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**To:** [CouncilMail](#)  
**Cc:** [boe@hcpss.org](mailto:boe@hcpss.org)  
**Subject:** Further testimony in support of Fully Funding HCPSS FY25 Operating Budget  
**Date:** Wednesday, May 8, 2024 11:01:30 PM  
**Attachments:** [DeBella CouncilPublic HearingComments2024-05-09.docx](#)

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Council Members,

I will present the attached comments at public hearing Thursday morning. Looking forward to hearing your thoughts. Two plots based on MSDE data are included to show that HCPSS focuses resources more efficiently relative to other Maryland school districts. HCPSS has relatively fewer non-instructional staff than any other Maryland school district, and more favorable student to faculty ratio than 95% of Maryland school districts.

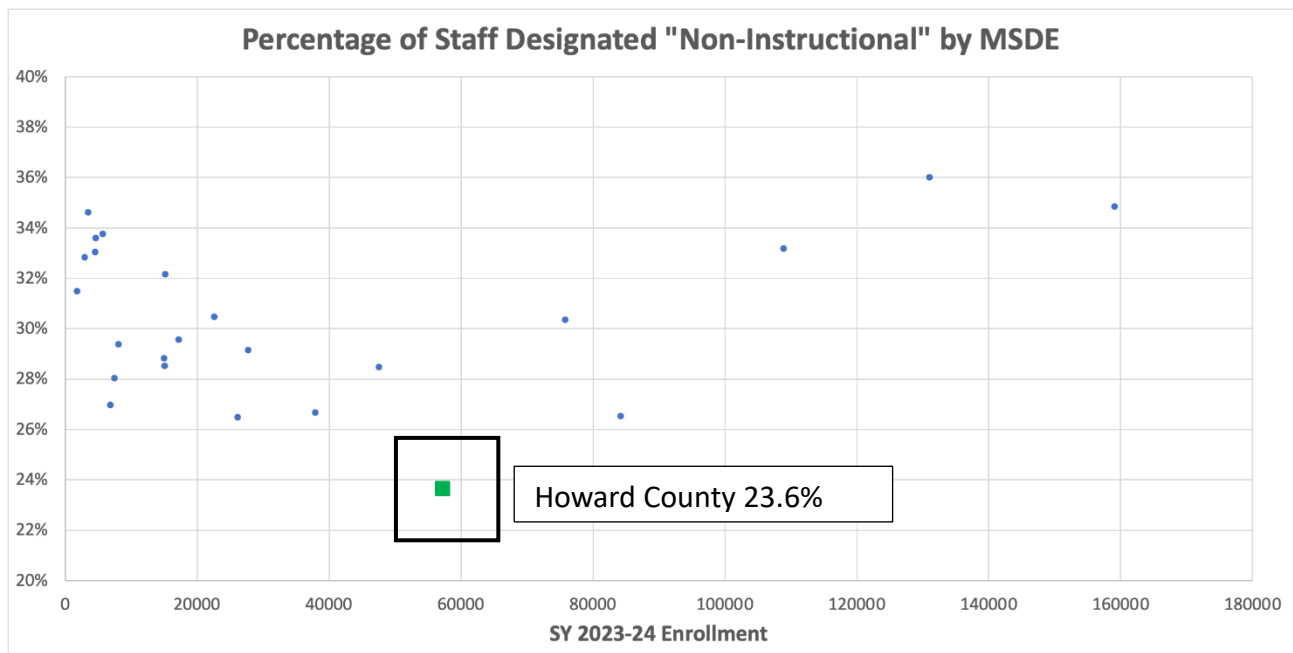
Respectfully,  
Anthony DeBella

Howard County Council Public Hearing Comments, May 9, 2024  
Anthony DeBella

At this point in the budget process, much has been accomplished, but there remains some ground to be gained in fully funding the HCPSS Board of Education request which is both necessary and affordable.

The Spending Affordability Advisory Committee’s guidance to maintain same-service levels of funding, as applied to a public school system, means maintaining class size and curriculum while meeting state and federal requirements, and adapting to changes in enrollment. Maintenance of Effort is NOT sufficient to ensure continuing same-service levels year over year.

I personally hope that the leadership and academic credibility of the superintendent demonstrated thus far in collaboration with the County Executive and County Council continues to influence the discussion. Data from recent MSDE staffing reports reinforces how worthwhile investments in HCPSS are. In Maryland, HCPSS spends the smallest share of their budget on non-instructional staff, regardless of enrollment.



