from a wide range of racial, ethnic, and
17 cultural backgrounds—for, example, nearly 40 percent of residents speak a language other than
18 English and 20 percent of county residents were born in a country other than the United States;
19 and

20
21 **WHEREAS**, despite the overall affluence and diversity in Howard County, there are areas of
22 socioeconomic disparities that create challenges and obstacles to equitable opportunities for
23 students and families; and.

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

1 **WHEREAS**, there are four Howard County Public School System high schools with percentages
2 of students who participate in the Free and Reduced Meal (FARM) program that are at or above
3 40 percent, nearly twice the countywide average of 22 percent, and there are five high schools
4 with percentages that are at or well below half the countywide average of students who
5 participate in the FARM program;

6
7 **WHEREAS**, five of the 12 high schools in Howard County enroll 72 percent of the students
8 participating in the FARM program, while the remaining seven high schools enroll the remaining
9 28 percent of students participating in the FARM program;

10
11 **WHEREAS:** Many students are impacted by social and economic inequities as noted in the
12 “Equity: Responding to Performance and Opportunity Gaps in HCPSS” (2019). The report states
13 “While overall graduation rates in HCPSS remain at over 90 percent, gaps among student groups
14 persist. Specifically, members of traditionally underserved student groups such as Black/African
15 American and Hispanic/Latinx students had lower four-year graduation rates than their peers
16 each year from the Class of 2016 through 2018. Students who received special services (FARMs,
17 special education, ESOL) also had lower graduation rates compared to their peers;”

18
19 **WHEREAS**, the Howard County Public School System’s report, *Equity: Responding to*
20 *Performance and Opportunity Gaps in HCPSS* (June 2019) shows that achievement gaps in
21 Howard County Public Schools have grown over the last three years as evidenced by the
22 following data:

- 23 - Graduation rates for students who participate in the FARM program have dropped 5
24 points from 83% to 78%;
- 25 - Graduation rates for students who participate in the FARM program are 17 points lower
26 than non-FARMs (95% vs. 78%) (78% vs. 95%);
- 27 - Graduation rates for African American students are 6 points lower than for white and
28 Asian students (95% vs. 89%) (89% vs. 95%);

1 - Graduation rates for Hispanic students are 18 points lower than for white and Asian
2 students (95% vs. 77%) (77% vs. 95%);

3
4 **WHEREAS: Many students are impacted by social and economic inequities as noted in the**
5 **“Equity: Responding to Performance and Opportunity Gaps in HCPSS” (2019). The report states**
6 **“While overall graduation rates in HCPSS remain at over 90 percent, gaps among student groups**
7 **persist. Specifically, members of traditionally underserved student groups such as Black/African**
8 **American and Hispanic/Latinx students had lower four-year graduation rates than their peers**
9 **each year from the Class of 2016 through 2018. Students who received special services (FARMS,**
10 **special education, ESOL) also had lower graduation rates compared to their peers. ... Compared**
11 **to a four-year graduation rate of over 91% for the Class of 2018, Black/African American**
12 **students graduated at a rate of 88.66%, Hispanic/Latinx students at 76.94%, students receiving**
13 **FARMS at 78.28%, students receiving special education services at 67.41%, and students eligible**
14 **for ESOL services at 43.44%.”;**

15
16 **WHEREAS,** the Howard County Public School System affirms that there are concerns about
17 access and equity in the school system by declaring in their Equity report’s “Strategic Call to
18 Action” a charge to “...ensure[s] academic success and social-emotional well-being for each
19 student in an inclusive and nurturing environment that closes opportunity gaps.”;

20
21 **WHEREAS,** past development patterns in Howard County have lacked a diversity of housing
22 types throughout the county, compounding socioeconomic inequities seen in the school system;

23
24 **WHEREAS,** the County is building upon policies to expand housing affordability, diversifying
25 housing types and their distribution throughout the county;

26
27 **WHEREAS,** as succinctly stated in the Century Foundation’s article, entitled, “*The Benefits of*
28 *Socioeconomically and Racially Integrated Schools and Classrooms*” (April 2019), “*We know*
29 *that diverse classrooms, in which students learn cooperatively alongside those whose*

1 *perspectives and backgrounds are different from their own, are beneficial to all students*
2 *including middle-class white students because these environments promote creativity,*
3 *motivation, deeper learning, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.”; and*
4

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

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

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

21 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the County Council of Howard County,
22 Maryland, on this *7th* day of *October*, 2019 supports the Howard County Board of Education and
23 Howard County Public School System in their efforts to lawfully integrate through the boundary
24 review process and focus their efforts and resources to close the achievement gaps and racial and
25 economic disparities in the Howard County Public School System.
26

27 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the County Council of Howard County, Maryland
28 commits to examining land-use and zoning policies, housing goals, and transportation access and

1 to recommend policy and funding options to help support actions taken by the Howard County
2 Public School System.

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