



April 25, 2022

Good Afternoon Councilmembers,

My name is Molly Meyer, a resident of Howard County-District 5 and I am writing to you representing the 71 Howard County School Psychology Association (HCSPA) members who serve our school system. We as school psychologists provide a wide variety of services within our district. For example, we conduct psychological assessments for students suspected of having educational disabilities to help identify the most appropriate school-based services. We regularly consult with teachers to develop effective academic and behavioral supports in their classrooms. And when students require counseling services or crisis support due to suicidal thoughts, we are there to listen and intervene. Today, I invite you to read our input as you consider the county budget as well as invite you to spend a day (or part of a day) in the life of a HCPSS school psychologist.

I am writing to emphasize the dire need for the proposed eight school psychologist positions that are currently in the HCPSS budget. These positions are essential now, more than ever, as we continue to navigate the lasting social-emotional and academic impacts of the pandemic. Of these eight proposed positions, three are to meet the staffing formula and service the expanding special education needs. Another two of those positions are to staff our additional preschool programs in accordance with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. School psychologists are well-versed in the importance of early intervention and provide teacher consultation, behavior supports and social-emotional well-being services to our youngest learners in these new pre-K programs.

And the final three positions are to increase support for our Regional Programs for Students with Emotional Disabilities at the elementary level. The five current regional programs allow for students to be taught in a comprehensive school, while accessing smaller class sizes and integrated daily social-emotional instruction taught by staff trained in both crisis prevention and crisis response. School psychologists work with these programs and experience first hand the level of expertise required to safely, physically, and emotionally respond to our students in crisis. While each crisis situation is unique, it may include physical aggression towards themselves or others-including using everyday objects as weapons. In other crises, students may leave the

school building and attempt to run into the parking lot and/or nearby roads. It is important to know that these crises can last anywhere from a few minutes to several hours.

As you may be aware, the HCPSS BOE voted to end the use of seclusion as a strategy to respond to such crises next year. The Howard County School Psychology Association (HCSPA) fully supports this change as a positive one for our students' well-being. However, we want to emphasize our concern that without additional appropriately trained staff for these programs, de-escalation can become more dangerous for both the student and the staff member. Full funding of the additional positions in the Fiscal Year 23 Proposed Budget will enable there to be a dedicated school psychologist for each elementary Regional ED Program and allow for increased prevention of these escalating events. In addition to spending more direct student time on prevention and coping strategies, the school psychologist will be able to provide increased training, consultation and case management with program staff and families.

Last year Howard County School Psychologists were one of three districts in the nation that achieved a proficiency distinction of Excellence in School Psychological Services determined by our national organization. On behalf of the Howard County School Psychology Association, I urge your support in allowing us to continue to provide high quality psychological services through funding of the HCPSS budget.

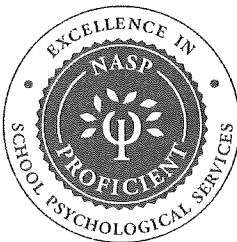
In closing, as I mentioned at the start of this letter, I invite you to spend a day (or part of a day) in the life of a HCPSS school psychologist. Please contact me to make the arrangements.

Best Regards,



Molly Meyer,

The Howard County School Psychologists Association



Sayers, Margery

From: jimarac <jimarac@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, April 25, 2022 2:09 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Jimara Kocik

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Buenas tardes

Mi nombre es Jimara Kocik y son madre de tres hijos en escuela del Condado de Howard County. Me di cuenta en la escuela de mi hijo quitaron el programa de enlace de ayuda a jóvenes hispanos. Mi hijo asiste a Lake Elkhorn Middle School. Grado 5to. Donde la oiblación hispana es bien alta.

Para poder comunicarme bien la ultima vez con temas relacionados con mi hijo y la escuela me asistio una traductora. Fue dificil y hacer las reuniones y tener una traductora. Tambien pertenezco al grupo de padres latinos con hijos con autismo y es bien dificil ayuda en espanol. Mi hijo tiene autismo, Cuando llamo siempre hay buzón de mensajes al family support telefono y parece nadie esta alli.

Necesitamos un departamento que maneje nuestras dificultades y nos brinde asistencia rapida y en nuestro idioma.

Yo aprendo ingles y ingles no se aprende de un dia al otro. Toma tiempo. La cominidad hispana en Columbia crece mucho y rapido. Por favor espero tome en cuenta mi experiencia y nos brinde apoyo.

Jimara Kocik
443-7105029

Sent from my Galaxy

Sayers, Margery

From: denisegiuliano5@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Denise Giuliano
<denisegiuliano5@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Monday, April 25, 2022 2:05 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Expand enhanced school-based mental health services to ALL Howard County public schools

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Dear Howard County Council,

I am writing in strong support of bringing enhanced mental health supports to ALL Howard County public schools.

As you know, all schools in Howard County have a standard set of mental health services available to students but only about 60 percent of schools have an enhanced set of supports that includes 1:1 counseling services – offered to students, with parent permission, by licensed professionals during the school day. County Executive Dr. Calvin Ball has promised \$1 million in funding for mental health, along with nearly \$1 million in philanthropic support from the Horizon Foundation and the Kahlert Foundation, to bolster this program. These investments will help bring these enhanced mental health supports to all Howard County public schools over the next two years. We urge you to protect and expand funding for this important program in this year's budget to ensure this gets done.

This program eliminates many barriers to students getting the help they need. Parents in these schools don't need to take off work to get their child to treatment, and students don't have to miss a bunch of instructional time waiting for and traveling to and from appointments. Nationally, more than 70 percent of students receiving mental health services access them in the school setting. Howard County must not fall behind, especially in this time of great stress and anxiety for our students.

We want every child in Howard County to have all the tools they need to thrive inside and outside of the classroom. After nearly two years of this pandemic, our students need these mental health supports more than ever. We strongly urge you to protect and expand funding for these enhanced school-based mental health services.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Denise Giuliano
10924 Kathleen Ct Columbia, MD 21044-3764 denisegiuliano5@gmail.com

Sayers, Margery

From: hweissbeedie@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Heidi Weiss-Beedie
<hweissbeedie@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Monday, April 25, 2022 1:43 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Expand enhanced school-based mental health services to ALL Howard County public schools

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Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Heidi Weiss-Beedie
6357 Early Red Ct Columbia, MD 21045-5400 hweissbeedie@icloud.com