

From: [Abhilasha Punje](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 10:23:39 AM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud parent of an alumni fine arts student, and Jazz/Marching Band student currently enrolled in school year 2024 and 2025. I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that arts education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My child's involvement in the arts in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of arts education on academic performance. Students engaged in the arts often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the class room and positively influence their academic achievements.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard arts programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles, theater productions, dance concerts, etc., teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that arts programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to arts funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Abhilasha Punje

From: [Allison Carpenter](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS Funding of 3rd Grade Strings
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 8:08:21 PM

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

Dear Members of the Howard County Council,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a music-loving student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

I played cello for six years between Elkridge Elementary School and Elkridge Landing Middle School, and I am now a senior at Howard High. For all six years, I was under Valerie Lawrence's teaching and learned valuable lessons about music and self-expression. Nothing can compare to the feeling of being on stage- performing with my peers and friends while creating beautiful, emotional music. Although I did not continue with orchestra in high school, the impact of my time playing cello has lasted. I would not have joined the color guard in the marching band in high school without the instruction of Mrs. Lawrence and the enthusiasm of band director Bryan Welker at Howard. Marching band has truly changed my life. I've become more outgoing and confident and connected with a lot of my peers. Music connects people in many ways and my life has been positively impacted by the music programs I've participated in.

Howard County has one of the best music programs in the country! If 3rd-grade strings are taken away from students, the quality of the program starts to slip. I am aware of other school systems that started cutting programs and those programs were never restored.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that music programs make to students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community like myself and my peers.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to music funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Allison Carpenter
alcarpe05@gmail.com

From: [William R. Rose](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [BoE Email](#); [CouncilMail](#); [Bill Barnes](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 4:50:53 PM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and
Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

The third grade Strings program is one that is well managed, demonstrably equitable, with a high-level of participation across all schools in the county. It is a foundational root and vital part of the infrastructure of the 3 - 12 instrumental music program that is an important part of Howard County Public School's reputation. The blanket removal of this program and its domino effect will have vast repercussions for years to come both on the quality of music instruction in Howard county and its reputation within the state and abroad.

I do recognize that the budget challenges this year are very stringent. I am curious why instead of adjusting staffing numbers, entire programs were chosen to be eliminated. This seems like a time where nuance and sensitivity are required to make changes that have the least impact on students.

I ask that you reinstate the funding necessary for the third-grade strings program, and find alternative means for closing the budget gap, including a more nuanced and informed approach to any staffing reductions you are pursuing.

Sincerely,

Bill Rose

CLES Orchestra Director

From: [Brittany Jacobs](#)
Subject: No Music Cuts
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 5:08:40 PM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and
Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud parent of a music-loving student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that music education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My child's involvement in music in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of music education on academic performance. Students engaged in music often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the music room and positively influence their academic achievements.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard music programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that music programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to music funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Brittany Jacobs

From: [CLESS Music Boosters](#)
To: boe@hcpss.org; Bill_Barnes@hcpss.org; Karalee_TurnerLittle@hcpss.org; [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Cc: terry_eberhardt@hcpss.org; Ebony_Langford-Brown@hcpss.org
Subject: Petition to Save Music Explodes!
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 8:03:02 AM
Attachments: [Signatures Save Music in HCPSS - petition signatures jobs 37915273 20240305124024.pdf](#)
[Comments Save Music in HCPSS - petition comments jobs 37915273 20240305124426.pdf](#)

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

In the last 24 hours, the petition Save Music in HCPSS!!!! <https://www.change.org/p/save-music-in-hcpss>, has gained over 1,000 signatures. As this email is being written, the petition stands at **3,882 signatures with no sign of slowing down.**

In the course of just 3 days thousands of parents, students, teachers, grandparents, and residents have expressed their desire to keep music in HCPSS. Their message is clear and as stewards of education in Howard County, it is your responsibility to honor that. Not only is it the clear will of the people, it is also the right thing to do for educational, social, emotional, and creative reasons. Take time to read the comments attached to this email. Music at a young age has made profound differences in the lives of the students in HCPSS.

As Annette Varoli, from Columbia wrote,
"Music is an integral part of creating a holistic education that benefits these students in so many ways! One of the main reasons we moved to Howard County is because of the amazing music education and performing arts opportunities available to students. My daughter was part of the 3rd grade Strings program at Swansfield Elementary and now as a senior applying to performing arts programs, she's been invited to audition and has been accepted at several of the nation's top colleges that only accept 1-3% of their applicants. We attribute much of her success in the performing arts to the music foundation she received early on in the Strings Program. Music in HCPSS has brought so much joy, creativity, well-being and a sense of community to so many children and families! Please, please do not cut any music and arts programs! They are the heart of our community!"

Attached to this email are two files: one listing the signatures and one listing comments left on the petition. We ask that you listen to Annette and the thousands of other music supporters and **reinstate full funding for music in all HCPSS schools.**

From: [Corine van der Weele](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 9:51:18 AM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud parent of a fine arts student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that arts education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My children's involvement in the arts in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

To be able to learn to play an instrument was something they looked forward to, it kept them engaged in school and after each performance they felt accomplishment and looked forward to doing more. Without music they would not have felt the sense of community. Music helped them gain the confidence and skills they need to be successful.

Now, my youngest is into art. He has a hard time being engaged in the more standard curriculum. Art is something he wants to do. Since he has been able to take art in high school his personality has grown in a positive direction. Through art he has started looking at his world around him and started to ask questions. He is engaged using his interest to look at his community and look at the future.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of arts education on academic performance. Students engaged in the arts often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the classroom and positively influence their academic achievements.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard arts programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles, theater productions, dance concerts, etc., teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that arts programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of

our community.

One of the HCPSS goals is to have children become career ready. I actually want to add to this that having a child be community ready is just as important. Music and Art are a way to teach children about community. There is a direct impact because of what they do.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to arts funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Corine van der Weele

3025 Greenway Dr.

Ellicott City, MD 21042

From: [Craig Renier](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: HCPSS Funding
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 4:01:10 PM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I am writing to you to express my concern with the proposed cuts to the HCPSS budget, which will result in the elimination of multiple positions and programs that are crucial to a well-rounded education that our students deserve. HCPSS has had a proud tradition of being one of the top school systems in Maryland but with these cuts, we will be relegated to mediocrity at best.

I find it disturbing that the first thing our government officials target when it comes to balancing budgets, is our education system. As it is, our education system is underfunded, our teachers are underpaid and as a result, we are attracting fewer qualified instructors to educate our future. We somehow always find ways to benefit the developers and other large businesses in our county, by providing financial incentives and perks justified with claims of future tax revenue. Instead, we should find better ways to direct funds toward improving our schools.

The arts in particular are a favorite for cuts. The arts are no less important for an education than math and science. In fact, they go hand in hand with these subjects by stimulating the creativity that is needed for success in all fields. Perhaps more importantly, the arts are crucial for the mental health of students. With each passing year, our students are facing more pressures and challenges to their emotional well-being. Cutting programs such as the arts, the participation in which is known to significantly reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression, is counter to our society's needs and goals.

I hope you reconsider these changes in the budget and put our children and our future first.

Regards,
Craig Renier
HCPSS Parent
Mt. Hebron HS

From: [Dan Bredice](#)
To: boe@hcpss.org; [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS Funding to Preserve Music Education
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 8:52:54 PM

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

Dr. Ball, Members of the Howard County Council; Members of the Howard County Board of Education; Acting-Superintendent Barnes

I hope this message finds you in good health and spirits. As a dedicated parent of a student who cherishes music education, I write to you with grave concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts looming over the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

The recent report in the Baltimore Sun outlining significant cuts to positions within the HCPSS has sent shockwaves through our community. With students and educators already grappling with increased class sizes in recent years, the prospect of further reductions is deeply distressing. I implore all our elected officials to collaborate closely with the HCPSS leadership to navigate this crisis and address the perennial funding challenges that continue to afflict our system.

I am compelled to emphasize the critical role that music education plays in nurturing well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and collaboration. My child's engagement with music within Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic journey but has also contributed profoundly to their holistic personal development.

A wealth of research underscores the myriad benefits of music education on academic performance. Students immersed in musical pursuits often demonstrate enhanced cognitive abilities, improved concentration, and heightened problem-solving skills. These advantages extend far beyond the confines of the music room, positively influencing their overall academic achievements.

Moreover, our esteemed music programs serve as the bedrock of community within our schools. The collaborative ethos of musical ensembles instills in students the values of teamwork, resilience, and perseverance—attributes that are indispensable not only in their scholastic pursuits but also in their future endeavors.

While I acknowledge the fiscal constraints confronting the HCPSS, I implore you to recognize the irreplaceable contribution of music programs to our students' lives. By investing robustly in the HCPSS as a whole, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I earnestly urge you to collaborate in averting any proposed cuts to music funding and to steadfastly support all programs deemed indispensable and well-managed within our county.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment and attention to this pressing matter.



Daniel P. Bredice
1-240-848-2758
10213 Spruce Way
Ellicott City, MD 21042
[Email](#)
[Linkedin](#)

From: [Dara Burstein](#)
To: boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent help needed in saving fine arts
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 7:02:17 AM

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

Hello,

Most parents have been instructed to email you stating the stats of the importance of a fine arts education. However, I am the parent of the Mt Hebron HS drum major. Her educational goal is to study music education and special education. How could you decrease her ability to get into college by decreasing her ability to study music. Would you cut math classes? Science? What about one of the 28 athletic coaches at the school? She has already had to seek educational opportunities outside her High School. She participates in bands at multiple universities. Without a proper music program in her HS she would be unable to do these things. How can you say one career path is more important than another. HCPSS already pushes our seniors to take classes at HCC to alleviate the "burden" of having to teach them in the district. My daughter is one of those students. She was set to take only one class her senior year at MT. Hebron BAND. This classes vigor and curriculum will have to change if the dept is cut the way it will be with proposed cuts. This is unacceptable.

I urge you not to cut fine arts in our high schools and in effect limit future fine arts educators, our future artists, musicians and performers. The world was devastated when COVID-19 shut down Broadway, how will you feel when you learn your decision today brought down the curtains for good!

Dara Burstein
917-648-6328

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Debbie Jackson](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 12:18:21 AM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud parent of a former fine arts student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that arts education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My child's involvement in the arts in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of arts education on academic performance. Students engaged in the arts often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the class room and positively influence their academic achievements.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard arts programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles, theater productions, dance concerts, etc., teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that arts programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to arts funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Debbie Jackson
443-370-4735

Sent from my iPhone

From: gibels@aol.com
To: [Ball, Calvin](mailto:Ball_Calvin); boe@hcpss.org; CouncilMail; bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Budget Vote Tonight
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 4:29:17 PM

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

Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. **As a retired HCPSS teacher**, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that music education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My child's involvement in music in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

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Furthermore, our Gold Standard music programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that music programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to music funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential

in our county.
Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Geoff Gibson

From: [Gillian Engelbrecht](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org; yun_lu@hcpss.org; jennifer_mallo@hcpss.org; linfeng_chen@hcpss.org; antonia_watts@hcpss.org; jolene_mosley@hcpss.org; Jacquelin_McCoy@hcpss.org; Robyn_Scates@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 5:37:03 PM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and
Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud music-loving alumna of HCPSS (Long Reach Class of 2014), and current HCPSS educator (middle school social studies) I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System.

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that music education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My involvement in music in Howard County schools when I was a student not only enriched my academic experience but also contributed to my overall personal development.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of music education on academic performance. Students engaged in music often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the music room and positively influence their academic achievements.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard music programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that music programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to music funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Gillian Engelbrecht

From: jacob.kuruville
To: [Ball, Calvin](mailto:Ball_Calvin); boe@hcpss.org; CouncilMail; bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 9:44:52 AM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope you are doing well. I am a proud parent of a fine arts student currently attending Mt. Hebron School and an alumni student who attended the same school in earlier years. This is a letter to inform you that I am concerned about the possibility of program cuts and staff reductions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the Baltimore Sun report regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years, and this news devastates our entire county. It's my request that all our elected officials work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that arts education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My children's involvement in the arts in Howard County schools has enriched their academic experience and contributed to their overall personal development.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of arts education on academic performance. Students engaged in the arts often show improved cognitive skills, concentration, and problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the classroom and positively influence their academic achievements.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard arts programs build community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles, theater productions, dance concerts, etc., teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that arts programs make to our student's lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in our community's future leaders, artists, and innovators.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to arts funding and continue supporting all programs considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jacob Kuruvilla

301-980-5130

Parent of Mt Hebron HS fine arts student

From: [Jen Retterer](#)
To: boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org; [Ball, Calvin](#)
Subject: Urgent request for HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 4:16:32 PM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and
Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud parent of a music-loving student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that music education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My child's involvement in music in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

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Furthermore, our Gold Standard music programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that music programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to music funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Retterer, HCPSS parent
391-910-0828

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: joanorcutt@aol.com
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 7:43:59 AM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud parent of two former fine arts students, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that arts education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My child's involvement in the arts in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of arts education on academic performance. Students engaged in the arts often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the class room and positively influence their academic achievements.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard arts programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles, theater productions, dance concerts, etc., teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

My own two daughters participated in the county school music programs from elementary school through high school and into college. To say that music teachers made an impact with them would be a drastic understatement. Let's be honest, we worship athletes in our society. And with that, many less athletic students flounder trying to find a place to fit in. Arts programs sweep many of these lost students up and gives them a home. They have a place to belong and flourish and make long lasting friendships. This is NOT a trivial matter. We wonder why students often feel disconnected in school. Go in person and look into the art room, the music room and the drama or dance rooms and see how invested these students are in their environment. We want well balanced students. We want students to be successful in school. We want students to feel like they belong SOMEWHERE! The arts programs that my own children enjoyed gave them that. My daughters did well academically, but it was the arts that provided that safe space. Children in the county schools deserve the same experiences that my daughters had. To do less is a very grave disservice!

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that arts programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in

HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to arts funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Joan Orcutt

joanorcutt@aol.com

12626 Fawn Run Ct

Ellicott City, MD. 21042

From: [Joanna Carpenter](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal to Fund the 3rd Grade Strings Program
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 8:05:35 PM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and
Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud parent of two music-loving children, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). I am also the Band and Strings Teacher at Running Brook Elementary School. I have been teaching instrumental music in HCPSS since 1992.

In my role as a teacher I have seen the excitement of younger children who can't wait to join 3rd grade strings and learn to play an instrument. The best part of my position is the success that 3rd graders achieve on their instruments and their smiles and pride after playing in their first concert. I am so happy when I see 3rd graders who may have some behavior challenges in the classroom be so successful in learning to play an instrument. I often hear from classroom teachers that students are doing so well in band and strings classes (when they may be struggling in their homeroom classrooms).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that music education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My childrens' involvement in music in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

While my daughter did not continue in orchestra at Howard High School, she did join the Color Guard in the Howard High School Marching Band. This has been life changing for her.

My son has played an instrument since third grade at Elkridge Elementary School. He played viola in 3rd grade, then trombone starting in 4th grade. He is also in the Howard High School Marching Band and Wind Ensemble. The band and orchestra room is their "safe space" in high school. It was the same for me as a member of the band at Oakland

Mills High School from 1984- 1988.

Howard County has one of the best music programs in the country, and this is why. If 3rd grade strings are taken away from our children, the quality of the program starts to slip. I am aware of other school systems that started cutting programs and those programs were never recovered.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of music education on academic performance. Students engaged in music often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the music room and positively influence their academic achievements.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard music programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that music programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to music funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Joanna Carpenter

joannasc70@gmail.com

410-733-5572

From: [Joey Yeoh](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [BoE Email](#); [CouncilMail](#); [Bill Barnes](#)
Subject: Concerns About Cutting the 3rd Grade Orchestra Program
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 4:18:43 PM

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

Dear Superintendent Barnes and Members of the Board of Education,

My name is Joey Yeoh and I am a first-year orchestra teacher at Hanover Hills Elementary School. Like many other people in support of the music program, I am writing to express my concerns about the decision to cut the 3rd-grade orchestra program.

Growing up in the Montgomery County Public School System, I started playing the violin in 2nd grade with a private teacher, an experience that significantly impacted my life. Throughout my schooling years, I admittedly struggled to stay afloat in most of my academic studies, but the only place where I excelled was in the music department. Even back then, I already knew that when I grew up, I wanted to do something related to music. Music is where I found my comfort and I continued my journey throughout middle, high school, and even college. I am now a music teacher today all because I had the opportunity to play a musical instrument at such a young age. Reflecting upon it, it is incredible to see how my decision to play an instrument at 7 years old has shaped my entire life.

Starting a string instrument at a young age is so important. Learning an instrument at a young age **helps the development of fine motor skills, coordination, and finger dexterity**. String players must use their hands independently of each other to play their instrument, which is helpful in training left/right hand coordination. Fine motor skills also improve with playing a string instrument as students need to be able to move their left-hand fingers to play different notes while also gripping their bow with their right hand. Learning an instrument also means reading music, decoding it, then translating that to the instrument. This process greatly helps to **strengthen cognitive abilities including memory, attention, and problem solving**. In fact, **students who are involved in music programs also tend to perform well academically**. I see this in my own school's program as well: the students who excel in their academics, participate in spelling bees, competitions, and multiple extracurricular activities are usually the same students who are involved in the music program.

Learning an instrument also requires consistent practice, which **instills good values such as patience, diligence, responsibility, and discipline**. All of these values carry over into other areas of students' lives as well. Being a part of an orchestra at such a young age **teaches the importance of community and fosters a sense of teamwork and cooperation through listening to others and working collaboratively to create music**. These traits also carry into other areas of students' lives as well.

Being involved in a music program is also **very beneficial for students' mental health as it allows students to express their emotions in a creative and constructive way**. With all the academic pressure that students must face, music can act as an emotional outlet for many and even provide a sense of accomplishment. A lot of students come to my classroom throughout the week to practice because they find that practicing their instrument is more fulfilling and enjoyable than going to recess. As you can see, there are many significant reasons why 3rd-grade orchestra should not be cut.

On the other hand, some people may argue that students should just take private lessons if they are interested in learning an instrument. However, not every family can afford to take private lessons, which is why 3rd grade orchestra is such a **vital** opportunity for many students. I currently teach 84 3rd-graders, which makes up close to 60% of my entire orchestra program. Only 2 out of 84 3rd-graders take private lessons, which leaves 82 students who depend on the school for lessons. By taking away 3rd grade orchestra, you are taking away opportunities from all the students who want the chance to learn an instrument. Howard County is a county that greatly values equality and equal opportunity. However, I believe that taking away the only chance for a lot of our young students to learn an instrument would not be equitable at all. It is evident that there are many students who are interested in learning a string instrument at that young age. In fact, a lot of my students would've started strings in kindergarten if that was an option that was open to them.

Music undeniably holds immense importance as it is present in almost every aspect of our daily lives. Whether it's on the radio, enriching cinematic films, playing at celebrations, or in the background during routine activities such as grocery shopping, music is a constant presence. In classrooms, it can aid students in memorizing complex material and contributes to a conducive learning environment. Music is universally embraced and enjoyed by everyone. The music that surrounds us would not exist without professional musicians, but without amateur musicians, you cannot have professional musicians.

Our music programs are invaluable, and so are the dedicated teachers in our county. Every teacher has worked tirelessly in building the programs we have today, fostering positive relationships within the community. Witnessing years of hard work potentially being thrown away is disheartening if this proposal is approved. Howard County is special **because** of the 3rd grade orchestra program. Personally, it played a pivotal role in my decision to work in the county as it distinguishes Howard County from every other county. Removing such a beloved program would be a significant disservice to the community.

In conclusion, the 3rd-grade orchestra program is not just an elective; it's an investment in the holistic development of our students through providing a well-rounded education. The benefits extend far beyond the music department, impacting academic performance,

fostering essential traits and values, and contributing to the overall well-being of our students. As we strive to provide equal opportunities and uphold the values of our community, persevering the 3rd-grade orchestra program is not just an option; it is a necessity in nurturing well-rounded individuals. I urge you to consider the lasting impact that this program has on our students and the uniqueness that it brings to the Howard County Public School System.

