

CR 69 - 2023

HCPSS Budget

215 - 4/20

Sayers, Margery

From: Karin Emery <karin.emery@verizon.net>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 10:10 PM
To: Jones, Opel; CouncilDistrict1@howardcountymd.gov; Jung, Deb; Rigby, Christiana; Yungmann, David; CouncilMail; Ball, Calvin
Subject: Fund The Renovation & Addition Process at Oakland Mills Middle School

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

Please fund the renovation and addition process at Oakland Mills Middle in the HCPSS Board of Education capital budget request.

Karin Emery

Sayers, Margery

From: Karin Emery <karin.emery@verizon.net>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 9:58 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Fund The Renovation & Addition Process at Oakland Mills Middle

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

Please fund the renovation and addition process at Oakland Mills Middle in the HCPSS Board of Education capital budget request.

Karin Emery

Sayers, Margery

From: Kristie L <kristielockwood@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 9:43 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: OMMS renovation and addition funding -- support

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

Dear Honorable Members of the Howard County Council:

I am writing to ask for your support for funding the renovation and addition process at Oakland Mills Middle School. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Kristine Lockwood
Columbia MD

Dear Howard County Council Members,

I strongly support the full funding of the Board of Education's capital funding request for Fiscal Year 2024. This plan will start the process for much-needed renovations to Oakland Mills Middle School, which is celebrating its 50th year.

With the Board of Education's capital plan, Oakland Mills High School, which is also in its 50th year, has been set as a clear priority to HCPSS and I do not want to see OMHS fall off the improvement plan again. With your support of this capital plan, Oakland Mills students, educators, and community members will no longer carry 20 percent of the deferred capital maintenance burden for the Howard County Public School System.

Thank you for your continued support to improve our school infrastructure.

Sincerely,
Jessica Mahajan
Oakland Mills parent

4/18
HCPSS



HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION

I, Jonathan Edelson, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

Oakland Mills Community Association to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding Capital Budget to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)

support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: Jonathan L. Edelson

Signature: [Handwritten Signature]

Date: April 18, 2023

Organization: Oakland Mills Community Association

Organization Address: 5851 Robert Oliver Place
Columbia, MD 21045

Number of Members: 29,000

Name of Chair/President: Jonathan Edelson

*This form can be submitted electronically via email to
councilmail@howardcountymd.gov no later than 2 hours prior to the start of the
Public Hearing.*



Oakland Mills Community Association
The Other Barn • 5851 Robert Oliver Place
Columbia, MD 21045

410-730-4610 • oaklandmills.org



April 18, 2023

Good evening. My name is Jonathan Edelson, and I am the chairman of the Oakland Mills Community Association (OMCA) and speaking on its behalf.

OMCA strongly supports the full funding of the Board of Education's capital funding request for Fiscal Year 2024. This funding includes \$4.4 million to begin the process of much needed renovations to Oakland Mills Middle School as well as an addition that will alleviate critical lack of middle school seats in Howard County by adding capacity in a central location with land and infrastructure already in place to accommodate the expansion.

We also support the Board of Education's capital plan, which lays out clear priorities and addresses both capacity needs and long-needed capital improvements to buildings that were originally constructed over 50 years ago, including Oakland Mills High School.

This budget and plan will finally address long-standing issues with school facilities both within Oakland Mills and throughout the county, and we look forward to the day when students and teachers in Oakland Mills are no longer carrying 20 percent of the deferred capital maintenance burden for the Howard County Public School System.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak with you about the capital budget.

Sayers, Margery

From: Jon Lemich <jonlemich@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 4:47 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: I support renovations to OMMS and OMHS

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

Good evening;

I support the plan to renovate Oakland Mills Middle and High school. They're in the heart of Columbia and need renovations badly. These renovations will add capacity and fix some problems the schools are suffering. Thank you!

Jon Lemich
9568 Patchin Ct.
Columbia, MD 21045



Community Action Council
of Howard County
HELPING PEOPLE. CHANGING LIVES.