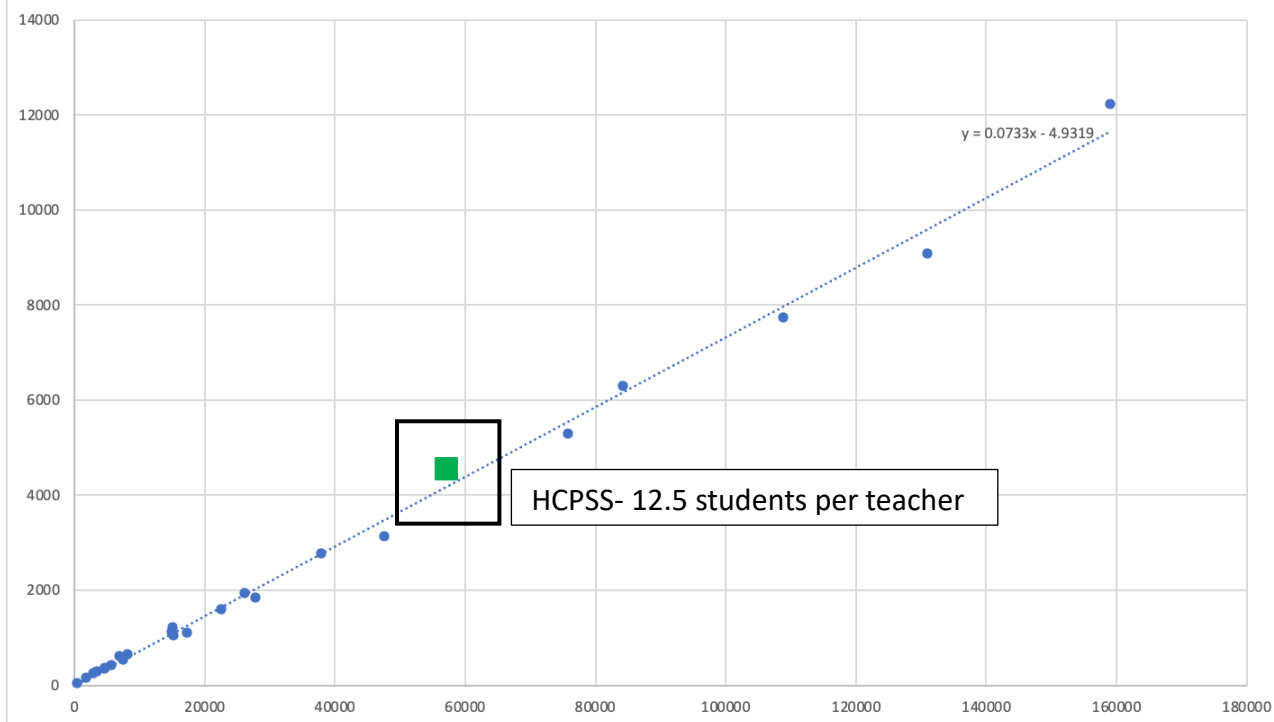
This chart shows the percentage of total staff MSDE considers “Non-Instructional” plotted against enrollment in the x-axis. I depicted HPCSS in the green square corresponding to its enrollment of approximately 58,000 students. Less than 24% of HCPSS staff are classified as non-instructional, and no Maryland school district of any size is below 26%.

An additional \$3M would represent the majority of the remaining funding required to restore the staffing reductions associated with class size increases that could reduce the number of courses within its academically diverse and excellent curriculum. It is notable that the Howard County operating budget yielded \$95M in surplus funds in 2024, and this council is considering raises for county employees, yet the Board of Education wrung their hands over \$25M in reductions to classroom personnel to scratch out a 1% increase in teachers’ salary.

In addition, I feel that fully funding the HCPSS request would give the Board confidence to enter into a multi-year contract for the teachers and paraeducators, and go a long way in rebuilding the trust with these workhorses of the school system while bringing some budgetary clarity to county level budgeting.

Salary will always be an important ingredient in recruiting any employee. MSDE data indicate that district-wide, HCPSS students enjoy more favorable student to faculty ratios than 95% of other Maryland students. HCPSS’ Student to Teacher ratio of 12.5 means there is 1 less student dividing a teacher’s attention. This difference in class size is a WIN-WIN for both students’ learning and teachers’ quality of life at work.

## Teachers vs. Enrollment Statewide 13.64 students per teacher



- In closing, this year's BoE request reflects a change from aspirational requests of the past, and barely maintains the curriculum for every student and necessary resources for teachers and materials. Yet, fully funding the BoE request will maintain some of the demonstrated advantage of HCPSS schools this year until increased state education funding becomes available next year.