Our community thrives because of unique programs like the 3rd-grade orchestra, and I strongly believe that its preservation will continue to enrich the lives of future students. Thank you so much for your time and thoughtful consideration of this matter. Your attentiveness to our voices is greatly appreciated.

Ms. Joey Yeoh

Orchestra Teacher

Hanover Hills Elementary School | [HHES Music Website](#)

From: juiceoric@aol.com
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 8:46:13 PM

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

Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and
Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud parent of two music-loving children, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS), including cutting 3rd grade instrumental music. Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that music education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My childrens' involvement in music in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

While my daughter did not continue in orchestra at Howard High School, she did join the Color Guard in the Howard High School Marching Band. This has been life changing for her.

My son has played an instrument since third grade at Elkridge Elementary School. He played viola in 3rd grade, then trombone starting in 4th grade. He is also in the Howard High School Marching Band and Wind Ensemble. The band and orchestra room is their "safe space" in high school. It was the same for me as a member of the band at Oakland Mills High School from 1984- 1988.

Howard County has one of the best music programs in the country, and this is why. If 3rd grade strings are taken away from our children, the quality of the program starts to slip. I am aware of other school systems that started cutting programs and those programs were never recovered.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of music education on academic performance. Students engaged in music often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the music room and positively influence their academic achievements.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard music programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that music programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to music funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

John Carpenter

JUICEorJC@aol.com

301-221-6328

From: [Jonathan Sindler](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [BoE Email](#); [CouncilMail](#); [Bill Barnes](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 4:34:01 PM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and
Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud HCPSS Music Teacher, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System. I taught for 19 years in the Baltimore County Public Schools and not only did I regard the Howard County music program as the top in the state, but I always dreamt of teaching here. In 2015, my dreams were realized and these past 9 years have been the happiest of my 28 year career.

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that music education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My students' involvement in music in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development. Music is one of the largest faces of any school system as our product is almost always put on stage in front of crowds of people.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of music education on academic performance. Students engaged in music often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the music room and positively influence their academic achievements.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard music programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that music programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to music funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Sindler

Director of Bands

Rainbow Representative

Mount View Middle School

12101 Woodford Drive

Marriottsville, Md. 21104

410-313-5545

Doing your best at this moment puts you in the best place for the next moment.

- Oprah Winfrey

From: [Judy Herrmann](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent - Please Fund HCPSS Arts Programs
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 12:07:44 AM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes:

One of the reasons my family has been so happy with our HCPSS experience has been the robust arts programs that our daughter has benefitted from at Veterans Elementary, Ellicott Mills Middle School and Mt. Hebron High School, where she is currently in her Junior year. As we are sure you are aware, [countless studies](#) have shown the benefits of the arts - the link between playing music and improved mathematical ability, how the team building skills, perseverance and self-confidence gained through participation in performing arts such as band, orchestra, dance and theatre impact career readiness and, above all, how the arts enhance social bonding/connection and improve mental health outcomes.

We don't know if you can imagine just how shocked, dismayed, and betrayed we felt upon learning about the planned staffing cuts that seem to be disproportionately targeting fine and performing arts faculty. We can't speak to what other schools are planning but it's our understanding that Mount Hebron intends to cut more than half of the current art-related faculty positions. Not only will this dramatically reduce the number and variety of arts related classes offered, but it will completely decimate the extracurricular arts programs including Marching Unit and Musical Theatre.

We urge you not to underestimate the value of a robust in-school and after-school arts program to students and their families. Through her participation in these programs, our daughter has made life-long friendships, learned how to build and be part of a tightly knit community and created a safe haven where she can set aside all of the stresses of modern teenage life. She has practiced countless critical life skills including creative problem-solving, critical thinking, and the ability to work closely with others to achieve a goal much larger than oneself. Thanks to her participation in the art programs during and after school, she has gained important career skills and a deeper understanding of what it means to contribute to society.

We understand that HCPSS is facing a budget shortfall but at a time when so many children and adolescents are struggling with anxiety and other mental health issues - a time when empathy and mutual understanding seem to be at an all time low - the arts are the last thing you should consider cutting!

We urge you to find a way to keep these critical programs and the remarkable faculty members who have built them intact. Our children need the arts now more than ever.

Sincerely,

Judy Herrmann & Michael Starke

From: [Julie Saitta](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); [Bill Barnes](#)
Subject: Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 8:47:09 AM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud parent of a fine arts student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county.

We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that arts education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My child's involvement in the arts in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of arts education on academic performance. Students engaged in the arts often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the classroom and positively influence their academic achievements.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard arts programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles, theater productions, dance concerts, etc., teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that arts programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to arts funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Julie Saitta

667-300-8589

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

From: [K.C](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); BudgetFeedback@hcpss.org; bill_barnes@hcpss.org; boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 7:31:48 PM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and
Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud parent of a music-loving student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

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I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that music programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to music funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kashif Choudhry
2516105074

From: [Kay Vandenberg](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [Boe](#); CouncilDistrict1@howardcountymd.gov; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 4:53:35 PM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud parent of a fine arts student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county.

We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that arts education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My child's involvement in the arts in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of arts education on academic performance. Students engaged in the arts often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the classroom and positively influence their academic achievements.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard arts programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles, theater productions, dance concerts, etc., teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that arts programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to arts funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

All three of my children have benefited from the fine arts that are so valued in our school community, including 3rd grade strings education. Please keep fine arts funding intact.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kay Vandenberg, MD, FACOG

Kvandnberg@aol.com
301-310-3152

[Sent from the all new AOL app for iOS](#)

From: lisacangi5@gmail.com
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 11:34:27 AM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Arts education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. All three of my children attended HCPSS schools and are now in college and beyond. All of them developed as musicians due to the amazing music programs at Hollifield Station Elem, Patapsco Middle and Mount Hebron High school. Their experiences were life altering. My son had leadership opportunities being a member of the marching band in high school and is now teaching students at other high schools in this county and in Baltimore. He is a business leadership and management major in college with a minor in music. He is now performing with a professional world percussion corp. All of this is due to the outstanding educators that taught him from the very young age of nine years old.

Both of my daughters participated in chorus from elementary through high school. One participated in school plays and developed confidence and lifelong friendships. She is now the president of her acapella group at college and helps to mentor younger students. The other plays acoustic guitar, self-taught, and uses this a relaxation technique while she balances life as a PhD immunology student. All of my children stay connected with their music teachers.

I am a private reading tutor, former HCPSS teacher, and teach the Orton-Gillingham intervention for students with dyslexia. Students with learning differences need an opportunity to develop various areas of their brain and arts education is vitally important to this task. Research consistently highlights the positive impact of arts education on academic performance. Students engaged in the arts often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the classroom and positively influence their academic achievements.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard arts programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles, theater productions, dance concerts, etc., teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that arts programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

Please work together to solve any proposed cuts to arts funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best Regards,

Lisa Cangialosi

*Orton-Gillingham Reading Tutor
Preschool Reading Teacher*

MD Certified Teacher

From: [Marcie Sivakoff](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 2:27:44 PM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

As a proud parent of a fine arts student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to remind our elected officials that arts education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My child's involvement in the arts in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of arts education on academic performance. Students engaged in the arts often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the class room and positively influence their academic achievements.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard arts programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles, theater productions, dance concerts, etc., teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that arts programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to arts funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Marcie Sivakoff

From: [Margaret Fischer](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Please fund arts education
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 11:59:45 AM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I understand that we are in a budget crisis within our school system. But I don't think anyone considered that staffing reductions would hit the fine and performing arts to a disproportionate degree.

At Mt. Hebron alone, there is a proposal to make band, choir, theater and dance part time and eliminate the part-time guitar teacher. That makes a performing arts department that had 5 full time employees go down to just one full time employee. It also means the elimination of everything these teachers do for students outside of the school day: the dance team, a capella choir, marching band, color guard, theater productions, pit orchestra, jazz band, unified dance, guitar-a-palooza. No part time employee with additional responsibilities at another location is going to return to school in the evenings to run these programs, especially for a stipend that amounts to far less than minimum wage.

Please consider that that the proposed budget cuts have farther-reaching consequences that anyone is envisioning right now.

I urge you to give our schools more funding so these valuable programs can be saved and these highly-effective teachers remain in their jobs, making great things happen for our kids.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Contact Information]

From: [Mariam Khambaty](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Concern about Funding Cuts
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 8:30:54 AM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I am a parent of two Howard High school students, a senior in Orchestra and a sophomore in Band. I am writing to express my sincere concern about potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). They have both greatly benefitted from Howard County's strong music program. My son is currently a part of the Howard County GT Jazz ensemble and was very active in the past two seasons of Marching Band. He also participated in a Pit orchestra last year, which he will remember forever. My daughter has been playing the cello in the upper-level orchestra her whole high school career. Music has been a big part of their lives and our families as well, enriching their high school, providing a fine arts balance and helping them grow into the people they are. High school would not have been the same without those opportunities. Both my children are going on their Spring Break music trip to Williamsburg.

I am concerned about the cuts to positions in HCPSS. Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that arts programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to arts funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Mariam Khambaty

From: [Meredith Curtis Goode](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); [Walsh, Elizabeth](#); CouncilDistrict2@howardcountymd.gov
Subject: Supplemental budget for Howard County schools please!
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 7:54:58 AM

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

Dear Dr Ball, Council Chair Jones, Council Vice Chair Walsh, Board of Education, and County Council,

I do not understand why I'm seeing no discussion of supplemental funds for the public school budget this year. Our county has the resources to make sure that we both keep class sizes low and continue needed funds for the arts.

Our child is going to Wilde Lake High School next year and is looking forward to doing strings all four years and fine arts all four years. She started playing cello in 3rd grade, which she loved, and her only real complaint about school has been that she hasn't been able to take visual art every year during middle school. She wants to be a professional artist/graphic designer after graduation.

Please add funds to the budget to protect smaller class sizes AND the arts! It enriches the lives -- and wellbeing -- of so many students!

Thank you,
Meredith Goode
4524 Kingscup Court
Ellicott City, MD 21042

From: [Michelle Vanderhoff](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Please do not cut high school band funding
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 8:51:37 AM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

As a proud parent of two students in band, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential arts program and staffing cuts in HCPSS. This news is devastating to our entire county, especially when many families have moved here -- and willingly pay higher taxes -- for Howard County schools.

Band, orchestra, and chorus are not "extras." They help children who may struggle in other areas to excel, to learn life lessons about teamwork, goal setting, and hard work. It's also a creative outlet and an environment of belonging. I speak from my own experience, not just for my children, one of whom will be participating in All-State Junior Band later this week and plans to participate in Mount Hebron's music program next year.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but so are we as individuals and families. WE pay for private lessons, purchase and rent instruments, AND we still raise money to cover the costs that the music program budget doesn't cover. We don't complain, we just do it, because it benefits our children.

If you can't work together to solve any proposed cuts to arts funding, then you personally need to walk into every arts classroom in HCPSS and explain to the kids why.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Michelle Vanderhoff

From: [Morgan Pardue-Kim](#)
To: BudgetFeedback@hcpss.org; bill_barnes@hcpss.org; boe@hcpss.org; cball@howardcountymd.gov; [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 6:51:02 PM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes.

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud parent of a music-loving student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that music education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My child's involvement in music in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of music education on academic performance. Students engaged in music often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the music room and positively influence their academic achievements.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard music programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that music programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to music funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Morgan Pardue-Kim and Gilby Kim
5756 Goldfinch Ct
Ellicott City MD 21043
410-443-8283

719-221-1607

From: [Natalie Chakrian](#)
To: bill_barnes@hcpss.org; boe@hcpss.org; [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 12:04:36 AM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing today as an alumnus of Mt. Hebron High School, former member of the Dance Company, Lancer Drill team (now Dance Team), Marching Unit and former coach of the Lancer Drill Team (now Dance Team).

I am writing to ask you to reconsider cutting funding for the arts for Howard County Public Schools. I know my story is just one of many you will read about the impact of the arts on students. I moved to Howard County as an incoming 9th grader because my father accepted the position of Fire Chief for Howard County in 2000. I was devastated to move and leave my friends behind. After going to look at a few different high schools, I ultimately picked Mt. Hebron because I was a dancer and knew it had the best dance program in the county. I then learned about the Lancer Drill Team and the Marching Unit.

Before the school year even started, I was able to meet and practice with the Lancers (Dance Team) so starting a new school didn't seem so scary. It took me a good 6 months to really make any true friends and most days I ate lunch alone or outside because I was too shy to push my way into an overcrowded lunch table. The one thing that got me through the school day was knowing I had practice that night and would have a place I felt like I belonged. It was my safe place and happy place at school.

The next year, I also joined the Dance Company. Being a part of the Dance Company and the Marching Unit (Lancers are a part of the marching unit-I believe this is now called Dance Team) were some of the best experiences of my life. I got to make friends and I learned so much. I got to travel to Florida, Hawaii, Myrtle Beach and Canada. I got to perform in the Veterans Day Parade in NYC and Intrepid aircraft carrier. My experience with the dance program and Marching Unit led me to coach the Lancers from 2015-2018.

I learned discipline from being part of a 200 student unit. I learned leadership as I served as an officer. I learned how to express myself through music and dance. I learned confidence and strength. I learned time management with balancing school work and involvement in extracurricular activities. These are all skills that I took with me to college and into my career today as Vice President of Customer Success for an educational technology company.

My life would not have been the same without these arts programs. I am just one of many that feel this way. I hope you will reconsider. I appreciate your time.

Thank you,

Natalie Herr Chakrian

From: [Natalie K](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 8:18:48 AM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I am writing to you to express my concern with the proposed cuts to the HCPSS budget, which will result in the elimination of multiple positions and programs that are crucial to a well-rounded education that our students deserve. HCPSS has had a proud tradition of being one of the top school systems in Maryland but with these cuts, we will be relegated to mediocrity at best.

I find it disturbing that the first thing our government officials target when it comes to balancing budgets, is our education system. As it is, our education system is underfunded, our teachers are underpaid and as a result, we are attracting fewer and fewer qualified instructors to educate our future. We somehow always find ways to benefit the developers and other large businesses in our county, by providing unlimited financial incentives and perks, which instead should have been directed towards improving our schools.

The arts in particular are a favorite for cuts. The arts are no less important for an education than math and science. In fact they go hand in hand with these subjects by stimulating the creativity that is needed for success in all fields. Perhaps more importantly, the arts are crucial for mental health of students. With each passing year, our students are facing more and more pressures and challenges to their emotional well-being. Cutting programs such as the arts, the participation in which is known to significantly reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression, is counter to our society's needs and goals.

I hope you reconsider these changes in the budget and put our children and our future first.

Regards,

Natalie Renier
HCPSS Parent
Mt. Hebron HS

From: [Nina Parekh](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: In Support of Funding for Arts Education
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 7:03:22 AM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. As an alumnus of HCPSS and a proud former member of the fine arts department at Centennial High School, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. I urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that arts education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My involvement in the arts in Howard County schools has not only enriched my academic experience but has also contributed to my overall personal development. Research consistently highlights the positive impact of arts education on academic performance. Students engaged in the arts often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the classroom and positively influence their academic achievements. I am now a doctoral candidate in no small part due to the arts education that I received during my upbringing.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard arts programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles, theater productions, dance concerts, etc., teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers. I can attest to these qualities being personally vital to my development as an HCPSS student.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that arts programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to arts funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Nina Parekh

ninajparekh@gmail.com

Ph.D. Candidate in Counseling Psychology - University of Akron

Pronouns: she/her/hers ([What's This?](#))

From: [Peter Ansong-Manu](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Urgent appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 7:11:50 PM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud parent of a music-loving student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that music education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My child's involvement in music in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of music education on academic performance. Students engaged in music often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the music room and positively influence their academic achievements.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard music programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that music programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to music funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential

in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Peter Ansong-Manu
443-742-8127
Pansongmanu@hotmail.com
Sent from [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: [Rebecca Freerksen](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding; an alumna's perspective
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 9:38:47 AM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am a proud HCPSS alumna, and I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding what I've heard about potential program cuts. I understand the email is long and the topic is difficult, but it is one particularly close to my heart.

It has been startling to me to see news floating around on social media about cuts, especially in the arts and music programs. As I see them, I then reflect on my experiences in HCPSS, and wonder how different the education will be for these students vs what I received from the county. From what I understand, students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. I'd like to urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to specifically address all that I've heard and seen about cuts to arts education in the school system — focusing on music because that is where I spent my time. I could probably track most of my successes back to my time in music in HCPSS. I made close friends that I still talk to today (and even met my husband) in my band classes. I learned and experienced important skills such as teamwork, determination, discipline, responsibility, confidence, leadership, and even communication through my years in band. The drive and skills that I learned in band easily carried over to my academics, where I maintained a 4.0 GPA for all of high school, and has shaped me as a contributor to my job and community. My passion for music drove me, and I was in Senior All-State band my junior year (and there were a handful from MHHS that made it every year). I did most of my papers in my college classes about music education, despite being a computer science major, due to my love for music and my wonderful experiences in HCPSS that others I met in college didn't have. At one point, University of Maryland's marching band was made up of 11 people from my high school program (4-5% of the band, and there were many more HCPSS alums), and my junior and senior year, all of my fellow upperclassmen Vikings were in some form of leadership within the program, along with others from HoCo. None of this would've been possible without the robustness of HCPSS's music program and the support from the board and local government.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of music education on students and their academic performance. Fun fact - musicians learn to use both sides of their brain simultaneously as they play an instrument. Given all the pushes for STEM - musicians also tend to excel in STEM fields due to the inherent mathematical nature of music (counting beats, tones in scales, etc). The cutting of 3rd grade strings will have a bigger impact than just "oh, they'll start next year". Studies show that young brains are arguably the most flexible, able to pick up on things and form synapse connections faster and stronger the younger they are. Starting music in 3rd grade allows for a better chance to form those strong connections, understand music, and reap the benefits of music education for the rest of their life. Beyond just music, students engaged in the arts often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the classroom and positively influence their academic achievements. Aside from academics, music programs create a sense of community both within each school and across schools. I got to know so many other students across the county (that I otherwise would have never met) through all-county music programs, and to this day I can feel a sense of kinship when I find out someone played an instrument or was in choir or theater. Qualities gained from music (and more broadly, art) education are essential not only in students' academic journey but also in their future careers, and I am a personal attestation to that.