Tracy Broccolino, President

April 17, 2023

Howard County Council
George Howard Building
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21043

Re: Written Testimony in Support of Fiscal Year 2024 Capital Budget

Dear Honorable Howard County Councilmembers,

On behalf of the Community Action Council (CAC) of Howard County, I share our support for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Capital Budget with the focus on increasing school capacity. County investment in both education AND housing provides innumerable benefits to our community. As you consider the proposed FY 2024 capital budget, please support Projects E-1036 and E-1049, the renovations of Oakland Mills and Dunloggin middle schools respectively. These renovations will add over 400 student seats to County schools.

As the County's designated anti-poverty agency focused on promoting and supporting families' self-sufficiency, CAC is keenly aware that housing and education are inextricably linked. Without adequate housing, families cannot access the exceptional education provided by the Howard County Public School System. All children are impacted when they attend overcrowded schools; yet children from families earning wages below the [Self-Sufficiency Standard](#) are often more negatively impacted. For many of the families CAC serves, the county public schools provide the academic support their families may not be able to provide oftentimes because their homes are not conducive to learning or their parents are working multiple jobs to remain in their homes. When classrooms are overcrowded, teachers are less likely to be able to provide the individualized support children need.

By approving the proposed FY2024 Capital Budget to increase school capacity at these two schools, the Council demonstrates its recognition of the reciprocal benefits of investing in education *and* housing. Maintaining an environment that supports the future success for *all students* is a win-win for those we collectively serve.



410-313-6440



9820 Patuxent Woods Drive
Columbia, MD 21046



www.cac-hc.org



Thank you for your consideration and your service to our community. You demonstrate the heart of this County – making it the special place it is for all citizens to thrive.

Most sincerely,

Tracy Broccolino, M.S., Ed



410-313-6440



9820 Patuxent Woods Drive
Columbia, MD 21046



www.cac-hc.org

Sayers, Margery

From: Laura Salganik <lsalganik@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 17, 2023 6:40 AM
To: CouncilMail
Cc: Betsy Singer Marcus
Subject: Capital budget projects E-1036 and E-1049

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



Dear Chair Rigby, Vice Chair Jung, Members of the Howard County Council:

As you consider the proposed FY 2024 capital budget, the Jewish Community Relations Council urges you to support Projects E-1036 and E-1049, the renovations of Oakland Mills and Dunloggin Middle Schools that will add over 400 student seats to county schools. The JCRC, guided by our Jewish values, seeks to promote the common good and to build mutual understanding between our local Jewish community of about 25,000 residents and the broader civic, ethnic, and religious communities here in the county.

Increasing school capacity throughout the county is critical to the preservation of current and development of sorely needed new affordable housing. Investment in both education AND housing provides multiple benefits to our community. Students from families with low incomes are negatively impacted academically and health-wise by overcrowding and school facilities that need maintenance. Likewise, lack of school space makes it more difficult to increase the amount of affordable housing. Recognizing that the Oakland Mills area has affordable housing, and that transportation is another challenge, we particularly hope that increasing the capacity of Dunloggin Middle School will allow for new affordable housing in that school's catchment area.

Thank you for your attention.

Betsy Singer Marcus and Laura Salganik
Co-chairs, Jewish Community Relations Council

Sayers, Margery

From: Ray LeVesque <levesque.ray2@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 16, 2023 3:12 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Support our County School System's Capital Budget

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

Dear Council Members:

I am writing to express my support for prudent investments in our County's School System Capital Budget to enable investment in both education **and** housing to provide complementary and reciprocal benefits to our community. While being mindful of fiscal soundness, I find it troubling that our County, wealthy as it is, exhibits the level of food insecurity and housing insecurity that it does. I see education - and the nutritional and emotional support that schools can also provide to students - as key parts of improving the future of all County citizens.

As you consider and finalize the proposed FY 2024 capital budget, please support the renovations of Oakland Mills and Dunloggin middle schools to add over 400 student seats to county schools. Educating all our children improves their foundation for a better future, which benefits all Howard County residents.

Thank you for the work you do for our community.

Sincerely,
Ray LeVesque

Sayers, Margery

From: Dona Oldfield <dona.oldfield@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 11, 2023 2:50 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Increasing capacity in our schools

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

Dear Council Members,

My husband and I have lived in Howard County for over 30 years. We raised our children here, and found the quality of our schools important to their lifetime success. I would like to encourage you to increase the capacity of our schools; in particular, to renovate and increase the capacity of Oakland Mills and Dunloggin Middle Schools.