## Non-Instructional Staff Ratio

Local Education Agency	Enrollment	Total Staff Employed	Total Instructional	Total Non-instructional	Percentage Non-Instructional
<b>Total State</b>	<b>885,808.5</b>	<b>128,707.7</b>	<b>88,592.9</b>	<b>40,114.8</b>	
Allegany	8,092.0	1,276.0	901.0	375.0	29.4%
Anne Arundel	84,176.5	11,336.6	8,328.2	3,008.4	26.5%
Baltimore City	75,742.5	10,874.7	7,574.4	3,300.3	30.3%
Baltimore	108,848.0	15,462.1	10,330.9	5,131.2	33.2%
Calvert	15,152.5	2,220.1	1,506.0	714.2	32.2%
Caroline	5,676.0	930.6	616.3	314.3	33.8%
Carroll	26,096.5	3,426.2	2,518.4	907.8	26.5%
Cecil	14,930.5	2,111.5	1,502.8	608.7	28.8%
Charles	27,708.0	3,853.6	2,730.5	1,123.0	29.1%
Dorchester	4,608.0	845.2	561.2	284.0	33.6%
Frederick	47,567.5	7,031.2	5,028.6	2,002.7	28.5%
Garrett	3,455.0	558.4	365.1	193.3	34.6%
Harford	37,873.0	5,414.0	3,969.5	1,444.5	26.7%
<b>Howard</b>	<b>57,190.0</b>	<b>8,861.3</b>	<b>6,766.0</b>	<b>2,095.3</b>	<b>23.6%</b>
Kent	1,732.0	322.3	220.8	101.6	31.5%
Montgomery	159,088.0	24,026.4	15,653.4	8,372.9	34.8%
Prince George's	130,980.0	18,180.4	11,633.9	6,546.5	36.0%
Queen Anne's	7,428.0	1,005.4	723.5	281.9	28.0%
SEED School	394.0	134.0	45.0	89.0	66.4%
Saint Mary's	17,214.5	2,316.5	1,631.6	684.9	29.6%
Somerset	2,894.0	600.0	403.0	197.0	32.8%
Talbot	4,482.5	708.3	474.2	234.0	33.0%
Washington	22,545.5	3,388.6	2,355.9	1,032.6	30.5%
Wicomico	15,086.0	2,569.6	1,836.5	733.2	28.5%
Worcester	6,848.0	1,254.8	916.3	338.5	27.0%

Extracted and derived from [Staff Employed at School and Central Office Levels](#), published by MSDE, October 2023

## Student Faculty Ratio, (Sorted)

School District	SFR	Enrollment
SEED School	9.85	394.0
Kent	10.75776398	1,732.0
Worcester	10.9603073	6,848.0
Somerset	11.21705426	2,894.0
Garrett	11.89328744	3,455.0
Wicomico	12.29002037	15,086.0
Allegany	12.39963224	8,092.0
<b>Howard</b>	<b>12.5460688</b>	<b>57,190.0</b>
Dorchester	12.68722467	4,608.0
Talbot	12.91042627	4,482.5
Montgomery	12.9968547	159,088.0
Cecil	13.18017302	14,930.5
Anne Arundel	13.36516783	84,176.5
Carroll	13.47333368	26,096.5
Caroline	13.54653938	5,676.0
Harford	13.58965158	37,873.0
Queen Anne's	13.83240223	7,428.0
Baltimore	14.04345358	108,848.0
Washington	14.05492176	22,545.5
Baltimore City	14.29562312	75,742.5
Prince George's	14.40353655	130,980.0
Calvert	14.50138769	15,152.5
Charles	14.98134631	27,708.0
Frederick	15.15081539	47,567.5
Saint Mary's	15.42241534	17,214.5

Extracted and derived from [Staff Employed at School and Central Office Levels](#), published by MSDE, October 2023



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May 9, 2024

The Oakland Mills Community Association is thrilled that much needed renovations and additions to Oakland Mills Middle School are imminent, and that the same is in the very near future for Oakland Mills High School. We urge the Howard County Council to support the County's Executive's proposed budget that will provide funding for long-overdue and very neglected facilities. We encourage you to uphold the Board of Education's position in the HCPSS capital budget moving forward to ensure occupancies in 2028 and 2031 for OMMS and OMHS, respectively. These facilities and the students and teachers they serve can wait no longer.

Thank you.

Brigitta Warren  
Village Manager  
Oakland Mill Community Association