I have always been proud of HCPSS, especially when it comes to the arts. I'd hear from others in college about how

their school systems were cutting arts and see stories from around the nation about the slashing of arts budgets and programs. But I had never had any reason to think HCPSS would follow suit; my experiences showed me that HCPSS valued arts education and seemed to be one of the few systems in the nation that did. I have been disappointed and distraught to see the cuts to arts education, proving my steadfast belief wrong.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that arts programs make to students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to arts funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county. I would be happy to talk further about any points or my experiences on HCPSS.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Chow (Freerksen)

rfreer19@gmail.com
443-955-1843

From: [Rebecca Mesh McCaffery](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org; BudgetFeedback@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 8:27:17 PM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and
Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud parent of a music-loving student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that music education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My child's involvement in music in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of music education on academic performance. Students engaged in music often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the music room and positively influence their academic achievements.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard music programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that music programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to music funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Rebecca McCaffery
Parent of 2 Howard County students who have benefitted from the strings program

From: [Reuben Burrows](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS Funding
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 4:18:13 PM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud parent of a music-loving student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that music education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My child's involvement in music in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of music education on academic performance. Students engaged in music often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the music room and positively influence their academic achievements.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard music programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that music programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to music funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

— Reuben Burrows
267-909-7474

From: [Richard Lucas](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS Music funding
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 4:29:11 PM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud parent of a music-loving student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that music education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My child's involvement in music in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of music education on academic performance. Students engaged in music often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the music room and positively influence their academic achievements.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard music programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that music programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to music funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Richard D. Lucas

410-428-0533

From: [Sarah Castrillon](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [BoE Email](#); [CouncilMail](#); [Bill Barnes](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS MUSIC Funding
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 4:59:10 PM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and
Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud parent of a music-loving student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that music education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My child's involvement in music in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of music education on academic performance. Students engaged in music often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the music room and positively influence their academic achievements.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard music programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that music programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to music funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sarah Castrillon

Sarah Castrillon
Orchestra Director
Oakland Mills High School
410-313-6945

Developer * Empathy * Relator * Harmony * Individualization

From: [Sofie Sanchez](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Budget Cuts
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 12:14:15 AM

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

Hello, My name is Sofie Sanchez. I am a 10th grader at Mt Hebron High school. I am involved in many aspects of the band program, such as marching band, colorguard, and wind ensemble. I am writing to you today to express my concerns regarding the proposed cuts to school teachers and stipends currently directed at the fine arts program. Mr Fisher has been my band teacher for the past two years and is immensely supportive of his students as a teacher and as a foundation to the many opportunities the fine arts program provides. Numerous programs he runs are the Marching Band, Jazz ensemble and pit orchestra which he works with other fine arts teachers to put on amazing plays and performances in our school. To cut to a part time teacher next year along with the many other fine art teachers would be a disservice to our learning and quality of education. We have put in time and money as individuals to these activities we care deeply about. What makes Howard county a great learning environment is all of the enrichment opportunities it provides through the arts and we see that from third grade to college in what programs are provided. To take that core value of learning and to diminish it through funding cuts makes me sorrowful and an individual. I request you to continue debating where the necessary budget cuts should occur and implore you to rethink reducing what makes this county stand out.

From: [Stephanie Hikel](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 2:19:48 PM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am an alumna of the HCPSS (MHHS '00) and proud "band kid" for 9 years, beginning with 3rd grade orchestra and ending with my high school career in Symphonic Band, Wind Ensemble, and Marching Band in an award-winning program at Mt. Hebron. It is hard to overstate the impact that my music education had on me in elementary, middle, and high school. The availability of these programs (as well as all of the extras like jazz band, pit band for the school musicals, drum major academy, county and state band, county and state Solo & Ensemble Festival, etc.), helped make me a well-rounded individual; gave me excitement, purpose, and community; and taught me valuable teamwork and leadership skills.

My husband was also a beneficiary of the excellent music programs in HCPSS (CHS '02), and it was because of our stellar educational experiences growing up that we decided to move our young family to Howard County in 2015. Our daughter, now in 4th grade, had a phenomenal experience last year in 3rd grade orchestra at SJLES, and is now enjoying 4th grade band and plans to continue her musical education. We are devastated, however, that our son in kindergarten may not get the same opportunities.

The program and staffing cuts being proposed would be heartbreaking to students, their families, the incredibly hardworking and dedicated music teachers, and ultimately the community. The arts bring such a richness to our lives and to our children's educational experience and personal development.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that arts programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community. I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to arts funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Stephanie Hikel
smhikel@gmail.com
410-236-1226

From: [Stephanie Waters Thompson](#)
To: boe@hcpss.org; budgetfeedback@hcpss.org; [executive](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 3:42:43 PM

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

Dear Board of Education members:

I am writing because I believe it is important that the Board of Education ask the County Executive for the money needed to maintain our current level of services and comply with the new Blueprint mandates. If we want to continue to have one of the country's best school systems we need to make it a priority.

I am also writing to implore you not to cut

Change in class size ratios, increasing class sizes by 2
Elementary Gifted and Talented seminars and Curriculum Extension Units (CEUs)
Elimination of 1.00 Security Investigator and 1.00 Security Assistant
15 custodial positions

The school system is the backbone of Howard County. It is the reason we are willing to pay the high taxes and real estate prices. If the quality of education slips, many of us will simply move counties and/or send our kids to private schools instead.

Many thanks
Stephanie Thompson
West Friendship ES/ Mount View MS

--
Stephanie Waters Thompson
240-463-7799 cell

From: [Sumanth Chennamsetty](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin; boe@hcpss.org](mailto:boe@hcpss.org); [CouncilMail; bill_barnes@hcpss.org](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 10:27:24 PM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud parent of a music-loving student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that music education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My child's involvement in music in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of music education on academic performance. Students engaged in music often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the music room and positively influence their academic achievements.

Music always helps: Associations of music subject choices with academic achievement in secondary education(<https://bera-journals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/berj.3928>)

The claim that music education is beneficial to both child development and academic success has grown as a popular idea in recent decades. (<https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/honorstheses/1041/>)

AI is everywhere. Here is the feedback from Natural Language Processing Model Google Gemini on how music education impacts academic performance:

Research suggests a **positive correlation** between music education and academic performance. While not a guarantee of better grades, studies have shown that students involved in music programs often demonstrate:

- **Higher overall academic achievement:** This includes improvements in various subjects like math, science, and English.
- **Enhanced cognitive skills:** Music training is linked to improved memory, concentration, spatial reasoning, and abstract thinking.
- **Stronger self-discipline and work ethic:** Learning and mastering an instrument requires dedication, practice, and perseverance, which can translate to other areas of life.

Here are some key points to consider:

- **The impact may be more prominent with sustained involvement:** Studies suggest that longer participation in music programs tends to correlate with stronger academic benefits [2, 3].
- **Causation vs. correlation:** While research shows a link, it's important to remember that correlation doesn't necessarily imply causation. Other factors influencing academic performance also need to be considered.
- **Benefits extend beyond academics:** Music education fosters creativity, communication, teamwork, and social-emotional skills, which contribute to overall well-being and development [4].

Overall, the evidence suggests that music education can be a valuable tool for supporting academic achievement and fostering well-rounded development in students.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard music programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I **urge** you to consider the invaluable contribution that music programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to music funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sumanth Chennamsetty

410-949-5189

From: [Barth-Huntt Parents](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Music funding concern/Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 8:40:38 AM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud parent of three Howard County fine arts students, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is unconscionable to me that after everything the kids have gone through in the last 4 years, amidst a very real mental health crisis amongst young people, that the board would consider removing such an important creative outlet and learning experience for our young people. It is heartbreaking.

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that arts education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My child's involvement in the arts in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of arts education on academic performance. Students engaged in the arts often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the class room and positively influence their academic achievements.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard arts programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles, theater productions, dance concerts, etc., teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that arts programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to arts funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

- Tessa Barth 443.875.7509
- David Hunt 443.875.2422
Barth.huntt@gmail.com

From: [Torie Grant](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Increase funds for elementary school GT teachers, CEUs, 3rd grade orchestra
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 12:23:27 PM

[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,

Thank you for taking more time to review the FY25 Operating Budget. As you have heard, our community is very upset by the proposed budget cuts. HCPSS is the heart of our strong community and these cuts would make HCPSS and our community weaker and less equitable.

As a board-certified pediatrician and mother of young children, I continue to be very concerned about the cuts at the elementary level. Early exposure to STEM and music are critical to fostering a lifelong love of learning, science, and music. It is important to keep our accelerated students engaged and to cultivate their full potential.

Moreover, *cutting elementary science and music enrichment programs disproportionately affects low-income students and students from minoritized communities* who have fewer resources to access these programs outside of school. If allowed to pass in its current form, HCPSS FY25 Operating Budget would increase the already high educational achievement gap between low-income and high-income households. This *cannot* happen in Howard County, Maryland.

Many families are asking whether Howard County's high cost of living is worth it when the school system continues to cut programs, positions, and increase class sizes. Many families with young children have started to question whether HCPSS is the right choice for their young students and are looking into private schools, homeschooling, or are considering leaving Howard County altogether.

Please urgently provide for more funding to preserve these vital elementary school programs:

- Elementary GT CEUs**
- Elementary GT Seminars**
- 3rd grade orchestra**

Respectfully,

Torie Grant, MD, MHS

From: [Vanessa Castelino](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org; BudgetFeedback@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 8:21:16 PM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and
Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud parent of a music-loving student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that music education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My child's involvement in music in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of music education on academic performance. Students engaged in music often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the music room and positively influence their academic achievements.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard music programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that music programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to music funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Vanessa Flannery
443-280-0186

From: [Wei Zhang](#)
To: boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); [Ball, Calvin](#)
Subject: Please Do Not Cut FY25 HCPSS Music Program Budget
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 1:58:51 AM

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

Dear Board Members and County Officials,

Thank you for your countless hours to work with the school staff on the proposed FY25 operating budget. I am writing today especially to urge not to reduce the funding of the school's music program.

I have two children both attending Howard County public schools, my daughter who is now 11 years old started orchestra when she was 3rd grade at Northfield Elementary, unfortunately, she started during the pandemic when all the teachings were conducted virtually. I can't imagine how a child who has never played violin is able to learn a new instruction through the little computer screen with her orchestra teacher and a bunch of children every week. Fortunately, she had one of the best orchestra teachers who tried every way to demonstrate how to place the violin on the shoulder comfortably and how to read notes correctly, and how to engage beginner violinists on a remote computer. I still remember that I often received personal communication from the orchestra teacher at very late night comforting me that it is ok if my child missed one class due to sickness. My daughter is now in the middle school orchestra program, and she still remembers her very first violin teacher in the elementary school that has played a very positive influence on the beginning of her music journey.

My son started learning percussion at 4th grade at Waverly Elementary. I can't appreciate enough for his band director who has worked with HCPSS children for over thirty years for doing everything he can to build students' confidence in learning a new instrument, and sending detailed weekly emails to parents about the specific music piece that each group should practice, and encouraging parents to visit the classroom and listening to the children's performance.

As much as I enjoy attending every school concert when the entire orchestra or band deliver a high quality performance, I am even more pleased to see my children picking up an instrument at home on a day when they simply want to stay away from electronic devices and want to find a moment of being themselves by connecting their mind to the instrument, searching for the inner peace and letting their music creativity flow through their fingertips.

With years of early music education received from HCPSS especially from so many talented and extremely committed music teachers, my children have developed pivotal skills to persevere through the challenges and stress, the ability to collaborate with team mates to produce a great performance with harmonies, and the discipline and good time management skills to prioritize their daily tasks between music practice and other activities.

We always say that it takes a village to raise a child, and yes, it also takes long time for a village to seed the field before the time for the harvest. I sincerely hope that the Board members and County officials please reconsider not to cut the operating budget of the school music program, learning music at early age is more than reading music notes at eight years old, it means making a childhood friend that will become a lifelong and loyal friend no matter when they are and where they are.

Sincerely,

Wei Zhang

Parent of HCPSS students

From: [Wesley Thompson](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [BoE Email](#); [CouncilMail](#); [Bill Barnes](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 4:13:25 PM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and
Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud parent of a music-loving student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that music education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My child's involvement in music in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of music education on academic performance. Students engaged in music often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the music room and positively influence their academic achievements.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard music programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that music programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to music funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Wesley Thompson (she/her)
[Strings Teacher](#), Clarksville Elementary
[CES STRINGS VIRTUAL CALENDAR!](#)

[Co-Director](#), Howard County Elementary Honors Orchestra

From: [Amy Boehmer](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Appeal for HCPSS Funding
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 6:26:24 PM

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

Hello Dr. Ball, Howard County Council, Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire community. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year. It is time to prioritize education.

I also want to remind our elected officials that music education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My third-grader's needs for enrichment in the general classroom have not been met. His involvement in music in Howard County schools has challenged him, and not only enriched his academic experience but has also contributed to his overall personal development.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of music education on academic performance. Students engaged in music often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the music room and positively influence their life skills and academic achievements.

Our Gold Standard music programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that music programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to music funding and continue to support **all programs** that are considered well-managed and *essential* in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Amy Boehmer

amy.l.boehmer@gmail.com

From: [Christine Jubinski](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#); boe@hcpss.org; bill_barnes@hcpss.org; [Budget Testimony](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for Sustaining HCPSS Music Education Funding
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 2:15:45 PM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, Members of the Howard County Council, Members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I trust this message finds you well. As a dedicated HCPSS alum, I am compelled to address a matter of profound concern – the potential repercussions of impending program and staffing reductions within the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS), particularly within the realm of music education.

My personal journey through the HCPSS system stands as a testament to the transformative power of music education in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My engagement with music during my time in Howard County schools not only enriched my academic pursuits but also played an integral role in my overall personal development.

Numerous studies consistently underscore the positive impact of music education on academic performance. Students immersed in music early on often exhibit enhanced cognitive skills, improved concentration, and superior problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the confines of the music room, exerting a positive influence on their broader academic achievements.

Moreover, the collaborative essence of musical ensembles imparts crucial values such as teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are not only pivotal in students' academic journeys but also lay the foundation for their future careers. The importance of instilling these virtues at an early age, particularly at the elementary level, cannot be overstated. Depriving young individuals of the opportunity for elementary music education would result in a significant deficit in access to music.

While I understand the budgetary challenges faced by HCPSS, I implore you to reflect upon the immeasurable contribution that music programs make to the lives of students, and the legacy of HCPSS. The research unequivocally supports the positive outcomes of early intervention and musical engagement. As an alum, I am living proof that investments in students at an early age yield profound and lasting impacts on their success.

I respectfully request that you collaboratively explore alternatives to mitigate proposed cuts to music funding and continue to invest in the budding talents of our young musicians. I ask that you support full funding requests for music in the Howard County Public School System and full funding from the county executive.

Thank you sincerely for your time, attention, and consideration.
Sincerely,

Christine Jubinski

HCPSS Alumnus

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Douglas Henderson](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org; BudgetFeedback@hcpss.org
Subject: [SUSPECTED SPAM] Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 6:17:33 AM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud parent of a music-loving student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that music education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My child's involvement in music in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of music education on academic performance. Students engaged in music often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the music room and positively influence their academic achievements.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard music programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that music programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to music funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Douglas Henderson
dbhender@aol.com

From: [Elizabeth Haight](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#); [Bill Barnes](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for Music Funding
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 11:34:04 AM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud music educator in HCPSS, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System.

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System and to see many of my colleagues who are experienced and veteran teachers receiving information that their staffing will be cut. Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that music education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. Each child's involvement in music in Howard County schools not only enriches their academic experience but also contributes to their overall personal development.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of music education on academic performance. Students engaged in music often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the music room and positively influence their academic achievements.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard music programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that music programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to music funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Haight
Patapsco Middle School Orchestra Director
Bonnie Branch Middle School Chamber Orchestra Director

From: [Jennifer Dorsey](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 12:40:34 PM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud parent of a fine arts student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county.

We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that arts education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My child's involvement in the arts in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of arts education on academic performance. Students engaged in the arts often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the classroom and positively influence their academic achievements.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard arts programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles, theater productions, dance concerts, etc., teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that arts programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to arts funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Dorsey

Jennifer Dorsey, MFA
Associate Professor of Dance
Department of Fine and Performing Arts
Bowie State University

Coordinator of Dance and Movement Studies, Theatre Arts Major

From: [Jordan Cypher](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for Sustaining HCPSS Music Education Funding
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 1:51:47 PM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, Members of the Howard County Council, Members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I trust this message finds you well. As a dedicated HCPSS alum, I am compelled to address a matter of profound concern – the potential repercussions of impending program and staffing reductions within the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS), particularly within the realm of music education.

My personal journey through the HCPSS system stands as a testament to the transformative power of music education in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My engagement with music during my time in Howard County schools not only enriched my academic pursuits but also played an integral role in my overall personal development.

Numerous studies consistently underscore the positive impact of music education on academic performance. Students immersed in music early on often exhibit enhanced cognitive skills, improved concentration, and superior problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the confines of the music room, exerting a positive influence on their broader academic achievements.

Moreover, the collaborative essence of musical ensembles imparts crucial values such as teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are not only pivotal in students' academic journeys but also lay the foundation for their future careers. The importance of instilling these virtues at an early age, particularly at the elementary level, cannot be overstated. Depriving young individuals of the opportunity for elementary music education would result in a significant deficit in access to music.

While I understand the budgetary challenges faced by HCPSS, I implore you to reflect upon the immeasurable contribution that music programs make to the lives of students, and the legacy of HCPSS. The research unequivocally supports the positive outcomes of early intervention and musical engagement. As an alum, I am living proof that investments in students at an early age yield profound and lasting impacts on their success.

I respectfully request that you collaboratively explore alternatives to mitigate proposed cuts to music funding and continue to invest in the budding talents of our young musicians.

Thank you sincerely for your time, attention, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Jordan Cypher (Budzinski)
HCPSS Alumnus

From: [Juan Peña](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 11:03:20 AM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud former fine arts student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county.

We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that arts education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My involvement in the arts in Howard County schools has not only enriched my academic experience but has also contributed to my overall personal development.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of arts education on academic performance. Students engaged in the arts often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the classroom and positively influence their academic achievements.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard arts programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles, theater productions, dance concerts, etc., teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that arts programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to arts funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Juan Jose Pena
jjpn22@gmail.com

From: [Kathy Devine](#)
To: boe@hcpss.org; [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 2:40:43 PM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and

Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud parent of a music-loving student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that music education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My child's involvement in music in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of music education on academic performance. Students engaged in music often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the music room and positively influence their academic achievements.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard music programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that music programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to music funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kathy Devine

nanakathy5@verizon.net

From: [Katie Hunt](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS Music Funding
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 6:05:14 PM

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

Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS Music Funding

Dear Members of the Howard County Council,

I hope this email finds you well. As a born-and-raised Howard County student and resident, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts next year in HCPSS, specifically regarding cuts to music and 3rd Grade Strings.

Howard County is known for its phenomenal music programs, especially our Strings programs. This is directly because of starting Strings in 3rd Grade, hiring the best music teachers in their specific music fields (Band/Choir/Strings), and buy-in and support from parents and families. The music teachers who dedicated their entire careers to building these programs in the 1990's, 2000's, and 2010's are all retired or starting to retire. I don't think the public understands that it has taken decades and entire careers in order for our music programs to get to this level and reputation, nor do they understand that cutting 3rd Grade Strings will affect music performance at ALL levels.

The majority of students who participate in 3rd grade strings (at all 42 elementary schools) either continue playing on their string instrument for years to come, or switch over to Band or Choir already knowing music vocabulary, how to read rhythm, how to read notes and rests, how to rehearse in a group setting, and already having concert performance experience. These are essential and invaluable skills that they learn in 3rd Grade Strings. If students start in 4th grade, then they will be entering middle school at a lower playing level compared to now, and will therefore enter high school at a lower playing level. When you cut the roots of a tree, it affects the whole tree. The quality and ability of our music programs will go down, and Howard County Music will never be the same. 3rd Grade Strings is the root of a music system that has taken decades to craft and establish in our schools and communities.

How are we supposed to fix the budget mistakes of former leadership and a global pandemic without hurting the current students and staff? The reason housing prices in Howard County are sky high and the reason families move to Howard County is for the schools and high quality education. With that high level of education also comes educating

the ENTIRE student in many subjects, facets, and outlets, not just in math and writing. Instead of making budget cuts that will negatively impact current students and staff, the County Council should work together with the Board of Education to fix the budget deficit.

There should be a multi-year plan made with yearly contractual stipulations that must be met by the school system in order to receive payment from the County Council that goes toward reducing the deficit over time. There should be yearly audits to ensure the money is being properly allocated and properly spent. When was the last time HCPSS was audited? Second, everywhere you look, more housing is being built, which means more students in our school system that should receive the same excellent education that they moved here for. How is HCPSS supposed to do that if there are budget cuts and not enough of an increase from the county to account for all the new housing and new students?