Simultaneously, I would encourage you to address the increasingly important issue of affordable housing in Howard County. If we want good schools, we need to make sure that our teachers can afford to live here. If we want to keep Howard County a safe place to live, we need to ensure that our first responders can also afford to live here. Currently, living in Howard County isn't even a consideration for these important county employees - they almost always commute from less expensive neighboring counties. We need to ensure that they can find housing that they can afford in Howard County.

Investment in our schools and affordable housing are investments in the safety, success and future of our citizens and community. Please ensure that these wise investments are made.

All the best,
Dona Oldfield
12135 Red Stream Way
Columbia, MD 21044
410-707-5720

Sayers, Margery

From: Ruth Griffin <ruth.lewis.griffin@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 11, 2023 9:58 AM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Supporting Schools

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

Hello,

Thank you for your work in Howard County.

As a housing professional of over 35 years, a Columbia resident, and a Howard County landlady, I'm writing to ask for your support for school growth.

Investment in both education AND housing provides complementary and reciprocal benefits to our community. As you deliberate the proposed FY 2024 capital budget, please support the renovations of Oakland Mills and Dunloggin middle schools that will add over 400 student seats to county schools.

I appreciate your consideration and look forward to good results on this matter.

Take care,
Ruth

--

Ruth L. Griffin
443-622-7295 (m)

Sayers, Margery

From: Clara A. Scholl <clara.scholl@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 22, 2023 11:10 AM
To: CouncilMail; Ball, Calvin
Subject: Traffic and walk zones for middle schools - citizen testimony

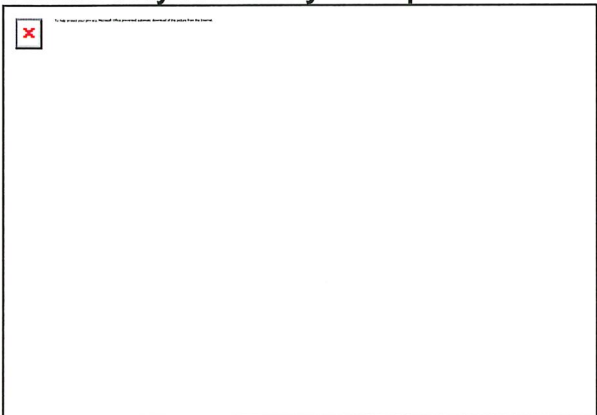
[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Dear Howard County Executive and Council,

I am a resident of Howard County in the Huntington neighborhood of King's Contrivance in Columbia, living on a suburban cul-de-sac off of Vollmerhausen. I am writing to share my perspectives regarding the expanded walk zones for Howard County Public Schools and how this updated walk zone interacts with traffic regulations in our area.

First and foremost: **I personally fully support an expanded walk zone for our public schools.** My home is 1.45 miles from my childrens' middle school, Patuxent Valley Middle School. My 11 year old is in 6th grade at PVMS right now, and I have two younger children who will attend PVMS in the future. While we currently have bus service from our home to PVMS, I totally support having them walk or bike 1.45 miles to attend middle school, and I am supportive of expanding the walk zone to 1.5 miles. This experience walking or bicycling nearly 3 miles daily - including substantial hills - will help them build physical and mental endurance and build a foundation of lifelong cardiovascular and cognitive health and also help them build a daily routine that is more environmentally sustainable.

That said, I am deeply concerned about the route they will need to walk or bike to get to school because vehicles driving on Vollmerhausen along the route that my children will have to walk or bike to get to school behave very recklessly and speed well above the posted 30 mph speed limit. This route is highlighted here:



In the past 6 years, there have been two car accidents with fatalities on this 30 mph stretch of Vollmerhausen Road, and numerous more incidents of excessive speed and vehicles running over the curb and onto the sidewalk. I do want to acknowledge that the county has taken steps to address this problem. The county has installed two speed devices that inform vehicles of their velocity, as well as large reflective signs around the curve where vehicles repeatedly run over the curb. However, these steps can be described as gestures with limited impact at best, as vehicles still exhibit excessive speed and driving behaviors are NOT changing. Meaningful changes would include speed cameras that **issue tickets, crosswalks with zebra stripes on the road for pedestrians to cross the road, including adding stop signs for vehicles that pedestrians can turn on - such devices are used in Washington, DC for pedestrians - see picture below** (at present there are only two zebra crossings for a 1.5-mile stretch of road - there should be one zebra crossing every 50 feet as this residential area has kids running across the street to friend's houses all along it, and drivers in Maryland don't seem to stop for pedestrians *when required by law - because the*

road infrastructure and driving policies and ticketing procedures provide zero feedback to do so), and **traffic calming infrastructure that forces vehicles to slow down.**



I recognize that there are real legal barriers preventing the county from taking these necessary steps immediately. Speed cameras that issue tickets may not be permitted outside a “school” zone limited to a 0.5 mile radius from the school (despite children walking to school from well outside that "school" zone), zebra crosswalks may not be permitted with limited sight distances for approaching vehicles, and traffic calming infrastructure may not be permitted on a road that emergency response vehicles travel. All that said, these reasons are precisely why I strongly urge the county executive and council to work with the necessary legislative organizations at the county and state level to make our community safe for some of its most vulnerable citizens: children who are walking and biking to get to school.

The traffic infrastructure should be designed first and foremost to support residents on foot and bicycle; and vehicles should be permitted in that space in a manner that enforces safe driving behaviors. While my testimony is specific to my family's experience along Vollmerhausen Road, similar principles apply to routes that county residents will be walking and bicycles all over the county with the expanded walk zones in place.

Please let me know if you have any questions regarding my testimony. Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective, and thank you for your hard work for all our citizens in Howard County.

Very respectfully,
Clara Scholl
443-765-2170
clara.scholl@gmail.com

Sayers, Margery

From: Sunil P. <spateel@caldrix.com>
Sent: Monday, March 20, 2023 5:40 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Science Olympiad Funding Bill

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

Dear Council,

Hi, my name is Sunil Pateel. I am a 12th grader at Reservoir High School in Howard County. Just recently there has been a bill passed by the Board of Education in Howard County giving funding to high schools in Howard County towards Science Olympiad. Science Olympiad is a science based competition in which students compete in various STEM events in order to win medals. Some examples of events in Science Olympiad are Astronomy, an event all about space, Environmental Chemistry, an event dedicated to water quality and the environment, and my favorite, Remote Sensing, an event that's about waves and how different satellites collect data. I have been doing Science Olympiad for 4 years and I have loved every moment of it. Currently I am an officer for my school's Science Olympiad Club because I want to spread my love for this to all students. It is such a good opportunity for students to engage in various STEM topics and activities that they normally wouldn't have. I am telling you all of this because this bill giving funding to schools for Science Olympiad will soon be passed on to you to either approve it or veto it. In order to give students all across Howard County the same wonderful experience I did, I implore you to accept this bill and increase or keep the same level of funding given in the bill.

Thank you!
Sunil Pateel

Sayers, Margery

From: Emily Gotowka <emilygotowka@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 15, 2023 11:55 AM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Dunloggin Middle School - Renovation Concerns

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

To Whom it May Concern,

I implore you to accelerate the much needed renovations on Dunloggin Middle School! If your child's safety was put in jeopardy daily due to lack of sufficient bathrooms, active rodent infestation, portables violating current fire code safety, and overcrowding leading to injuries by merely walking to class. As a tax paying citizen this is completely unsatisfactory! DMS has continually been neglected since it was originally placed on the FY2012-2015 operating budget. The renovation completion date has been deferred SIX TIMES! An incoming 6th grade student entering DMS in 2018, the original renovation completion date, will be a College Junior if DMS renovation is not completed until Sep 2027. THIS IS UNSAFE, UNSATISFACTORY, AND UNACCEPTABLE.

The DMS community has for too long waited patiently for our turn. Sadly, year after year, we were overlooked and consistently bumped further and further down the renovation list. Well the time is NOW. Due to your inaction and failure to protect our children – we will sit idle no more. When you jeopardize the safety of my child due to your ineptitude to realize the deplorable state of DMS, I will not rest until I know that my child. No child in the 21st century should be deprived of the accessibility of a bathroom!