Music education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. Students' involvement in music in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of music education on academic performance. Students engaged in music often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the music room and positively influence both their academic achievements and their adult life.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard music programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers. Music in Howard County is the

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that music programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in our students and school system overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to music funding and continue to support all programs that educate the entire child essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Katie Hunt

From: [Kimberly Hampton](#)
To: boe@hcpss.org; budgetfeedback@hcpss.org; [executive](#); [CouncilMail](#); katiefry.hester@senate.state.md.us; clarence.jam@senate.state.md.us; guy.guzzone@senate.state.md.us; chao.wu@house.state.md.us; natalie.ziegler@house.state.md.us; courtney.watson@house.state.md.us; pam.guzzone@house.state.md.us; terri.hill@house.state.md.us; jessica.feldmark@house.state.md.us; vanessa.atterbeary@house.state.md.us; jen.terrasa@house.state.md.us
Subject: Phelps Luck 5th Graders Advocate to Keep 3rd Grade Orchestra
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 6:28:26 PM
Attachments: [Letter from Phelps Luck 5th Graders Advocating for Strings.pdf](#)

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

Hello,

Today my 5th grader, Brooklyn Hampton, handed me the attached letter when she got home from school. She asked me to take it to our Phelps Luck Elementary PTA meeting tonight so that the PTA President could present it to the Superintendent. She began telling me how she and her friends drafted a letter to "the Board" that shares why third grade students should "be able to play an orchestra instrument". The letter states the benefits of keeping 3rd grade orchestra including giving these students an extra year to practice before getting to middle school, learning responsibility and how to be a part of a team, and bringing them joy (because 2nd graders with older siblings who told them they could play an instrument in 3rd grade will be "extremely upset" when they find out they can't play an instrument). In addition to sharing the benefits of keeping 3rd grade strings, the 5th graders also have some recommendations for what could be cut from the budget instead of orchestra. The students acknowledge that some grades have three field trips during the year while other grades have two, so why not cut one of their field trips instead of orchestra? The letter ends by sharing that the students have a petition with "many people" who have signed it.

While I understand that there is a vote tomorrow for the budget, I thought it was important that I share this letter with as many people in power as possible. The budget cuts have far-reaching implications as we all know, and our children know as well.

Thank you for the time you spent reading this letter. The letter from our beautiful, intelligent children is attached. Unfortunately you will see some of it is cut off as the children actually wrote on a piece of construction paper at school :). I'm happy to share the original if you would like.

Students Responsible for Writing the Letter: Yasminah Sample, Afomia Manale, Brooklyn Hampton, Madeline LaSota and the Phelps Luck 5th Grade Advanced Orchestra

Kim Hampton
Mother of HCPSS Students Brooklyn & Campbell

From: [Ashylle](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 8:16:49 AM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and
Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud Howard County community member, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that music education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My child's involvement in music in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of music education on academic performance. Students engaged in music often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the music room and positively influence their academic achievements.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard music programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that music programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to music funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Margaret Twigg
Sykesville, MD

From: [Michael Keller](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 4:07:56 PM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I have found recent reports of proposals to save money in the HCPSS budget by cutting arts and music programs in our schools. In addition to making our children “college and career ready” our schools play a significant role in making students “community ready.” Programs including fine arts, music, and physical education play a critical role in development of a sense of place and belonging in a social structure, and a connection to their community they cannot get elsewhere. In addition, these programs provide important development opportunities for leadership and teamwork development, which are skills colleges and future employers value above specific academic knowledge. Participation in band is a consistent, unifying experience from grades 3-12 that engage students of all academic, physical, and developmental levels.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that arts programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to arts funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael Keller

3025 Greenway Dr.

Ellicott City, MD 21042

From: [Monica McCluskey](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 12:46:00 PM

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

Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

As a proud parent of a fine arts student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that arts education, in all its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My child's involvement in the arts in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

I had one child and currently have a second in the music program at Mt. Hebron High School. Our teachers are fantastic, and their leadership has promoted teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. My children as well as hundreds of others are regularly challenged while having fun at the same time. They have learned to be good friends and mentors while gaining confidence in themselves and their abilities. The arts, like a sport, requires dedication, hard work, and a passion for something you love. Many students, like mine, have chosen to pursue a career in music and the ensembles, music courses and outside opportunities have allowed them to make that decision and prepare them for college. The arts are a vital part of our children's education.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that arts programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to arts funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Monica McCluskey

410-218-7375

From: [Morgan Dice](#)
To: bill_barnes@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); boe@hcpss.org; [Ball, Calvin](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 3:23:56 PM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and
Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a Howard County resident and tax payer, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that music education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My child's involvement in music in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

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Furthermore, our Gold Standard music programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that music programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to music funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Morgan Dice

From: [Nicholas Gurf](#)
To: bill_barnes@hcpss.org; boe@hcpss.org; [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 10:00:40 AM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this email finds you well. As a graduated fine arts student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that arts education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My child's involvement in the arts in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

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Furthermore, our Gold Standard arts programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles, theater productions, dance concerts, etc., teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that arts programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to arts funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Gurf (Nick)
Artist, Curator, Content Creator

■ nick@gurfmusic.com
■ <http://solo.to/gurf>

Co-founder | Partica Artist Group



■ Maryland, USA

From: [Riley Smith](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 12:19:01 PM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

As a fine arts student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that arts education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. Mine and my peers' involvement in the arts in Howard County schools has not only enriched our academic experience but has also contributed to our overall personal development.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of arts education on academic performance. Students engaged in the arts often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the classroom and positively influence our academic achievements.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard arts programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles, theater productions, dance concerts, etc., teaches us the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in our academic journey but also in our future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that arts programs make to mine and my peers' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to arts funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Riley Smith

10th grade, Mount Hebron High School

From: [Ryan Ritzes](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: No cuts in education.
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 7:55:44 AM
Attachments: [Outlook-\[headshot .png\]](#)

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

Good morning! My name is Ryan James Ritzes and I am a teacher in HCPSS.

Please fully fund our education. The BOE has proposed cutting hundreds of positions and programs, and if we lose them the quality of our school system will PLUMMET. Let me focus for a moment on music. If the proposed cuts are made, students will have to wait longer to be introduced to music, which will affect all other levels as well. Imagine if we pushed pre-algebra back a year. Well then algebra would also get pushed back a year, and algebra II, geometry, etc. Last week I was at the American Choral Directors Association conference in Providence, RI. People from all over the country know Howard County MD for its excellence in music. People move here for the schools. If we don't get the funding we need to keep these programs, less people will move here. Would the Ravens managers allow their best players to get cut? Would a museum allow its most prized exhibit to be removed?

Please allocate more of HoCo General Fund Revenue to HCPSS, as you have in the past, but greatly decreased in the last few years. Our students, staff, and communities deserve better.

In addition, please consider that these proposed cuts will affect people's livelihoods. At a time when the cost of living is higher than ever before, we need our jobs. Losing our jobs means losing our salaries and healthcare, which could lead to worse things to follow. *We need our schools fully funded. Please don't leave us out in the cold.* Fully fund HCPSS. Thank you.

~~



Ryan James Ritzes

he/him/Mr. rritzes@hcpss.org

Hammond Middle School

Director of Choirs 🎵

General Music Teacher 🎵

Rainbow Representative 🌈

HMS Music website: bit.ly/hamsmusic

[Mr. Ritzes's Classroom Wishlist](#)

bit.ly/hamsmusic | [Mr. Ritzes's Classroom Wishlist](#)

From: [Samantha Bechara](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 9:26:00 PM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud parent of a music-loving student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that music education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My child's involvement in music in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of music education on academic performance. Students engaged in music often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the music room and positively influence their academic achievements.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard music programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that music programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to music funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Samantha Bechara
Sent from my iPhone

From: [Sha"Niesha Brown](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org; [Budget Testimony](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for Sustaining HCPSS Music Education Funding
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 2:39:21 PM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, Members of the Howard County Council, Members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I trust this message finds you well. As a dedicated HCPSS alum, I am compelled to address a matter of profound concern – the potential repercussions of impending program and staffing reductions within the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS), particularly within the realm of music education.

My personal journey through the HCPSS system stands as a testament to the transformative power of music education in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My engagement with music during my time in Howard County schools not only enriched my academic pursuits but also played an integral role in my overall personal development.

Numerous studies consistently underscore the positive impact of music education on academic performance. Students immersed in music early on often exhibit enhanced cognitive skills, improved concentration, and superior problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the confines of the music room, exerting a positive influence on their broader academic achievements.

Moreover, the collaborative essence of musical ensembles imparts crucial values such as teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are not only pivotal in students' academic journeys but also lay the foundation for their future careers. The importance of instilling these virtues at an early age, particularly at the elementary level, cannot be overstated. Depriving young individuals of the opportunity for elementary music education would result in a significant deficit in access to music.

While I understand the budgetary challenges faced by HCPSS, I implore you to reflect upon the immeasurable contribution that music programs make to the lives of students, and the legacy of HCPSS. The research unequivocally supports the positive outcomes of early intervention and musical engagement. As an alum, I am living proof that investments in students at an early age yield profound and lasting impacts on their success.

I respectfully request that you collaboratively explore alternatives to mitigate proposed cuts to music funding and continue to invest in the budding talents of our young musicians. I ask that you support full funding requests for music in the Howard County Public School System and full funding from the county executive.

Thank you sincerely for your time, attention, and consideration.

Regards,

Sha’Niesha Brown, MBA, CHG
HCPSS Alumnus

From: [Tina David](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 3:57:55 PM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. I was on the BOE call on Monday evening and appreciate your time. As a proud parent of a music-loving student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

I am shocked to hear that Veterans Elm will lose their 3rd grade strings program, GT teachers and possible cut in Band. My daughter, because of the teaching of Mrs. McLagan, was invited to participate in the Honors Orchestra Concert this past weekend. My daughter does not take private lessons but loves playing her violin! This is all due to her teacher.

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that music education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My child's involvement in music in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of music education on academic performance. Students engaged in music often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the music room and positively influence their academic achievements.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that music programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to music

funding, GT funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Tina David

Veterans Elementary School PTA President

From: [Victoria Smith](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org; BudgetFeedback@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 10:17:35 AM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, members of the Howard County Council, members of the Howard County Board of Education, and
Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud parent of a music-loving student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

It is shocking to see the report in the Baltimore Sun regarding so many cuts to positions in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county. We urge all of our elected officials to work together with HCPSS to help during this crisis and continue to solve the funding issues that seem to plague the system every year.

I also want to email to remind our elected officials that music education, in all of its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My child's involvement in music in Howard County schools has not only enriched their academic experience but has also contributed to their overall personal development.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of music education on academic performance. Students engaged in music often show improved cognitive skills, better concentration, and enhanced problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the music room and positively influence their academic achievements.

Furthermore, our Gold Standard music programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

I understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that music programs make to our students' lives. By investing more in HCPSS overall as a county, we are investing in the future leaders, artists, and innovators of our community.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to music funding and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Victoria Smith
8393 Tamar Dr. Apt 238, Columbia, MD 21045
918-813-7679

From: [Vidya Kaliappan](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Support for Music Education Funding in Howard County Schools
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 9:33:56 PM

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

Dear HCPSS Board of Education Members,

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed cuts to music education funding in Howard County Schools. It has come to my attention that there is a request to allocate \$795k, which represents just 0.06% of the overall budget, to fully support music programs within our schools.

Music education is not merely an extracurricular activity; it plays a vital role in the holistic development of our students. It fosters creativity, instills discipline, promotes teamwork, and contributes significantly to academic, social, and emotional growth. Cutting funding for music education would deprive our children of valuable opportunities to explore their talents and passions, hindering their overall development.

I urge you to reconsider these proposed cuts and prioritize the preservation of music programs in our schools. Investing in music education is an investment in our children's future. By providing them with access to quality music education, we are equipping them with essential skills that will benefit them throughout their lives.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your dedication to the education of our children.

Sincerely,
Vidya Kaliappan
(Parent of HCPSS students)

From: clairereinken@gmail.com
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Save GT teachers and 3rd Grade Strings
Date: Saturday, March 9, 2024 11:40:31 PM

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

Greetings,

The Honorable Dr. Calvin Ball and Howard County Council Members,

The recent exclusion of 3rd Grade Strings Education and GT teachers by the HCPSS Board of Education is an injustice to Howard County's children. Nearly 5,500 individuals signed the petition [Save Music in HCPSS!!!!](#), but were promptly ignored by the BOE. While 13 Title I schools will keep 3rd Grade Strings and GT teachers, 29 Howard County elementary schools will completely eliminate the program. This program has existed in the county for decades and has initiated scores of eager young students into the world of instrumental music, many of whom have gone on to play an instrument through middle school, high school, college, and beyond.

While this action was taken in the name of equity, there is nothing equitable about it. There is no replacement for the creativity, teamwork, community building, and cooperative education that occurs in a music ensemble. Some may argue families with students who do not attend a Title I school are able to pay for private lessons, however this is wrong on two counts. First of all, it assumes that all families who can't afford extra curricular music education have students who attend Title I schools. There are FARM students in *every* elementary school in Howard County. There are also students who are not categorized as FARM students but whose families cannot afford music lessons. Secondly, there is NO substitute for a music *ensemble* education. In 3rd Grade Strings, 8 and 9 year olds learn the responsibility of having an ensemble depend upon them to learn their part and be prepared. They learn to think differently than they do in their other classes, improving cognitive skills, concentration, and problem solving skills. They learn what it means to perform and present their accomplishments proudly to family, friends, and classmates. These experiences and opportunities are not available in any other single class in elementary school.

The restoration of 3rd Grade Strings in the HCPSS Budget is less than \$795,000, only marginally more than the average cost of a home in Howard County. This is a tiny percentage of the HCPSS budget. However, the removal of this program will be detrimental to our students and have a devastating effect on the prestigious HCPSS Music Program as a whole, because it will degrade the foundation on which it is built.

Therefore, I request that when providing allocations to HCPSS, please earmark funds for the continuation of 3rd Grade Strings in all HCPSS elementary schools.

Sincerely,

- Claire Reinken

13299 Hunt Rdg

Ellicott City, MD 21042

From: [Dongyi\(Tony\) Du](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Please restore GT and 3rd strings for all schools
Date: Saturday, March 9, 2024 8:47:04 AM

[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,

As you may be aware the BOE passed an irresponsible budget removing GT and 3rd grade string only for some schools. This is not fair for these students and for their parents who paid their share of taxes.

I understand we have a budget problem. I ask you to delay the new library project or move \$2 million of the new library budget to help restore the GT and 3rd strings for all schools.

Thank you!

Dongyi (Tony) Du

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

From: [Mark Kelly](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org; [Budget Testimony](#)
Subject: Don't Cut Funds for Music
Date: Saturday, March 9, 2024 8:08:26 AM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, Members of the Howard County Council, Members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Acting-Superintendent Barnes,

I hope this message finds you well. I'm an alumni of the HCPSS, and am concerned to hear of the impending program and staffing reductions, particularly with regards to music education.

I remember this battle being fought by my parents, more than 20 years ago when I was attending Hammond Elementary School. I'm disappointed that we still have to keep fighting it.

My time in the HCPSS stands as a testament to the transformative power of music education in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. Quite simply, the music department, and the people I met there (particularly the educators) made me the man I am today. I'm now a successful Mechanical Engineer, working for Northrop Grumman, a job that has little to do with music, but I credit my success to the time I spent in the music department.

Studies have consistently shown the positive impact of music education on academic performance. Students immersed in music early on often exhibit enhanced cognitive skills, improved concentration, and superior problem-solving abilities. These benefits extend beyond the confines of the music room, exerting a positive influence on their broader academic achievements.

Moreover, the collaborative essence of musical ensembles imparts crucial values such as teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are not only pivotal in students' academic journeys but also lay the foundation for their future careers. The importance of instilling these virtues at an early age, particularly at the elementary level, cannot be overstated. Depriving young individuals of the opportunity for elementary music education would result in a significant deficit in access to music.

While I understand the budgetary challenges faced by HCPSS, I implore you to reflect upon the immeasurable contribution that music programs make to the lives of students, and the legacy of HCPSS. The research unequivocally supports the

positive outcomes of early intervention and musical engagement. As an alum, I am living proof that investments in students at an early age yield profound and lasting impacts on their success.

I implore that you collaboratively explore alternatives to mitigate proposed cuts to music funding and continue to invest in the futures of young musicians. I ask that you support full funding requests for music in the Howard County Public School System and full funding from the county executive.

Thank you sincerely for your time, attention, and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mark William Kelly

Reservoir High School, Class of 2009

PS. I'm 32 years old, currently living in Baltimore, and am considering where I want to live and raise my children. The presence of a strong, well funded music department will be a strong deciding factor.

From: [Melody](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#); [Ball, Calvin](#)
Subject: Funding for 3rd Grade Strings in HCPSS
Date: Saturday, March 9, 2024 11:42:48 PM

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

The Honorable Dr. Calvin Ball and Howard County Council Members,

The recent exclusion of 3rd Grade Strings Education by the HCPSS Board of Education is an injustice to Howard County's children. Nearly 5,500 individuals signed the petition [Save Music in HCPSS!!!!](#), but were promptly ignored by the BOE. While 13 Title I schools will keep 3rd Grade Strings, **29 Howard County elementary schools will completely eliminate the program.** This program has existed in the county for decades and has initiated scores of eager young students into the world of instrumental music, many of whom have gone on to play an instrument through middle school, high school, college, and beyond.

While this action was taken in the name of equity, there is nothing equitable about it. There is no replacement for the creativity, teamwork, community building, and cooperative education that occurs in a music ensemble. Some may argue families with students who do not attend a Title I school are able to pay for private lessons, however this is wrong on two counts. First of all, it assumes that all families who can't afford extra curricular music education have students who attend Title I schools. There are FARM students in *every* elementary school in Howard County. There are also students who are not categorized as FARM students but whose families cannot afford music lessons. Secondly, there is NO substitute for a music *ensemble* education. In 3rd Grade Strings, 8 and 9 years olds learn the responsibility of having an ensemble depend upon them to learn their part and be prepared. They learn to think differently than they do in their other classes, improving cognitive skills, concentration, and problem solving skills. They learn what it means to perform and present their accomplishments proudly to family, friends, and classmates. These experiences and opportunities are not available in any other single class in elementary school.

The restoration of 3rd Grade Strings in the HCPSS Budget is less than \$795,000, only marginally more than the average cost of a home in Howard County. This is

a tiny percentage of the HCPSS budget. However, the removal of this program will be detrimental to our students and have a devastating effect on the prestigious HCPSS Music Program as a whole, because it will degrade the foundation on which it is built.

On a more personal note, I did not start my music education in 3rd grade strings, but in 4th grade band. Both of these programs are equally important and being in band has had such an amazing impact on my life and on my educational career. I probably would not have considered doing 4th grade band if it had not been for my friends who had done 3rd grade strings and who had loved it so much.

Therefore, I request that when providing allocations to HCPSS, please earmark funds for the continuation of 3rd Grade Strings in **ALL** HCPSS elementary schools.

Sincerely,
Melody Freed
Former HCPSS Student (FRES, PVMS, HaHS)

From: [Albert Musselwhite](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Cc: Jdchem111@yahoo.com
Subject: 3rd Grade Strings Education and HCPSS Board of Education
Date: Sunday, March 10, 2024 2:57:02 PM

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

The Honorable Dr. Calvin Ball and Howard County Council Members,

The recent exclusion of 3rd Grade Strings Education by the HCPSS Board of Education is an injustice to Howard County's children. Nearly 5,500 individuals signed the petition [Save Music in HCPSS!!!!](#), but were promptly ignored by the BOE. While 13 Title I schools will keep 3rd Grade Strings, **29 Howard County elementary schools will completely eliminate the program.** This program has existed in the county for decades and has initiated scores of eager young students into the world of instrumental music, many of whom have gone on to play an instrument through middle school, high school, college, and beyond.

There is no replacement for the creativity, teamwork, community building, and cooperative education that occurs in a music ensemble. Some may argue families with students who do not attend a Title I school are able to pay for private lessons, however this is wrong on two counts. First of all, it assumes that all families who can't afford extra curricular music education have students who attend Title I schools. There are FARM students in *every* elementary school in Howard County. There are also students who are not categorized as FARM students but whose families cannot afford music lessons. Secondly, there is NO substitute for a music *ensemble* education. In 3rd Grade Strings, 8 and 9 years olds learn the responsibility of having an ensemble depend upon them to learn their part and be prepared. They learn to think differently than they do in their other classes, improving cognitive skills, concentration, and problem solving skills. They learn what it means to perform and present their accomplishments proudly to family, friends, and classmates. These experiences and opportunities are not available in any other single class in elementary school.