Please accelerate the overdue and needed renovation of Dunloggin Middle School!

A Very Concerned Parent
Emily Gotowka

Sayers, Margery

From: Jo M. Glasco <jg500f@msn.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 9, 2023 10:13 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Funding for Added seats at Dunloggin and Oakland Mills Middle

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

Dear Sir and Madam. Please note that I support funding for the above and believe even more funding should occur to ease crowding in the schools. Thanks. Jo Glasco. 443 538 5394

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device
Get [Outlook for Android](#)

Sayers, Margery

From: Kevin Chin <kchin987@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 10, 2023 9:44 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Support for School Renovations

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

Hello Council,

Investment in both education AND housing provides complementary and reciprocal benefits to our community. As you deliberate the proposed FY 2024 capital budget, please support the renovations of Oakland Mills and Dunloggin middle schools that will add over 400 student seats to county schools.

**Sincerely,
Kevin Chin
Howard County Resident**

Sayers, Margery

From: Alfred Epangue <epangoll65@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, April 17, 2023 11:26 PM
To: CouncilMail

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

Investment in both education AND housing provides complementary and reciprocal benefits to our community. As you deliberate the proposed FY 2024 capital budget, please support the renovations of Oakland Mills and Dunloggin middle schools that will add over 400 student seats to county schools.

Sayers, Margery

From: Vivian Moore Lawyer <vmlawyerster@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 11, 2023 9:29 PM
To: CouncilMail

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

Dear County Council Members,

Investment in both education AND housing provides complementary and reciprocal benefits to our community. As you deliberate the proposed FY 2024 capital budget, please support the renovations of Oakland Mills and Dunloggin middle schools that will add over 400 student seats to county schools.

Thank you for your consideration.

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HCPSS
4/19



HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION

I, BRENT LOULESS, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

PTA Council of Howard County to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding Capital Budget to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)

support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: BRENT LOULESS

Signature: Brent Louless

Date: 4/18/2023

Organization: PTACHC

Organization Address: 5451 Beaverkill Columbia MD 21044

Number of Members: Representing 74 local PTA units in Howard County

Name of Chair/President: SHRINE GORANTALA

This form can be submitted electronically via email to
councilmail@howardcountymd.gov no later than 2 hours prior to the start of the
Public Hearing.

4118
HCPSS / HCLS



**HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION**

I, Jackie Eng, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

Housing Affordability Coalition to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding MD to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)

support for | opposition to | undecided on this legislation.
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: Jackie Eng

Signature: _____

Date: April 16, 2023

Organization: Howard County Housing Affordability Coalition

Organization Address: 9770 Patuxent Woods Drive Columbia MD 21046

9770 Patuxent Woods Drive Columbia MD 21046

Number of Members: 215 individuals; 42 organizations

Name of Chair/President: Jackie Eng, Coordinator

This form can be submitted electronically via email to councilmail@howardcountymd.gov no later than 5pm the day of the Public Hearing or delivered in person the night of the Public Hearing before testifying.

Sayers, Margery

From: Greg Guy <gregguy@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 21, 2023 12:10 PM
To: CouncilMail; Ball, Calvin
Subject: Howard County Schools Sports Safety / Athletic Trainer Positions

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

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing today in support of adding an Athletic Trainer position as a full-time position in each of the Howard County High Schools. I am the father of three students including two currently attending Centennial High School. This year alone, my two sons participated in JV Football, Varsity Basketball and Varsity Track. The reduction in trainers has directly jeopardized the safety of students including my children. My youngest son suffered a concussion at a JV Football game this past fall. There was one coach in attendance for Centennial High School and one shared trainer for the two schools. Being an away game, there was no trainer on the sideline for Centennial. The trainer for Reservoir tended to my son briefly immediately after the play however had to return to the other sideline and tend to other athletes. With only one coach in attendance for Centennial my son was not monitored or tended to.