The restoration of 3rd Grade Strings in the HCPSS Budget is less than \$795,000, only marginally more than the average cost of a home in Howard County. This is a tiny percentage of the HCPSS budget. However, the removal of this program

will be detrimental to our students and have a devastating effect on the prestigious HCPSS Music Program as a whole, because it will degrade the foundation on which it is built.

Therefore, I request that when providing allocations to HCPSS, please earmark funds for the continuation of 3rd Grade Strings in **ALL** HCPSS elementary schools.

Sincerely,

A.M. Musselwhite

HCPSS Parent

From: [Alison Flanigan](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Save the Music in HCPSS!
Date: Sunday, March 10, 2024 10:32:21 AM

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

The Honorable Dr. Calvin Ball and Howard County Council Members,

The recent exclusion of 3rd Grade Strings Education by the HCPSS Board of Education is an injustice to Howard County's children. Nearly 5,500 individuals signed the petition [Save Music in HCPSS!!!!](#), but were promptly ignored by the BOE. While 13 Title I schools will keep 3rd Grade Strings, **29 Howard County elementary schools will completely eliminate the program.** This program has existed in the county for decades and has initiated scores of eager young students into the world of instrumental music, many of whom have gone on to play an instrument through middle school, high school, college, and beyond.

While this action was taken in the name of equity, there is nothing equitable about it. There is no replacement for the creativity, teamwork, community building, and cooperative education that occurs in a music ensemble. Some may argue families with students who do not attend a Title I school are able to pay for private lessons, however this is wrong on two counts. First of all, it assumes that all families who can't afford extra curricular music education have students who attend Title I schools. There are FARM students in *every* elementary school in Howard County. There are also students who are not categorized as FARM students but whose families cannot afford music lessons. Secondly, there is NO substitute for a music *ensemble* education. In 3rd Grade Strings, 8 and 9 years olds learn the responsibility of having an ensemble depend upon them to learn their part and be prepared. They learn to think differently than they do in their other classes, improving cognitive skills, concentration, and problem solving skills. They learn what it means to perform and present their accomplishments proudly to family, friends, and classmates. These experiences and opportunities are not available in any other single class in elementary school.

The restoration of 3rd Grade Strings in the HCPSS Budget is less than \$795,000, only marginally more than the average cost of a home in Howard County. This is

a tiny percentage of the HCPSS budget. However, the removal of this program will be detrimental to our students and have a devastating effect on the prestigious HCPSS Music Program as a whole, because it will degrade the foundation on which it is built.

Therefore, I request that when providing allocations to HCPSS, please earmark funds for the continuation of 3rd Grade Strings in **ALL** HCPSS elementary schools.

Sincerely,

Alison Flanigan

From: [Aparna](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#); [BOE Email](#)
Subject: Music Program
Date: Sunday, March 10, 2024 11:44:17 PM

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

Dear Honorable Ball and Howard County Council Members,

My entire family plays music, and our three young HCPSS girls are outstanding musicians, who love playing their instruments at school and for band concerts. Music is core to our humanity - and to be brutally honest, it is what has saved them. For years, my daughters have suffered bullying and the general depravity that comes from kids being kids --- but when they walk into their band room, and pick up their instrument, they light up, the joy and peace emanating from their soul. The HCPSS Music program SAVES our kids - for many children, it's their refuge, it's where they find solace, where they find peace, hanging out really good kids, good, well-raised children - these are children who don't smoke, drink, and do band stuff - musicians are generally upstanding citizens -- why in God's name would anyone take this jewel away from our children? Why would you hunt down and take away the jobs of our music teachers -- these same teachers who dedicate their lives to opening up a whole new part of the brain, a whole new source of happiness for our children? WHY?

Are the sports programs facing similar cuts? Why are we preying on music? Our daughters are travel soccer players -- and they choose music over sports everytime because it's less "drama," less mean kids, more diversity, more happiness - they come home happy. Why take this away? Why punish our music program? If you need to find cuts, find it another way -- but not with our arts -- not with what makes us human and kind.

Please don't do this.

Aparna
HCPSS Mom of 3

From: [Brittany Jacobs](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Funding to Keep 3rd Gr Strings
Date: Sunday, March 10, 2024 10:29:29 AM

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

The Honorable Dr. Calvin Ball and Howard County Council Members,

The recent exclusion of 3rd Grade Strings Education by the HCPSS Board of Education is an injustice to Howard County's children. Nearly 5,500 individuals signed the petition [Save Music in HCPSS!!!!](#), but were promptly ignored by the BOE. While 13 Title I schools will keep 3rd Grade Strings, 29 Howard County elementary schools will completely eliminate the program. This program has existed in the county for decades and has initiated scores of eager young students into the world of instrumental music, many of whom have gone on to play an instrument through middle school, high school, college, and beyond.

While this action was taken in the name of equity, there is nothing equitable about it. There is no replacement for the creativity, teamwork, community building, and cooperative education that occurs in a music ensemble. Some may argue families with students who do not attend a Title I school are able to pay for private lessons, however this is wrong on two counts. First of all, it assumes that all families who can't afford extra curricular music education have students who attend Title I schools. There are FARM students in *every* elementary school in Howard County. There are also students who are not categorized as FARM students but whose families cannot afford music lessons. Secondly, there is NO substitute for a music *ensemble* education. In 3rd Grade Strings, 8 and 9 years olds learn the responsibility of having an ensemble depend upon them to learn their part and be prepared. They learn to think differently than they do in their other classes, improving cognitive skills, concentration, and problem solving skills. They learn what it means to perform and present their accomplishments proudly to family, friends, and classmates. These experiences and opportunities are not available in any other single class in elementary school.

The restoration of 3rd Grade Strings in the HCPSS Budget is less than \$795,000, only marginally more than the average cost of a home in Howard County. This is

a tiny percentage of the HCPSS budget. However, the removal of this program will be detrimental to our students and have a devastating effect on the prestigious HCPSS Music Program as a whole, because it will degrade the foundation on which it is built.

Therefore, I request that when providing allocations to HCPSS, please earmark funds for the continuation of 3rd Grade Strings in ALL HCPSS elementary schools.

Sincerely,

Brittany Jacobs

From: [Brooke Loudermilk](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: 3rd grade orchestra
Date: Sunday, March 10, 2024 4:15:15 PM

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

The Honorable Dr. Calvin Ball and Howard County Council Members,

The recent exclusion of 3rd Grade Strings Education by the HCPSS Board of Education is an injustice to Howard County's children. Nearly 5,500 individuals signed the petition [Save Music in HCPSS!!!!](#), but were promptly ignored by the BOE. While 13 Title I schools will keep 3rd Grade Strings, **29 Howard County elementary schools will completely eliminate the program.** This program has existed in the county for decades and has initiated scores of eager young students into the world of instrumental music, many of whom have gone on to play an instrument through middle school, high school, college, and beyond.

While this action was taken in the name of equity, there is nothing equitable about it. There is no replacement for the creativity, teamwork, community building, and cooperative education that occurs in a music ensemble. Some may argue families with students who do not attend a Title I school are able to pay for private lessons, however this is wrong on two counts. First of all, it assumes that all families who can't afford extra curricular music education have students who attend Title I schools. There are FARM students in *every* elementary school in Howard County. There are also students who are not categorized as FARM students but whose families cannot afford music lessons. Secondly, there is NO substitute for a music *ensemble* education. In 3rd Grade Strings, 8 and 9 years olds learn the responsibility of having an ensemble depend upon them to learn their part and be prepared. They learn to think differently than they do in their other classes, improving cognitive skills, concentration, and problem solving skills. They learn what it means to perform and present their accomplishments proudly to family, friends, and classmates. These experiences and opportunities are not available in any other single class in elementary school.

The restoration of 3rd Grade Strings in the HCPSS Budget is less than \$795,000, only marginally more than the average cost of a home in Howard County. This is

a tiny percentage of the HCPSS budget. However, the removal of this program will be detrimental to our students and have a devastating effect on the prestigious HCPSS Music Program as a whole, because it will degrade the foundation on which it is built.

Therefore, I request that when providing allocations to HCPSS, please earmark funds for the continuation of 3rd Grade Strings in **ALL** HCPSS elementary schools.

Sincerely,

Brooke Loudermilk

From: [Dan Bredice](#)
To: boe@hcpss.org; [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#); [Bill Barnes](#)
Subject: HCPSS Music Program
Date: Sunday, March 10, 2024 6:31:55 PM

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

Dear Dr. Calvin Ball and Esteemed Members of the Howard County Council,

The recent decision by the HCPSS Board of Education to exclude 3rd Grade Strings Education is deeply concerning. Despite our hopes, the budget adoption on Thursday, March 7 fell short of expectations. While it's commendable that 3rd Grade Strings will persist in Title I schools, it's disheartening to note that 29 elementary schools in Howard County will see their programs eliminated, potentially affecting up to 12 music educators' jobs.

This exclusion undermines the legacy of music education in Howard County and disregards the voices of nearly 5,500 individuals who signed the petition "Save Music in HCPSS!!!!" The argument for equity in this decision lacks validity, as it fails to acknowledge the diverse financial circumstances of families across the county. Moreover, the value of a music ensemble education extends beyond the classroom, fostering creativity, teamwork, and cognitive development in young students.

The cost of restoring 3rd Grade Strings in the HCPSS budget—less than \$795,000—is negligible compared to its profound impact. This program not only enriches students' lives but also forms the bedrock of the esteemed HCPSS Music Program. Its removal would erode this foundation, jeopardizing the program's reputation and diminishing opportunities for countless students.

Therefore, I urge you to allocate funds specifically for the continuation of 3rd Grade Strings in all HCPSS elementary schools. It's imperative that we safeguard this invaluable aspect of our children's education and uphold the longstanding tradition of musical excellence in Howard County.

Daniel P. Bredice
1-240-848-2758
10213 Spruce Way
Ellicott City, MD 21042
[Email](#)
[Linkedin](#)

From: [Diane Shaver](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Save 3rd Grade Strings please!
Date: Sunday, March 10, 2024 9:39:08 AM

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

The Honorable Dr. Calvin Ball and Howard County Council Members,

The recent exclusion of 3rd Grade Strings Education by the HCPSS Board of Education is an injustice to Howard County's children. Nearly 5,500 individuals signed the petition [Save Music in HCPSS!!!!](#), but were promptly ignored by the BOE. While 13 Title I schools will keep 3rd Grade Strings, **29 Howard County elementary schools will completely eliminate the program.** This program has existed in the county for decades and has initiated scores of eager young students into the world of instrumental music, many of whom have gone on to play an instrument through middle school, high school, college, and beyond.

While this action was taken in the name of equity, there is nothing equitable about it. There is no replacement for the creativity, teamwork, community building, and cooperative education that occurs in a music ensemble. Some may argue families with students who do not attend a Title I school are able to pay for private lessons, however this is wrong on two counts. First of all, it assumes that all families who can't afford extra curricular music education have students who attend Title I schools. There are FARM students in *every* elementary school in Howard County. There are also students who are not categorized as FARM students but whose families cannot afford music lessons. Secondly, there is NO substitute for a music *ensemble* education. In 3rd Grade Strings, 8 and 9 years olds learn the responsibility of having an ensemble depend upon them to learn their part and be prepared. They learn to think differently than they do in their other classes, improving cognitive skills, concentration, and problem solving skills. They learn what it means to perform and present their accomplishments proudly to family, friends, and classmates. These experiences and opportunities are not available in any other single class in elementary school.

The restoration of 3rd Grade Strings in the HCPSS Budget is less than \$795,000, only marginally more than the average cost of a home in Howard County. This is

a tiny percentage of the HCPSS budget. However, the removal of this program will be detrimental to our students and have a devastating effect on the prestigious HCPSS Music Program as a whole, because it will degrade the foundation on which it is built.

Therefore, I request that when providing allocations to HCPSS, please earmark funds for the continuation of 3rd Grade Strings in **ALL**HCPSS elementary schools.

Sincerely,

Diane Shaver

From: [Hershal Rami](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Date: Sunday, March 10, 2024 1:59:32 AM

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

The Honorable Dr. Calvin Ball and Howard County Council Members,

The recent exclusion of 3rd Grade Strings Education by the HCPSS Board of Education is an injustice to Howard County's children. Nearly 5,500 individuals signed the petition [Save Music in HCPSS!!!!](#), but were promptly ignored by the BOE. While 13 Title I schools will keep 3rd Grade Strings, **29 Howard County elementary schools will completely eliminate the program.** This program has existed in the county for decades and has initiated scores of eager young students into the world of instrumental music, many of whom have gone on to play an instrument through middle school, high school, college, and beyond.

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Therefore, I request that when providing allocations to HCPSS, please earmark funds for the continuation of 3rd Grade Strings in **ALL** HCPSS elementary schools.

Sincerely,
Hershal Rami

From: [Jeanene Kleinman](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Music
Date: Sunday, March 10, 2024 9:31:38 PM

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

The Honorable Dr. Calvin Ball and Howard County Council Members,

The recent exclusion of 3rd Grade Strings Education by the HCPSS Board of Education is an injustice to Howard County's children. Nearly 5,500 individuals signed the petition Save Music in HCPSS! but were disturbingly ignored by the BOE. While 13 Title I schools will keep 3rd Grade Strings, 29 Howard County elementary schools will completely eliminate the program. This program has existed in the county for decades and has initiated scores of eager young students into the world of instrumental music, many of whom have gone on to play an instrument through middle school, high school, college, and beyond.

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Therefore, I request that when providing allocations to HCPSS, please earmark funds for the continuation of 3rd Grade Strings in ALL HCPSS elementary schools.

Sincerely,

Jeanene Kleinman

(410) 608-3851

From: [Joshua Albright](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Howard County's Requirement for Music Education in FY 25
Date: Sunday, March 10, 2024 6:54:15 PM

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

Honorable Calvin Ball and Howard County Council Members,

The recent exclusion of 3rd Grade Strings Education by the HCPSS Board of Education is an injustice to Howard County's children. Nearly 5,500 individuals signed the petition Save Music in HCPSS!!!!, but were promptly ignored by the BOE. While 13 Title I schools will keep 3rd Grade Strings, 29 Howard County elementary schools will completely eliminate the program. This program has existed in the county for decades and has initiated scores of eager young students into the world of instrumental music, many of whom have gone on to play an instrument through middle school, high school, college, and beyond.

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Therefore, I request that when providing allocations to HCPSS, please earmark funds for the continuation of 3rd Grade Strings in ALL HCPSS elementary schools.

Sincerely,

--

Joshua D. Albright
LCDR USN

From: [Julie Bedwell](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Save Music in HCPSS!!
Date: Sunday, March 10, 2024 3:09:42 PM

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

The Honorable Dr. Calvin Ball and Howard County Council Members,

The recent exclusion of 3rd Grade Strings Education by the HCPSS Board of Education is an injustice to Howard County's children. Nearly 5,500 individuals signed the petition [Save Music in HCPSS!!!!](#), but were promptly ignored by the BOE. While 13 Title I schools will keep 3rd Grade Strings, **29 Howard County elementary schools will completely eliminate the program.** This program has existed in the county for decades and has initiated scores of eager young students into the world of instrumental music, many of whom have gone on to play an instrument through middle school, high school, college, and beyond.

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will be detrimental to our students and have a devastating effect on the prestigious HCPSS Music Program as a whole, because it will degrade the foundation on which it is built.

Therefore, I request that when providing allocations to HCPSS, please earmark funds for the continuation of 3rd Grade Strings in **ALL** HCPSS elementary schools.

Sincerely,

Julie Bedwell

From: [Kay Vandenberg](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#); CouncilDistrict1@howardcountymd.gov
Subject: HCPSS Budget and 3rd grade strings instruction
Date: Sunday, March 10, 2024 6:36:35 AM

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

The Honorable Dr. Calvin Ball and Howard County Council Members,

The recent exclusion of 3rd Grade Strings Education by the HCPSS Board of Education is an injustice to Howard County's children. Nearly 5,500 individuals signed the petition [Save Music in HCPSS!!!!](#), but were promptly ignored by the BOE. While 13 Title I schools will keep 3rd Grade Strings, 29 Howard County elementary schools will completely eliminate the program. This program has existed in the county for decades and has initiated scores of eager young students into the world of instrumental music, many of whom have gone on to play an instrument through middle school, high school, college, and beyond.

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Therefore, I request that when providing allocations to HCPSS, please earmark funds for the continuation of 3rd Grade Strings in ALLHCPSS elementary schools.

Sincerely,

Kay Vandenberg, MD, FACOG
Ellicott City, District 1
[Sent from the all new AOL app for iOS](#)

From: [Lynn Chen](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Save Music in HCPSS!!!!,
Date: Sunday, March 10, 2024 1:01:20 AM

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

The Honorable Dr. Calvin Ball and Howard County Council Members,

The recent exclusion of 3rd Grade Strings Education by the HCPSS Board of Education is an injustice to Howard County's children. Nearly 5,500 individuals signed the petition [Save Music in HCPSS!!!!](#), but were promptly ignored by the BOE. While 13 Title I schools will keep 3rd Grade Strings, **29 Howard County elementary schools will completely eliminate the program.** This program has existed in the county for decades and has initiated scores of eager young students into the world of instrumental music, many of whom have gone on to play an instrument through middle school, high school, college, and beyond.

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Therefore, I request that when providing allocations to HCPSS, please earmark funds for the continuation of 3rd Grade Strings in **ALL** HCPSS elementary schools.

Sincerely,

Lynn Chen

From: [Missy Hapner](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: HCPSS Budget Crisis. Strings.
Date: Sunday, March 10, 2024 7:56:51 AM

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

The Honorable Dr. Calvin Ball and Howard County Council Members,

The recent exclusion of 3rd Grade Strings Education by the HCPSS Board of Education is an injustice to Howard County's children. Nearly 5,500 individuals signed the petition [Save Music in HCPSS!!!!](#), but were promptly ignored by the BOE. While 13 Title I schools will keep 3rd Grade Strings, 29 Howard County elementary schools will completely eliminate the program. This program has existed in the county for decades and has initiated scores of eager young students into the world of instrumental music, many of whom have gone on to play an instrument through middle school, high school, college, and beyond.

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The restoration of 3rd Grade Strings in the HCPSS Budget is less than \$795,000, only

Sincerely,

Marissa Hapner

From: [Meehyeun Bovee](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Save Music in HCPSS!!!!
Date: Sunday, March 10, 2024 12:27:12 PM

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

The Honorable Dr. Calvin Ball and Howard County Council Members,

The recent exclusion of 3rd Grade Strings Education by the HCPSS Board of Education is an injustice to Howard County's children. Nearly 5,500 individuals signed the petition [Save Music in HCPSS!!!!](#), but were promptly ignored by the BOE. While 13 Title I schools will keep 3rd Grade Strings, **29 Howard County elementary schools will completely eliminate the program.** This program has existed in the county for decades and has initiated scores of eager young students into the world of instrumental music, many of whom have gone on to play an instrument through middle school, high school, college, and beyond.

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The restoration of 3rd Grade Strings in the HCPSS Budget is less than \$795,000, only marginally more than the average cost of a home in Howard County. This is

a tiny percentage of the HCPSS budget. However, the removal of this program will be detrimental to our students and have a devastating effect on the prestigious HCPSS Music Program as a whole, because it will degrade the foundation on which it is built.

Therefore, I request that when providing allocations to HCPSS, please earmark funds for the continuation of 3rd Grade Strings in **ALL** HCPSS elementary schools.

Sincerely,

Meehyeun Bovee

From: [Rory May](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: 3rd Grade Strings Education by the HCPSS Board of Education
Date: Sunday, March 10, 2024 12:40:50 AM

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

The Honorable Dr. Calvin Ball and Howard County Council Members,

The recent exclusion of 3rd Grade Strings

Education by the HCPSS Board of Education is an injustice to Howard County's children. Nearly 5,500 individuals signed the petition Save Music in HCPSS!!!!, but were promptly ignored by the BOE. While 13 Title I schools will keep 3rd Grade Strings, 29 Howard County elementary schools will completely eliminate the program. This program has existed in the county for decades and has initiated scores of eager young students into the world of instrumental music, many of whom have gone on to play an instrument through middle school, high school, college, and beyond.

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There is no replacement for the creativity, teamwork, community building, and cooperative education that occurs in a music ensemble. Some may argue families with students who do not attend a Title I school are able to pay for private lessons, however this is wrong on two counts. First of all, it assumes that all families who can't afford extra curricular music education have students who attend Title I schools. There are FARM students in every elementary school in Howard County. There are also students who are not categorized as FARM students but whose families cannot afford music lessons. Secondly, there is NO substitute for a music ensemble education. In 3rd Grade Strings, 8 and 9 years olds learn the responsibility of having an ensemble depend upon them to learn their part and be prepared.

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Therefore, I request that when providing allocations to HCPSS, please earmark funds for the continuation of 3rd Grade Strings in ALL HCPSS elementary schools.

Sincerely,
Rory May

From: [EJ Han](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Please reinstate 3rd Grade String Education.
Date: Monday, March 11, 2024 2:43:07 PM

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

The Honorable Dr. Calvin Ball and Howard County Council Members,

The recent exclusion of 3rd Grade Strings Education by the HCPSS Board of Education is an injustice to Howard County's children. Nearly 5,500 individuals signed the petition [Save Music in HCPSS!!!!](#), but were promptly ignored by the BOE. While 13 Title I schools will keep 3rd Grade Strings, **29 Howard County elementary schools will completely eliminate the program.** This program has existed in the county for decades and has initiated scores of eager young students into the world of instrumental music, many of whom have gone on to play an instrument through middle school, high school, college, and beyond.

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will be detrimental to our students and have a devastating effect on the prestigious HCPSS Music Program as a whole, because it will degrade the foundation on which it is built.

Therefore, I request that when providing allocations to HCPSS, please earmark funds for the continuation of 3rd Grade Strings in **ALL** HCPSS elementary schools.

Sincerely,

Eui Jung Han

From: [Nicole Oruncak](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Public Prejudice
Date: Monday, March 11, 2024 9:36:26 AM

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

Good Morning,

I would like to address the BOE meeting on 3/7/2024 regarding the proposed and passed Scenario D. I would like to commend Dr. Chen on his passionate remarks regarding our children's 3rd grade strings program. I am appalled as a parent of a Northfield Elementary school rising 3rd grader of a Scenario that seems extraordinarily biased to those in the FARMS program.

Why does this scenario punish those who are above the FARMS requirements? My husband was a FARMS student in Howard County and has worked his life to do better for his own family and now seems to me that we are punishing those that are above the FARMS requirements. I was from a family who lived paycheck to paycheck but did not qualify for FARMS and would be below this 40% requirement funding that is included within Scenario D. Scenario D seems discriminatory against those families within Howard County who are maybe able to provide for their families without government assistance but not without support from their schools and communities.

Scenario D is publicly prejudicial to families that are making the financial means to be above the FARMS requirements. Financial means have nothing to do with a student's love of music and a teacher's ability to provide a student with passion for music, this only happens within our schools.

Our children at Northfield love this program and I am sure there are many Elementary schools who are above the 40% who feel the same. Taking away this program robs the 3rd grade students who are not within this FARMS bracket of a music program within their school.

Maybe you are thinking that parents can choose to enroll their students in outside programs, but let's not forget that the parents riding the fine line of paycheck to paycheck can not afford these tutors. In whole, a child who strives to learn an instrument but whose parents make "X" amount of money is not as important as the FARMS students who qualify to get the chance to learn that instrument, this is the definition of prejudice. This child's whole musical career trajectory can be decided in this moment as their inquisitiveness of learning an instrument is snuffed out due to their financial status. Decisions like this divide Howard County into groups and starts defining political boundaries of those who need assistance, those who don't qualify, and those who are above the need. We will become a county of the "have's & have-not's" which is not what we are teaching our children about inclusion and diversity. You are on a stage when you are making these decisions and these children are watching every word, you need to do better!

Thank you for your time,
Nicole Oruncak, LMT
Parent of 2 at Northfield Elementary

From: [Becky & Jesko Hagee](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: HCPSS music
Date: Monday, March 11, 2024 4:51:30 PM

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

The Honorable Dr. Calvin Ball and Howard County Council Members,

The recent exclusion of 3rd Grade Strings Education by the HCPSS Board of Education is an injustice to Howard County's children. Nearly 5,500 individuals signed the petition [Save Music in HCPSS!!!!](#), but were promptly ignored by the BOE. While 13 Title I schools will keep 3rd Grade Strings, 29 Howard County elementary schools will completely eliminate the program. This program has existed in the county for decades and has initiated scores of eager young students into the world of instrumental music, many of whom have gone on to play an instrument through middle school, high school, college, and beyond.

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a tiny percentage of the HCPSS budget. However, the removal of this program will be detrimental to our students and have a devastating effect on the prestigious HCPSS Music Program as a whole, because it will degrade the foundation on which it is built.

Therefore, I request that when providing allocations to HCPSS, please earmark funds for the continuation of 3rd Grade Strings in ALL HCPSS elementary schools.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Hagee

From: [S.S](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: 3 grade strings- budget
Date: Monday, March 11, 2024 3:49:08 AM

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

The Honorable Dr. Calvin Ball and Howard County Council Members,

The recent exclusion of 3rd Grade Strings Education by the HCPSS Board of Education is a meaningful loss. The robust music program is one of the best aspects of HCPSS, it benefits the children and it enriches the community. While 13 Title I schools will keep 3rd Grade Strings, 29 Howard County elementary schools will completely eliminate the program. This program has existed in the county for decades and has initiated scores of eager young students into the world of instrumental music, many of whom have gone on to play an instrument through middle school, high school, college, and beyond.

There is no replacement for the creativity, teamwork, community building, and cooperative education that occurs in a music ensemble. In 3rd Grade Strings, 8 and 9 years olds learn the responsibility of having an ensemble depend upon them to learn their part and be prepared. They learn to think differently than they do in their other classes, improving cognitive skills, concentration, and problem solving skills. They learn what it means to perform and present their accomplishments proudly to family, friends, and classmates. These experiences and opportunities are not available in any other single class in elementary school.

I understand the restoration of 3rd Grade Strings in the HCPSS Budget is less than \$795,000. However, the removal of this program will be detrimental to our students and have a negative effect on our music program.

Therefore, I request that when providing allocations to HCPSS, please earmark funds for the continuation of 3rd Grade Strings in All HCPSS elementary schools.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Shapley

From: [Zeena & Seong Chi](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#); [Ball, Calvin](#)
Subject: 3rd Grade Strings in Howard County
Date: Monday, March 11, 2024 6:59:18 PM

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

Dear Dr. Calvin Ball and Howard County Council Members,

The recent exclusion of 3rd Grade Strings Education by the HCPSS Board of Education is an injustice to Howard County's children. Nearly 5,500 individuals signed the petition [Save Music in HCPSS!!!!](#), but were promptly ignored by the BOE. While 13 Title I schools will keep 3rd Grade Strings, 29 Howard County elementary schools will completely eliminate the program. This program has existed in the county for decades and has initiated scores of eager young students into the world of instrumental music, many of whom have gone on to play an instrument through middle school, high school, college, and beyond.

While this action was taken in the name of equity, there is nothing equitable about it. There is no replacement for the creativity, teamwork, community building, and cooperative education that occurs in a music ensemble. Some may argue families with students who do not attend a Title I school are able to pay for private lessons, however this is wrong on two counts. First of all, it assumes that all families who can't afford extra curricular music education have students who attend Title I schools. There are FARM students in *every* elementary school in Howard County. There are also students who are not categorized as FARM students but whose families cannot afford music lessons. Secondly, there is NO substitute for a music *ensemble* education. In 3rd Grade Strings, 8 and 9 years olds learn the responsibility of having an ensemble depend upon them to learn their part and be prepared. They learn to think differently than they do in their other classes, improving cognitive skills, concentration, and problem solving skills. They learn what it means to perform and present their accomplishments proudly to family, friends, and classmates. These experiences and opportunities are not available in any other single class in elementary school.

The restoration of 3rd Grade Strings in the HCPSS Budget is less than \$795,000, only marginally more than the average cost of a home in Howard County. This is

a tiny percentage of the HCPSS budget. However, the removal of this program will be detrimental to our students and have a devastating effect on the prestigious HCPSS Music Program as a whole, because it will degrade the foundation on which it is built.

Therefore, I request that when providing allocations to HCPSS, please earmark funds for the continuation of 3rd Grade Strings in ALLHCPSS elementary schools.

Sincerely,

Zeena Chi

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Alex Angela](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Save music in hcps
Date: Tuesday, March 12, 2024 6:00:07 AM

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

The Honorable Dr. Calvin Ball and Howard County Council Members,

The recent exclusion of 3rd Grade Strings Education by the HCPSS Board of Education is an injustice to Howard County's children. Nearly 5,500 individuals signed the petition [Save Music in HCPSS!!!!](#), but were promptly ignored by the BOE. While 13 Title I schools will keep 3rd Grade Strings, **29 Howard County elementary schools will completely eliminate the program.** This program has existed in the county for decades and has initiated scores of eager young students into the world of instrumental music, many of whom have gone on to play an instrument through middle school, high school, college, and beyond.

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a tiny percentage of the HCPSS budget. However, the removal of this program will be detrimental to our students and have a devastating effect on the prestigious HCPSS Music Program as a whole, because it will degrade the foundation on which it is built.

Therefore, I request that when providing allocations to HCPSS, please earmark funds for the continuation of 3rd Grade Strings in **ALL** HCPSS elementary schools.

Sincerely,

Angela and Alex

From: [Annie McLean](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [Budget Testimony](#); boe@hcpss.org; budgetfeedback@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org; jennifer_mallo@hcpss.org
Cc: [Rob McLean](#)
Subject: Retain Budget for HCPSS GT and Orchestra Programs for ALL Schools
Date: Tuesday, March 12, 2024 9:20:37 AM

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

Dear Dr. Ball and other community leaders,

We are writing to implore you to pass a budget that retains the current level of funding for GT and Orchestra programming for ALL public schools in Howard County. We were extremely disappointed that the budget put forward by the board of education did not include funding for these programs for all HCPSS schools. These programs provide important benefits to the quality of education in our schools, and we believe it would be a grave mistake to no longer provide ALL children the opportunity to partake in these valuable programs.

We have two children who attend Manor Woods Elementary School, one in fourth grade and one in kindergarten. These programs have been a very important aspect of my fourth grader's education thus far, not least because they make him passionate about attending school and what he is learning. His favorite classes without a doubt are his GT classes and Orchestra. The other day, when I told him he was going to participate in the GT Revolutionary War CEU, he actually jumped and danced for joy and yelled, "Let's GO, GT Revolutionary War!!!!!" He has learned so much from both his GT class and Orchestra and they are a huge part of why I view the level of education currently provided by HCPSS as very high quality.

It would be an absolute shame and disservice to our children as well as a significant blow to the quality of HCPSS schools to not make these programs available to all children in HCPSS. We are very upset that our Kindergartner won't have the opportunity to participate in 3rd grade Orchestra and CEUs when he is old enough. Howard County's great reputation is largely because of its schools and certainly was the determining factor in why we moved here. Cuts that impact the quality of the schools are extremely frustrating and disheartening.

If there is any way possible, please retain these programs.

Thank you for your consideration,
Annie and Rob McLean
Ellicott City, MD Residents

From: [Kemuel Durham](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#); CouncilDistrict5@howardcountymd.gov
Cc: bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Proposed Howard County Public School GT and Music Budget Cuts
Date: Tuesday, March 12, 2024 8:10:45 AM

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

Dear Dr. Ball and Members of the Howard County Council,

We have two children who attend Dayton Oaks Elementary School (DOES). We are writing this letter to request that you do **not** approve the parts of the budget from the Howard County Board of Education which cut staffing for the gifted and talented program for grades K-3 (GT) as well as the 3rd grade strings opportunity (strings), at Dayton Oaks Elementary School (DOES). These are great learning opportunities for our children at DOES, and they have positive spill-over benefits into other aspects of our children's academic and non-academic lives.

In targeting certain high-performing schools for budget cuts, the HoCo BOE said this is an equity budget, not an equitable budget. We think it is neither, and there are better ways to accomplish the same budgetary objective without denying our children educational opportunities.

The goal of public schooling across HoCo should be to provide educational enrichment to all students, to help all of them achieve their potential. We cannot do this by providing fewer opportunities to schools which are higher performing; rather, we should always seek to provide more opportunities to all students. When 40% of all 4th and 5th grade students at DOES qualify for GT math services, it is incomprehensible that we should not give them the tools to excel. The proposed cuts to the GT program will tax the remaining GT staff and students who show a need will not receive the services needed to flourish. Our families, the county, and the country as a whole can only benefit when we nourish and then unleash the awesome potential of our children.

Further, it is not accurate to say parents at above-average achieving schools have the resources to make up for what their schools lack – first, not all parents at above-average achieving schools have sufficient resources for this, so it's an overly broad assumption; and second, no tutoring or private music lessons outside of school can replace the enriching environment which weaves higher-level academics and musical exploration with a group of like-minded students into the fabric of the school day, which then have positive ripple effects on everything else the students are learning in school.

We strongly believe we should have a budget that is both equity-focused and equitable **for the students**; if there is to be a gap between equity and what is equitable, then that should fall on the parents' financial shoulders. So we request that:

(1) HoCo does not cut GT and strings programs at any HoCo schools, including DOES.

(2) The County allocate additional funds to keep these essential programs.

(3) If needed to make up a budgetary shortfall to cover this, HoCo should approach funding for these programs on an “asking for more resources on a family-by-family, across all schools” basis rather than a “discriminating against all students at particular schools” basis. For example, each school in HoCo could ask that parents by, say, the end of May 2024 commit to whether their child will engage in GT/strings programs for the Fall 2024/Winter 2025 school year. If so, and if the parents are above a certain income threshold, then those parents would be required to pay an extra fixed fee (say, \$300 per child). If an insufficient number of above-income threshold parents at a particular school do not elect to pay for a particular program (whether GT or strings), then that would be the parents' decision not to fund it. That is both equitable and equity-based with a focus on opportunities for children, and not depriving them of great resources. If the BOE's main concern is ensuring students who are lower performing get more resources, then HoCo should not adopt a tool which discriminates against students only in certain schools when it can instead put the financial focus where appropriate – i.e., asking above-income threshold parents to bear a greater financial burden.

In conclusion, we request that you do **not** approve the parts of the Howard County Board of Education's suggested budget which cuts staffing for the GT and strings programs at DOES.

Thank you,

Patrick and Kemuel Halasz

cc: David Yungmann, Deb Jung, Christiana Rigby, Opel Jones, and Liz Walsh

From: [Sara Goggin](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Concern over cutting the 3rd grade strings in Howard County Elementary Schools
Date: Tuesday, March 12, 2024 3:00:08 PM

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

The Honorable Dr. Calvin Ball and Howard County Council Members,

The recent exclusion of 3rd Grade Strings Education by the HCPSS Board of Education is an injustice to Howard County's children. Over 5,500 individuals signed the petition [Save Music in HCPSS!!!!](#), but were promptly ignored by the BOE. While 13 Title I schools will keep 3rd Grade Strings, **29 Howard County elementary schools will completely eliminate the program.** This program has existed in the county for decades and has initiated scores of eager young students into the world of instrumental music, many of whom have gone on to play an instrument through middle school, high school, college, and beyond. Music education has also been shown to have great benefits to all students involved.

While this action was taken in the name of equity, there is nothing equitable about it. There is no replacement for the creativity, teamwork, community building, and cooperative education that occurs in a music ensemble. Some may argue families with students who do not attend a Title I school are able to pay for private lessons, however this is wrong on two counts. First of all, it assumes that all families who can't afford extra curricular music education have students who attend Title I schools. There are FARM students in *every* elementary school in Howard County. There are also students who are not categorized as FARM students but whose families cannot afford music lessons. Secondly, there is NO substitute for a music *ensemble* education. In 3rd Grade Strings, 8 and 9 year olds learn the responsibility of having an ensemble depend upon them to learn their part and be prepared. They learn to think differently than they do in their other classes, improving cognitive skills, concentration, and problem solving skills. They learn what it means to perform and present their accomplishments proudly to family, friends, and classmates. These experiences and opportunities are not available in any other single class in elementary school.

My oldest of three daughters is currently a second grader at St. John's Lane Elementary School and has been looking forward to being in the 3rd grade string ensemble for over 2 years as it is a wonderful opportunity for her to further her love of music in a group environment.

The restoration of 3rd Grade Strings in the HCPSS Budget is less than \$795,000, only marginally more than the average cost of a home in Howard County. This is a tiny percentage of the HCPSS budget. However, the removal of this program will be detrimental to our students and have a devastating effect on the prestigious HCPSS Music Program as a whole, because it will degrade the foundation on which it is built.

Therefore, I request that when providing allocations to HCPSS, please earmark funds for the continuation of 3rd Grade Strings in **ALL** HCPSS elementary schools.

Sincerely,

Sarar Goggin

From: [Tara Benedetti](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Elem GT & Music Cuts
Date: Tuesday, March 12, 2024 6:27:46 PM

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

Good evening,

I'm writing as a concerned parent and citizen. I currently have three sons at Bushy Park Elementary in third grade, second grade and Kindergarten. I also have a 3-year-old daughter.

I was recently shocked to learn that the BOE is considering the elimination of elementary GT and 3rd grade strings.

Quality public schools were the main reason our family moved from Montgomery to Howard County. My third grader was recently accepted into the GT extension for Social Studies, and it has been the absolute highlight of his year. Each morning, he goes to school genuinely excited for his GT class and his self-confidence and love of learning have greatly increased. My third grader also currently participates in the 3rd grade strings program by playing the cello. In my eyes, the 3rd grade strings program set HoCo apart from neighboring counties and uniquely showcased the value of living in Howard County.

The proposed cuts are not only a serious blow to my children's education, but also tarnish Howard County's reputation and undermine confidence in our elected officials. Removing elementary GT and music programs signal an education system in decline and a lack of leadership and responsible decision making.

Please consider intervening to save elementary GT and 3rd grade strings and set Howard County back on the right course.


Best regards,
Tara Benedetti



From: [Alicia Bridges-PTA](#)
To: [Budget Testimony](#); [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#); [executive Board](#); [President DOES PTA](#)
Subject: URGENT: Request to ADD Funds to GT & Strings - HCPSS Elementary Budget
Date: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 7:50:56 AM
Attachments: [image.png](#)
[Enclosure DOES PTA GT n Strings Impacts.pdf](#)

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



Dayton Oaks PTA, Incorporated

4691 Ten Oaks Road, 
Dayton, MD 21036
Howard County

president@daytonoakspta.org 
<https://daytonoakspta.org> 

March 13, 2024

Dr. Calvin Ball, County Executive
410-313-2013
cball@HowardCountyMD.gov
George Howard Building
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21043

Dear Dr. Ball,

On behalf of all the Dayton Oaks parents and families, including the entire Dayton Oaks ES PTA Board, I am writing you to advocate for adding funds back into the HCPSS budget to fully support Elementary GT programs and 3rd grade Orchestra. The budget allocated towards the schools needs to be prioritized so programs are fully funded.

GT staff at Dayton Oaks ES provide so many supports across all grades, to include special recess seminars for 2nd and 3rd graders whose working parents, like myself, might not otherwise have the resources to expose the children to these learning opportunities. The biggest take away for Dayton Oaks is that we have a high percentage of high achieving students (ex: 40% of all 4th & 5th grade students qualify for GT math services). These students require more educational services to provide them with a level of teaching that matches their educational needs.