My older son had similar issues being unable to receive treatment for ongoing injuries unless it fell on a home game or a Tuesday/Thursday when the trainer was at the school. This included a serious cut to his leg during a practice when a trainer was unavailable. Not having a trainer for each school is negligent and puts our children in danger. I strongly believe we should not be playing in athletic events unless there is a trainer for each school. If you cannot find money in the budget for full time trainers at each school, then you should terminate the sports programs. Our children's safety should be the paramount concern. If our county cannot afford this position at each school, we cannot afford to have athletics. Cutting positions and sharing trainers is not a compromise, it is negligence.

Greg Guy
443-415-5455

Sayers, Margery

From: Lisa Connelly-Duggan <lisacd17@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 20, 2023 6:25 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Omhs and omms renovations

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

Please fund!!!! Not equitable for us to continue to be passed over year after year!

Please!!!

Sayers, Margery

From: Jennifer O'Connor <jennyoc@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, April 20, 2023 1:07 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: HCPSS Full Time Athletic Trainers

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

Good Afternoon

Yesterday at my daughter's varsity softball game a teammate of hers was hit in the head with a pitch. Two batters later another player was hit in the elbow with a pitch. There was no athletic trainer on site that day since we have to share a trainer with another high school. It was a scary wait while our coach tried to reach the trainer by phone to be walked through the concussion protocols. I am writing today to request that full time athletic trainers remain in the 2023/2024 budget. Trainers are a very important line item in the budget and should remain for the safety and well being of our student athletes.

Thank you for your consideration
Jennifer O'Connor
410-209-7722

Sayers, Margery

From: Colin Moe <Colin_Moe@hcpss.org>
Sent: Thursday, April 20, 2023 9:21 AM
To: BoE Email; CouncilMail
Subject: CRITICAL NEED: Athletic Trainers

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

Good Morning Board of Education Members,

I am writing to you as a taxpayer and educator here in Howard County. On top of being an educator here for the past 10 years, I am a proud alumnus of the Howard County Public School System having graduated from Centennial High School in 2008. While at Centennial from 2004-2008, we ALWAYS had an athletic trainer available to us prior to practices, during practice, and at every athletic contest we participated in. They were critical in diagnosing injuries, treating injuries, and ensuring the safety of all student athletes. It is critical that they remain a part of the school system and that each high school have a dedicated athletic trainer for every athletic contest.

As I have read through the proposed budget and the \$66 million shortfall, I know that athletic trainers have not been cut from the budget, but I fear as negotiations continue, this could be on the chopping block. The lack of athletic trainers has already been a problem the last few school years, as athletic trainers have been shared between schools. It creates an unsafe environment for all student athletes to not have an athletic trainer on site during practices and contests. **Please do not consider cutting this necessity from the budget.**

Coaches are responsible for many duties during practice and games: coaching, player safety, dealing with officials, sideline management, etc. Having an athletic trainer present, or on campus, helps to alleviate some of the stress dealing with bumps, bruises, cuts, or more serious injury. Coaches are trained to deal with just about any injury a sport can throw at you but are not specifically trained as athletic trainers are. It is imperative that this continues to be funded, and not only funded, but held as an important aspect to student safety.

I leave you with this... In January, the world watched as the Buffalo Bills were playing against the Cincinnati Bengals in a critical game with playoff implications. Shortly after the game started, Damar Hamlin made a routine tackle that any person watching didn't see as violent. As he stood up, he again fell to the ground, where unbeknownst to most watching around America, his heart had stopped beating and he was in cardiac arrest. Because of the swift action of team official, most notably their head athletic trainer, CPR was initiated, and an AED was used, to bring Damar back to life. As a former football player myself, this shook me to my core. That could have been me, a teammate, a friend, a family member... We play the sport because we love it, but no one should ever enter a athletic contest thinking that it might be their last. That should have been a turning point for the importance of athletic trainers at EVERY ATHLETIC CONTEST. This is not only happening in professional sports, but also in college athletics, high school athletics, and even youth athletics. These stories are few and far between, but with the expertise of an athletic trainer on site, the likelihood of serious injury or death drastically declines.

Please take this into consideration as you continue to negotiate with the county council and executive to work out budget issues. Please continue to advocate to the county council and Executive Ball that more funding is needed to fund your proposed budget that makes student safety a priority. This is important and critical to the safety of all our high school student athletes. Thanks for your consideration.

Colin Moe
ALS Teacher/Team Leader
Best Buddies Sponsor