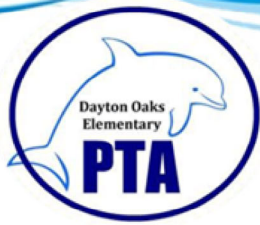
For the cuts to the orchestra/strings budget, these are a direct hit to 3rd grade families, such a myself. 3rd grade strings in the school allow for anyone to participate - ANY one - even those students with special needs or those who cannot afford or provide private tutors. What you should know is that about 60% of 3rd grade students participate in Strings, demonstrating a need & desire for our community. While we all have seen the research on the benefit of orchestra for kids at this grade level, I can attest to my own 3rd grader who was extremely introverted, but joining orchestra helped them find a few friends with common interests and genuinely improving their social and emotional development.

I plead with you to review the enclosures that our DOES parents put together from the impacts of GT and Strings budget cuts and use that to strongly push to have those funds reinstated for our Elementary schools.

Enclosure(1)

Respectfully,
Alicia Bridges
DOES PTA President
president@daytonoakpta.org





Dayton Oaks PTA, Incorporated

4691 Ten Oaks Road,
Dayton, MD 21036
Howard County



president@daytonoakspta.org
<https://daytonoakspta.org>



March 13, 2024

Dr. Calvin Ball, County Executive
410-313-2013
cball@HowardCountyMD.gov
George Howard Building
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21043

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Enclosure(1)

Respectfully,
Alicia Bridges
DOES PTA President
president@daytonoakpta.org

PTA[®]
everychild.one voice.[®]





What's at risk in a nutshell for GT:

CEU: Curriculum Extension Units offered to students based on multiple data measures, most often in social studies or science. The students are pulled out of their regular class for those 8 weeks of the quarter.

Primary Talent Development: GT staff pushes into the classroom to teach lessons to every student, explicitly teaching them advanced learning behaviors

Math Enrichment: GT staff pushes into the classroom to teach advanced learning math strategies to all students

Seminars: Offered to all students, group sessions, occurring during recess focused around "outside the box" thinking, integrating multiple academic disciplines and methods of learning.

About 60% of all students participate in a seminar.

Specifics:

Kindergarten and 1st:

- **Primary Talent Development with each & every student 7-8 times per year**
- Support classroom enrichment ideas for classroom teachers

Remaining GT staff physical availability cannot prioritize Primary Talent Development, lessons that teach every student advanced learning behaviors regardless of ability, data, or test scores

2nd Grade

- **CEU's 2 per yr**
- **Seminars 1 - 2 per year 60% student enrollment rate**
- **Math class enrichment**
- Support classroom enrichment ideas for classroom teachers

Remaining GT staff physically cannot offer CEU's, and would likely be replaced with a single Primary Talent Development class.

Remaining GT staff cannot offer math in-class enrichment

Recess Seminars will not be offered due to an overtaxing schedule.

3rd Grade

- **CEU's 2 per yr**
- **Seminars 3 - 5 per year 60% student enrollment rate**
- **Math class enrichment**
- Support classroom enrichment ideas for classroom teachers

Remaining GT staff physically cannot offer CEU's, classroom teachers would likely have to teach any units to students with need and rest of students would have to sprinkle to other classrooms.

Remaining GT staff cannot offer math in-class enrichment

Recess seminars will not be a priority due to an overtaxing schedule.



4th & 5th Grade

- 2-3 Math classes per year with 24-30 students each 40% student enrollment rate
 - **Class size will increase**
- CEU's 2 per yr (**Limited CEU openings**)
- Seminars 3 - 5 per year 60% student enrollment rate
- Support classroom enrichment ideas

Remaining GT staff will be taxed to be able to reach all students who show an enrichment need.

Not all students who show a need will be provided with GT services, there simply won't be enough staff to support the number of students.

Our GT Staff responsibilities outside the DOES classroom:

- Attend after school programs such as UPs and Battle of the Books to support students (outside of school hours)
- Attend/lead data conversations for 2-5
- Organize and run 2 Family Nights
- Administer and support testing (CogAt, MAP, MCAP, MISA) and provide make up testing sessions
- Run Professional Development for Staff
- Facilitator of county-wide Professional Development and mentors to other GT resource teachers

In short, GT services will basically no longer exist for grades K-3 in a truly impactful way.

Impact of losing Strings/3rd Grade Orchestra:

- There's a plethora of scientific and academic research available for why early instrumental opportunities are extremely beneficial to student academic success, so I don't need to expound here.
- String instruments specifically offer an early opportunity for students to participate in an ensemble experience because most students are not quite big enough to physically play a band instrument due to lung capacity and size of instrument. (string instruments come in child sizes).
- 3rd grade strings in the school allow for anyone to participate - ANY one - even those students with special needs or those who cannot afford or provide private tutors. What you should know is that about 60% of 3rd grade students participate in Strings, demonstrating a need & desire for our community.
- Many of those students continue to stay with a musical instrument whether it's band, orchestra, or chorus throughout middle school and high school.
- Cutting this year out will have a massive trickle down effect that will impact our future school's music programs.

From: [Xiaomeng Xia](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Please keep music program for 3rd grade
Date: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 2:50:40 PM

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

The Honorable Dr. Calvin Ball and Howard County Council Members,

The recent exclusion of 3rd Grade Strings Education by the HCPSS Board of Education is an injustice to Howard County's children. Over 5,600 individuals signed the petition [Save Music in HCPSS!!!!](#), but were promptly ignored by the BOE. While 13 Title I schools will keep 3rd Grade Strings, **29 Howard County elementary schools will completely eliminate the program.** This program has existed in the county for decades and has initiated scores of eager young students into the world of instrumental music, many of whom have gone on to play an instrument through middle school, high school, college, and beyond.

While this action was taken in the name of equity, there is nothing equitable about it. There is no replacement for the creativity, teamwork, community building, and cooperative education that occurs in a music ensemble. Some may argue families with students who do not attend a Title I school are able to pay for private lessons, however this is wrong on two counts. First of all, it assumes that all families who can't afford extra curricular music education have students who attend Title I schools. There are FARM students in *every* elementary school in Howard County. There are also students who are not categorized as FARM students but whose families cannot afford music lessons. Secondly, there is NO substitute for a music *ensemble* education. In 3rd Grade Strings, 8 and 9 years olds learn the responsibility of having an ensemble depend upon them to learn their part and be prepared. They learn to think differently than they do in their other classes, improving cognitive skills, concentration, and problem solving skills. They learn what it means to perform and present their accomplishments proudly to family, friends, and classmates. These experiences and opportunities are not available in any other single class in elementary school.

The restoration of 3rd Grade Strings in the HCPSS Budget is less than \$795,000, only marginally more than the average cost of a home in Howard County. This is

a tiny percentage of the HCPSS budget. However, the removal of this program will be detrimental to our students and have a devastating effect on the prestigious HCPSS Music Program as a whole, because it will degrade the foundation on which it is built.

Therefore, I request that when providing allocations to HCPSS, please earmark funds for the continuation of 3rd Grade Strings in **ALL** HCPSS elementary schools.

Sincerely,

Xiaomeng

From: [Torie Grant](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: GT and orchestra for all elementary schools
Date: Friday, March 15, 2024 11:10:58 AM

[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 again to request that you fully fund GT and orchestra programs in ALL elementary schools at their current level. These cuts affect the majority of HCPSS students in grades K-5. Our youngest learners have a critical window to develop a love of learning, including STEM and music. My oldest daughter has excelled in GT math, CEUs, and seminars and orchestra. I want the same experience for my younger children and for all children in Howard County.

The community is also very concerned about the last-minute nature of Scenario D. There was no time for anyone from the community, and some BOE Members, to be able to voice their opinions or concerns. **This lack of transparency is very concerning and has become a source of distrust for many of our Howard County families and community members.**

Scenario D does not give anything additional to schools with >40% of students receiving free and reduced meals. It keeps them with their current level of services, which is great. Taking away from some schools does not create equity. Different curriculum at different schools creates division in the community. Rather, providing guaranteed transportation to schools with >40% of students receiving free and reduced meals so they can arrive safely and have reliable transportation in all weather conditions works to create equity. Providing *additional* tutoring and resources in STEM, reading, and music to schools with >40% of students receiving free and reduced meals works to create equity.

Accelerated learners deserve to be challenged appropriately starting in early elementary school. Waiting until 4th or 5th grade to challenge these students is doing them a disservice and does not fulfill the HCPSS Mission to ensure academic success and social-emotional well-being for each student.

Many families, including my own, moved to Howard County specifically for our schools. Cutting GT and orchestra programs could risk losing the trust of those families and have families asking themselves the difficult question: Is Howard County the right place for me to raise my family as the school system continues to cut services for our students?

Please work with the BOE, Superintendent, and County Executive to increase the budget to include ALL elementary GT and orchestra teacher positions. This is a minor cost (less than \$2 million) compared to the overall budget and the educational richness it adds to our students, our teachers, our schools, and our community. I look forward to working with you in the months and years to come.

Respectfully,

Torie Grant, MD, MHS

From: Marie Jeng <marie.jeng@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, March 16, 2024 12:19 AM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: HCPSS Budget - 3rd Grade Strings program

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

Honorable Members of the Howard County Council,

Our family was saddened and discouraged to learn of the recent exclusion of 3rd Grade Strings Education by the HCPSS Board of Education. We, along with many, many other HCPSS families and Howard County residents, emailed and petitioned to keep this important program in the FY 2025 budget, but our pleas were promptly ignored by the BOE. While 13 Title I schools will keep 3rd Grade Strings, 29 Howard County elementary schools will completely eliminate the program. This program has existed in the county for decades and has initiated scores of eager young students into the world of instrumental music, many of whom have gone on to play an instrument through middle school, high school, college, and beyond.

There is no replacement for the creativity, teamwork, community building, and cooperative education that occurs in a music ensemble. Some may argue that families with students who do not attend a Title I school are able to pay for private lessons; however, this reasoning is wrong on two counts. First of all, it assumes that all families who can't afford extra curricular music education have students who attend Title I schools. In fact, there are students in every elementary school whose families cannot afford music lessons, not to mention those whose families don't have the capacity to facilitate such lessons. Secondly, there is NO substitute for a music ensemble education. In 3rd Grade Strings, 8 and 9 years olds learn the responsibility of having an ensemble depend upon them to learn their part and be prepared. They learn to think differently than they do in their other classes, improving cognitive skills, concentration, and problem solving skills. They learn what it means to perform and present their accomplishments proudly to family, friends, and classmates. These experiences and opportunities are not available in any other single class in elementary school.

The restoration of 3rd Grade Strings in the HCPSS Budget is less than \$795,000, only marginally more than the average cost of a home in Howard County. This is a tiny percentage of the HCPSS budget. However, the removal of this program will be detrimental to our students and will have a devastating effect on the prestigious HCPSS Music Program as a whole, because it will degrade the foundation on which it is built.

Therefore, we request that when providing allocations to HCPSS, please earmark funds for the continuation of 3rd Grade Strings in ALL HCPSS elementary schools.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter!

Sincerely,
Marie and Victor Jeng



ReplyForward
Add reaction

From: [Erin and Christian](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#)
Cc: [Christian Hayes](#)
Subject: Budget Cuts - Elementary Strings Program
Date: Sunday, March 17, 2024 11:16:27 AM

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

Dear Board of Education Members,

As a life-long Howard County resident, and now a parent to three young children, I am writing because I believe it is important that the Board of Education ask the County Executive for the money needed to maintain our current level of services and comply with the new Blueprint mandates.

Deciding to keep our family in Howard County, rather than moving to Montgomery County or NoVa, was primarily driven by my own experiences in the Howard County public school systems. The preeminent education that I was afforded during my time in Howard County was the springboard for the rest of my academic career. If we want to continue to have one of the country's best school systems we need to make it a priority - or those with options **will** leave.

I am writing to implore you not to cut funding for the strings programs in elementary schools. A strong education is far more than MACP scores - it is opportunities. Studies after studies have shown that children that have the opportunities to engage in music and the arts perform better in school overall (<https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2019/06/music-students-score-better>).

With children already trying to claw their way back academically after the pandemic, why would we eliminate something that has been proven time and time again to help children succeed?

Residents, money, taxes will only stay in Howard County if Howard County continues to be the strong county it has been held out to be. Cuts like these create far reaching ripples.

Sincerely,

Erin Hayes

From: [Rebecca Palmquist](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Fully Fund HCPSS 3rd Grade Strings
Date: Monday, March 18, 2024 7:28:25 AM

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

The Honorable Dr. Calvin Ball and Howard County Council Members,

The recent exclusion of 3rd Grade Strings Education by the HCPSS Board of Education is an injustice to Howard County's children. Nearly 5,500 individuals signed the petition Save Music in HCPSS!!!!, but were promptly ignored by the BOE. While 13 Title I schools will keep 3rd Grade Strings, 29 Howard County elementary schools will completely eliminate the program. This program has existed in the county for decades and has initiated scores of eager young students into the world of instrumental music, many of whom have gone on to play an instrument through middle school, high school, college, and beyond.

While this action was taken in the name of equity, there is nothing equitable about it. There is no replacement for the creativity, teamwork, community building, and cooperative education that occurs in a music ensemble. Some may argue families with students who do not attend a Title I school are able to pay for private lessons, however this is wrong on two counts. First of all, it assumes that all families who can't afford extra curricular music education have students who attend Title I schools. There are FARM students in every elementary school in Howard County. There are also students who are not categorized as FARM students but whose families cannot afford music lessons. Secondly, there is NO substitute for a music ensemble education. In 3rd Grade Strings, 8 and 9 years olds learn the responsibility of having an ensemble depend upon them to learn their part and be prepared. They learn to think differently than they do in their other classes, improving cognitive skills, concentration, and problem solving skills. They learn what it means to perform and present their accomplishments proudly to family, friends, and classmates. These experiences and opportunities are not available in any other single class in elementary school.

The restoration of 3rd Grade Strings in the HCPSS Budget is less than \$795,000, only marginally more than the average cost of a home in Howard County. This is a tiny percentage of the HCPSS budget. However, the removal of this program will be detrimental to our students and have a devastating effect on the prestigious HCPSS Music Program as a whole, because it will degrade the foundation on which it is built.

Therefore, I request that when providing allocations to HCPSS, please earmark funds for the continuation of 3rd Grade Strings in ALL HCPSS elementary schools.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Palmquist
Mom of 2024-2025 3rd grader

From: [Cartiqueyane Barathapunnian](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#)
Cc: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Funding for HCPSS 3rd Grade Orchestra
Date: Wednesday, March 20, 2024 10:18:38 PM

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

Dear Sir/Madam,

We kindly request you to extend the funding for the 3rd grade orchestra, as budding students get an opportunity to get hands on experience in Orchestra at their school. Orchestra means a lot to the students and the teachers. Please don't take away 3rd grade orchestra.

Thanks
Cartiqueyane & Indira

From: [Torie Grant](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: 8AM rally to fund GT and orchestral teachers
Date: Wednesday, March 20, 2024 4:48:45 PM

[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,

This morning dozens of families from multiple elementary schools and middle schools joined together outside of your office to ask *you* to work with the BOE and County Executive to provide funding to restore the cut GT and orchestra teachers at ALL elementary schools in Howard County. Elementary students played together on violins, a viola, and a cello. A first grader held a handmade sign which read: "I want a chance." Students, parents, and grandparents spoke to media outlets from Baltimore and DC, expressing their concerns about how cutting GT and orchestra teachers directly affects their students and weakens our beloved Howard County community.

Here is one interview: <https://www.fox5dc.com/video/1428350>
Journalists, reporters, and media staff from WJZ, WBAL, *The Capital Gazette*, FOX45, *The Baltimore Sun*, and others were also in attendance. Many more news stories are scheduled to air this evening.

Elementary GT and orchestra teachers are extremely important to the quality of education in HCPSS. According to HCPSS, 67% of elementary students participate in GT. *Cutting GT and orchestra teachers cuts services to thousands of elementary students*. Every student in HCPSS elementary schools deserves to be challenged appropriately. Every student in HCPSS deserves early exposure to STEM and music. Petitions in support of restoring ALL GT and orchestra teachers have gathered **over 7,480 signatures** from community supporters. The number of signatures continues to grow daily.

As you can see by the volume of emails to your office and the thousands of petition signatures, GT and orchestra in elementary schools are extremely important to Howard County residents. Many families who gathered this morning cited the quality of GT and music programming in HCPSS as their primary reason for moving to Howard County. Please work to provide funding to restore GT and orchestra teachers to ALL elementary schools. Our children are asking you directly.

Respectfully,

Torie Grant, MD, MHS

From: [Cheryl MacLean](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Cc: [Rigby, Christiana](#)
Subject: Performing Arts Education in Howard County
Date: Saturday, March 30, 2024 3:47:00 PM

[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 to express praise and support of performing arts programs in the Howard County School System and to ask that the **county fully fund performing arts education in our schools**.

My daughter is a senior at Hammond High School and has benefited from amazing programs in the performing arts throughout her 12 years of schooling. She was in orchestra from grades 3-8, and in theatre from 9-12.

I have always been proud of how much our county values the arts and therefore ask that Howard County find the funding to **preserve performing arts education** in our schools.

If you've seen the theatrical productions that our high schools offer to the community every year, you know that they put on fantastic shows. Theatre teachers cultivate our students' talents (acting, improv, music, dance, tech crew) to create the highest quality show possible.

If a teacher cannot be a part of the school full-time, the quality of these productions will decrease. Creating a musical is not just an after-school activity. The teachers and kids are integrated in a relationship of learning and trust. Theatre teachers are consistently working with others in the school and throughout the day to get the physical space, the ideas, and the skills they need to put on quality show. There are costumes to plan and sets to build, as well as spirit days and assemblies to promote and showcase the talent.

With regards to our students, there is no question that having the skills learned within all areas of theatre (drama, musicals, improv, tech crew) are ones that will serve our students well when they are out in the 'real world' - knowing how to conduct themselves, speak in front of groups, follow directions, create and tell stories, and play. Many students learn these skills in theatre classes in addition to actual theatre productions.

Theatre is often thought of as a place where people can be someone other than themselves. In reality, it seems it is a place where people can truly be themselves - where they can express themselves in ways other venues may not encourage or cultivate. These kids learn to collaborate, support, trust, and encourage each other through some challenging and vulnerable situations. They accept each other for who they are... pretty extraordinary in today's world.

Please make every consideration to preserve the performing arts in our schools. Our kids need it and our communities need it. It is a true treasure and a source of pride.

With best regards,

Cheryl MacLean
Proud Hammond HS theatre parent
Jessup, MD

From: stowersmonica@yahoo.com
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); boe@hcpss.org; [Budget Testimony](#)
Subject: Letter to Board of Ed. <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1FsAuf-fUTcOhazTLj8Np-TPIcfmSZ-pifGAXt7sQTWU/view>
Date: Sunday, March 31, 2024 6:06:00 PM

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

Dear Dr. Ball, Acting-Superintendent Barnes, and members of the Howard County Council and the Howard County Board of Education,

Below is a letter from my middle schooler. Please take the time to read the concerns directly from a student who will be affected by the decision to cut back on GT funding. She is also passionate about keeping 3rd grade orchestra programs for all schools.

The letter was originally written in a school account with Google Doc, so I apologize if the formatting is a little off since it had to be copied and pasted to be emailed out (files aren't able to be emailed out directly from school accounts).

Thank you,
Monica Stowers

*see email below

From: AG Stowers <stowersag@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 31, 2024 5:39PM
To: Monica Stowers <stowersmonica@yahoo.com>
Subject: Letter to Board of Ed. <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1FsAuf-fUTcOhazTLj8Np-TPIcfmSZ-pifGAXt7sQTWU/view>

Dear Board of Education for Howard County,

The Howard County school system is mostly known for two things: our GT options and our music. You are trying to take that away. When I moved here, we made sure to get a house with a good school system that would allow me to be in GT classes and continue at my current math level (a grade above at that time), and we chose Howard County above the neighboring counties.

Howard County has the best school rating in all of Maryland, and most of that comes from our GT options (which is the reason we chose to move to THIS county). If you take some of the GT options away, then you might lose that position. If you take our GT options away, then our students won't get the best education possible. Education will drop, and education is important. People should have good education opportunities to meet their needs, no matter where they live and what FARM percentage their school is. Less GT options and taking away third grade orchestra will lessen the desire for people to choose THIS county over neighboring counties. The demand for housing here will decrease and therefore the property

values will decrease as people looking for homes choose other counties (which generally have less expensive houses and taxes). Lower property values will decrease the taxes received based upon the housing values. The GT options and third grade orchestra are not only assets to the students who benefit from these options, they also DRIVE property demand and INCREASE property values in the area - which circles back and leads to more taxes being collected for Howard County schools. Your decision to take these programs away will affect the money coming in through taxes. Have you thought about that?

Howard County is also known for our amazing music programs. When I was talking to my viola teacher from Do Re Mi (she is from out of state), she said that Maryland had very good music options - she even knew about our programs and she doesn't even live in Maryland. If you take our third-grade orchestra away, we will lose some of our reputation since students will not be getting such an early start. Music is also good for our health. Orchestra is something that I look forward to in school; it was a joy. If you take away third grade orchestra, then the school system will have a rating drop. Many of my friends and other students agree with me. This will only hurt the school system and for what?

You have seen the young kids playing their instruments at the protests. Do you really want to take that opportunity away from them? What about all of the second graders, waiting to start orchestra next year? How do they feel now knowing that opportunity is being taken away from them, but not other second graders in certain schools that have a specific FARM rating? In my elementary school, Mrs. Sutton was your orchestra teacher, and she is the best teacher EVER. Do you want to take this opportunity away from your students?

Please give us our orchestra and GT programs. Don't cut our amazing teachers. You have seen the protests - more bad than good will come out of this. If I, a middle school student, need to tell you this, if I am involved, if the youth are involved, then it must be serious. Please don't take this away from us. Please give ALL Howard County students the same opportunities.

From,
Alaina Stowers, Folly Quarter Middle School Student

From: [Susan Finger](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#); [Walsh, Elizabeth](#); [Jones, Opel](#); [Rigby, Christiana](#); [Jung, Debra](#); [Yungmann, David](#); [boe@hcpss.org](#); [jennifer_mallo@hcpss.org](#); [yun_lu@hcpss.org](#); [linfeng_chen@hcpss.org](#); [antonia_watts@hcpss.org](#); [jolene_mosley@hcpss.org](#); [jacquelin_mccoy@hcpss.org](#); [robyn_scates@hcpss.org](#); [student_member@hcpss.org](#)
Subject: Budget Cuts to performing arts education
Date: Sunday, March 31, 2024 7:04:58 PM

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

Hello,

I wanted to write this letter so that the board and anyone who is making decisions for the Howard County School District understands what their choices for next school year can mean for everyone. I am humbly asking you to fully fund to preserve the performing arts education at HCPSS.

My husband and I met in high school in the arts program. I was in colorguard, and he was a drummer. We have gone on to have my husband serve our country first as a musician in the Marine corp and then in army where he was hurt in Afghanistan in 2010 in an IED explosion. We moved to Howard county after being stationed here for a few years at Fort Meade. The years leading up to this move were hard for our family while my husband was recovering. Our children had hard years that children should not have to go through. We were extremely unhappy at Anne Arundel county when my daughter was bullied in middle school and her safety was in question. When we moved to Howard County we were very excited. Both our children were into arts programs and had tried to get into magnet schools in Anne Arundel schools. But this met they had to choose between their arts and they had not decided yet. We brought our children to see "The Wiz" at Hammond. Our daughter Sydney was excited that she could do both her art and theater. Since then both our daughter Sydney and our son Alex have been a huge part of the Hammond theater family. During this time, we have had a family here in the theater department. Lauren Tobaison has helped our family through a lot. She has helped us feel like a part of this community. Both of my children have had a hard time with their mental health and Lauren Tobaison has been my eyes and ears in school for both of my children. She has been an integral part of making my children into the adults that they are today. When we lost our nephew to suicide, she was the teacher who was there for my son Alex as he struggled with losing the cousin. She also helped as Alex learned that he would not be able to follow in his father's and cousin's footsteps and join the military because of his rare blood disorder, and asked him to be a part of the theater apprenticeship. Working with her this year has shown Alex that he enjoys teaching and will be studying secondary education next year.

My point is that there is so much more to this job as a theater teacher than the shows they put on the stage. Lauren Tobaison is there at the school as the students are overwhelmed. She is there as they are scared of moving into the real world. As they cry about all the things that our teenagers go through on a daily basis. She helps them to be better for the world out there by showing them that hard work and commitment can lead to great things. When I heard that she was possibly not going

to be in the school full time I thought about all she has done to shape my children. I thought of all the children she will not be there when they need her and my heart broke. As a District Director for Celebree schools, I understand that there are budget cuts that need to happen, but it continues to break my heart that they always happen in the arts. In a world where we know how important social and emotional intelligence is, I cannot believe we continue to look at these programs to cut. We continue to see the effects of the pandemic; we need a place where children are accepted for who they are and Lauren Tobaison is a huge part of that. She has built an amazing program at Hammond and continues it through hard work and personal sacrifice. Our children know that they can come to her, and she will be there when they cry, she will help them when they are bullied, she will remind them that there is a world out there where they can be creative and people will enjoy self expression. Not all children are athletes, or only athletes and that is ok also.

I hope that you will find a way that these teachers will not be left to make hard choices that could disrupt these programs. Many theater teachers do have the ability to teach other classes and they should have the opportunity to do that and stay in their schools. These teachers are vital to our community and to our children who are the future. Please reconsider these choices that are being made to find a way for Hammond theater to not be disrupted. For Lauren Tobaison to continue all the hard work that has made some of the best shows that I have seen. My husband, who has studied music, continues to boast about Lauren Tobaison's ability to continue to pick amazing talent for all her shows. In his words, he has never seen a bad show at Hammond and that is because of Lauren Tobaison.

Please reconsider these decisions. I would be happy to speak to anyone about this.

Sincerely,
Susan Finger
Susanfinger78@gmail.com
267-615-8432

From: [Torie Grant](#)
To: [Budget Testimony](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Restore GT and orchestra teachers to all elementary schools
Date: Saturday, April 13, 2024 9:47:09 AM

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

Dear Howard County Leadership Team,

The Howard County community continues to rally around saving GT teachers and 3rd grade strings at all elementary schools in HCPSS. To date, petitions have gathered nearly 8,000 signatures. Both GT and music programs set HCPSS apart from other school districts and are a major reason families move to Howard County. GT and music programs attract diverse families who make our community stronger.

During a gathering at the BOE on Thursday, a 4th grade student told the media the following regarding GT programs: "I like how it challenges my brain and makes me think in different ways, so I can use that when I need to in everyday life." What an amazing quote! Don't we as a community want ALL elementary students to have the opportunity to have their brains challenged and to learn to think in different ways?

Cutting GT teachers puts extra work on the teachers who remain. Cutting GT teachers means larger class sizes in 4th and 5th grade math and 2nd-5th grade science and social studies, hurting students of all learning levels. Cutting GT teachers means fewer students will have the opportunity to be involved in GT programs, have their brains challenged, and learn to think in different ways. GT and orchestra teacher cuts affect thousands of students, including students who receive free and reduced meals and students from low-income and minoritized communities.

Elementary students are the future of our county and our nation. It is unimaginable that Howard County would take away STEM and music opportunities from our youngest learners. We are asking that you do what is best for elementary students and restore GT and orchestra teacher positions at ALL HCPSS elementary schools.

I look forward to working with you in the months and years to come.

Respectfully,
Torie Grant, MD, MHS

From: [Jeffrey Gibson](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: HCPSS music program testimony
Date: Tuesday, April 23, 2024 7:10:22 PM

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

I am writing in support of the HCPSS music program. I am respectfully requesting this program be fully funded with the epic failures of HCPSS and the county government for the Elkrige community from proper educational facilities, infrastructure that keeps leading to deaths far more regularly than they should, expanding crime rates the least (and I do mean the least) we could do is fund the music programs for HCPSS.

In an area where it is no longer safe to walk to the few facilities we have for recreation here from poor infrastructure planning, total disregard for public safety, crime prevention and investment into this community the music program at HCPSS is one of the few things my child has found a center for himself in. From building friendships, a passion for an art and something that is truly enjoyed. Now I read we are going to pull funding for this too. Why? To fund more projects to yield political gain, to appease donors for political ambition. Just try and do the right thing for the community that you are representing and not yourself.

Screaming into the wind from Elkrige in the hopes you notice at least a whisper.
Jeff Gibson

From: [Emily Close](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Urgent message re. Funding
Date: Friday, April 26, 2024 9:05:20 AM

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

Dear Members of the Howard County Council,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud parent of a music-loving student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. While we are grateful and thankful that Dr Ball has encouraged the Superintendent and Board of Education to restore funding for targeted cuts to 3rd grade strings and other programs, we have been engaged in the process for months and know that ANY cut to the Board of Education's request is damaging to the level of education expected in HCPSS. I urge the county council to move \$3.2 million in the operating budget for Howard County to HCPSS to fully restore the entire HCPSS budget. In addition to proposed cuts in Elementary instrumental music, we have seen staff surpluses in both middle school and high school for music, and the complete loss of music transportation for curricular based fieldtrips, as well.

Our Gold Standard music programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

Our music programs are uniquely strong in Howard County. We are fortunate to be the current beneficiaries of these programs, but we also know that they are fragile. It takes years to grow programs of this nature to the levels that we appreciate. It takes time to build the staffing of specialists who make these programs what they are today. The Board worked hard to make difficult choices and put forward a budget that is very difficult to swallow. By not fully funding the request, we are looking at some increased class size and potentially some lack of access to high level classes for music students.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to the HCPSS request in funding and continue to support our students in HCPSS.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Emily Betz
Kindergarten parent

From: [Eyal Bor](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Cuts for music
Date: Friday, April 26, 2024 8:55:37 AM

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

My name is Eyal Bor. I trained on Clarinet, Sax and Violin over 2000 students since 1985 in Howard County.

I strongly suggest that funds for music education in HC will not be cut.

I see the benefit of having strong music programs that are essential to our community. Our students perform well in all disciplines and being admitted to top universities due to the commitment they have for music which they develop over the years.

Cutting funding will be a dire mistake beyond repair.

Respectfully,

Eyal Bor, PhD

Owner of the Dr Eyal Bor music Studios

Columbia, MD 21045

Professor at LA,

Towson University.

410 802 4616

ebor@towson.edu

From: [Phoebe McGall](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Please fully fund the HCPSS School Music Programs
Date: Saturday, April 27, 2024 5:53:04 PM

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

Dear Members of the Howard County Council,

I hope this letter finds you well. As a proud parent of two music-loving students, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. While we are grateful and thankful that Dr. Ball has encouraged the Superintendent and Board of Education to restore funding for targeted cuts to 3rd grade strings and other programs, we have been engaged in the process for months and know that ANY cut to the Board of Education's request is damaging to the level of education expected in HCPSS. I urge the county council to move \$3.2 million in the operating budget for Howard County to HCPSS to fully restore the entire HCPSS budget. In addition to proposed cuts in Elementary instrumental music, we have seen staff surpluses in both middle school and high school for music, and the complete loss of music transportation for curricular based fieldtrips, as well.

Our Gold Standard music programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

Our music programs are uniquely strong in Howard County. We are fortunate to be the current beneficiaries of these programs, but we also know that they are fragile. It takes years to grow programs of this nature to the levels that we appreciate. It takes time to build the staffing of specialists who make these programs what they are today. The Board worked hard to make difficult choices and put forward a budget that is very difficult to swallow. By not fully funding the request, we are looking at some increased class size and potentially some lack of access to high level classes for music students.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to the HCPSS request in funding and continue to support our students in HCPSS.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Phoebe McGall
Glennelg, MD

From: Howard County Parents for School Music <hcpsm3@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 13, 2024 10:49 PM
To: CouncilMail
Cc: Howard County Parents for School Music
Subject: Fully Fund HCPSS

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

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

Dear members of the Council,

As a proud parent of a music-loving student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

§

Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. While we are grateful and thankful that Dr Ball has encouraged the Superintendent and Board of Education to restore funding for targeted cuts to 3rd grade strings and other programs, we have been engaged in the process for months and know that ANY cut to the Board of Education's request is damaging to the level of education expected in HCPSS. I urge the county council to move \$3.8 million in the operating budget for Howard County to HCPSS to fully restore the entire HCPSS budget. Proposed cuts to elementary music **have** been restored and now we need you to lead our county to protect our treasured programs at the secondary level. We have seen staff surpluses in both middle school and high school for music, and the complete loss of music transportation for curricular based field trips, as well. Every part of the curriculum is important. Please re-allocate \$3,8 m back to HCPSS.

Ginger Segala
Chair, Howard County Parents for School Music
<http://hcpsm3.wixsite.com/music>

If you no longer wish to receive emails from us, please send a reply requesting removal.

From: [Amir Nooruddin](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 10:06:18 AM

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

Dear Members of the Howard County Council,

I hope this letter finds you well.

As a proud parent of four music-loving students, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. While we are grateful and thankful that Dr Ball has encouraged the Superintendent and Board of Education to restore funding for targeted cuts to 3rd grade strings and other programs, we have been engaged in the process for months and know that ANY cut to the Board of Education's request is damaging to the level of education expected in HCPSS. I urge the county council to move \$3.8 million in the operating budget for Howard County to HCPSS to fully restore the entire HCPSS budget. Proposed cuts to elementary music have been restored and now we need you to lead our county to protect our treasured programs at the secondary level. We have seen staff surpluses in both middle school and high school for music, and the complete loss of music transportation for curricular based field trips, as well. Every part of the curriculum is important. Please re-allocate \$3.8 m back to HCPSS.

Our Gold Standard music programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

Our music programs are uniquely strong in Howard County. We are fortunate to be the current beneficiaries of these programs, but we also know that they are fragile. It takes years to grow programs of this nature to the levels that we appreciate. It takes time to build the staffing of specialists who make these programs what they are today. The Board worked hard to make difficult choices and put forward a budget that is very difficult to swallow. By not fully funding the request, we are looking at some increased class size and potentially some lack of access to high level classes for music students.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to the HCPSS request in funding and continue to support our students in HCPSS.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Aamir Nooruddin

From: [Angela Dale](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Restore Full funding for HCPSS
Date: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 3:27:47 PM

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

Dear Members of the Howard County Council,

I am the parent of four children who have benefited from the Howard County Music Program and HCPSS in general, in myriad ways, from elementary school through high school, and who are now succeeding in college and beyond. I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts looming over HCPSS.

Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. While we are grateful and thankful that Dr Ball has encouraged the Superintendent and Board of Education to restore funding for targeted cuts to 3rd grade strings and other programs, ANY cut to the Board of Education's request is damaging to the level of education worthy of and expected in HCPSS. Nothing is more important to Howard County parents, the community at large, and those considering Howard County for their home, than the excellence of our schools, of which the music program is an important jewel in the crown.

I urge you to move \$3.8 million in the operating budget for Howard County to HCPSS to fully restore the entire HCPSS budget. Proposed cuts to elementary music have been restored and now we need you to lead our county to protect our treasured programs at the secondary level. We have seen staff shortages in both middle school and high school for music, and the complete loss of music transportation for curricular based field trips.

Our Gold Standard music programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. The collaborative nature of musical ensembles teaches students the value of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

Our music programs are uniquely strong in Howard County. My family has been fortunate to be the past beneficiaries of these programs, but they continue to be in jeopardy. It takes years to grow programs of this nature to the levels HCPSS has achieved. It takes time to build the staffing of specialists who make these programs what they are today.

The Board worked hard to make difficult choices and put forward a budget that is very difficult to swallow. By not fully funding the request, we are looking at some increased class size and potentially some lack of access to high level classes for music students.

I kindly request that you work together to restore any proposed cuts to the HCPSS request in funding and continue to support our community through full financial support of our schools.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Angela H. Dale

From: [Gaby H](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 9:44:57 AM

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

Dear Members of the Howard County Council,

I hope this letter finds you well.

As a proud parent of a music-loving student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. While we are grateful and thankful that Dr Ball has encouraged the Superintendent and Board of Education to restore funding for targeted cuts to 3rd grade strings and other programs, we have been engaged in the process for months and know that ANY cut to the Board of Education's request is damaging to the level of education expected in HCPSS. I urge the county council to move \$3.8 million in the operating budget for Howard County to HCPSS to fully restore the entire HCPSS budget. Proposed cuts to elementary music have been restored and now we need you to lead our county to protect our treasured programs at the secondary level. We have seen staff surpluses in both middle school and high school for music, and the complete loss of music transportation for curricular based field trips, as well. Every part of the curriculum is important. Please re-allocate \$3.8 m back to HCPSS.

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Our music programs are uniquely strong in Howard County. We are fortunate to be the current beneficiaries of these programs, but we also know that they are fragile. It takes years to grow programs of this nature to the levels that we appreciate. It takes time to build the staffing of specialists who make these programs what they are today. The Board worked hard to make difficult choices and put forward a budget that is very difficult to swallow. By not fully funding the request, we are looking at some increased class size and potentially some lack of access to high level classes for music students.

I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to the HCPSS request in funding and continue to support our students in HCPSS.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Gaby

From: [Kelly Cash](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Cc: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 9:47:34 AM
Attachments: [Video.mov](#)

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

Dear Members of the Howard County Council,

I hope this letter finds you well.

As a proud parent of a music-loving student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. While we are grateful and thankful that Dr Ball has encouraged the Superintendent and Board of Education to restore funding for targeted cuts to 3rd grade strings and other programs, we have been engaged in the process for months and know that ANY cut to the Board of Education's request is damaging to the level of education expected in HCPSS. I urge the county council to move \$3.8 million in the operating budget for Howard County to HCPSS to fully restore the entire HCPSS budget. Proposed cuts to elementary music have been restored and now we need you to lead our county to protect our treasured programs at the secondary level. We have seen staff surpluses in both middle school and high school for music, and the complete loss of music transportation for curricular based field trips, as well. Every part of the curriculum is important. Please re-allocate \$3.8 m back to HCPSS.

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perseverance. These qualities are essential not only in their academic journey but also in their future careers.

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I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to the HCPSS request in funding and continue to support our students in HCPSS.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Kelly Cash

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Kiersten Lortz](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Restore our budget NOW
Date: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 12:52:08 PM

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

Dear Members of the Howard County Council,

I hope this letter finds you well.

As a proud parent of a music-loving student, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. While we are grateful and thankful that Dr Ball has encouraged the Superintendent and Board of Education to restore funding for targeted cuts to 3rd grade strings and other programs, we have been engaged in the process for months and know that ANY cut to the Board of Education's request is damaging to the level of education expected in HCPSS. I urge the county council to move \$3.8 million in the operating budget for Howard County to HCPSS to fully restore the entire HCPSS budget. Proposed cuts to elementary music have been restored and now we need you to lead our county to protect our treasured programs at the secondary level. We have seen staff surpluses in both middle school and high school for music, and the complete loss of music transportation for curricular based field trips, as well. Every part of the curriculum is important. Please re-allocate \$3.8 m back to HCPSS.

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I kindly request that you work together to solve any proposed cuts to the HCPSS request in funding and continue to support our students in HCPSS.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kiersten Lortz
www.kierstenlortz.com

From: Erin Skoda <skoda.erin@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 15, 2024 9:46 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding

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

Dear Members of the Howard County Council,

As a parent of young Howard county students, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. The Board of Education voted to restore funding for targeted cuts to 3rd grade strings, elementary G/T program, and elementary class sizes. These items will greatly benefit HCPSS students, and I urge the county council to move \$3.8 million in the operating budget for Howard County to HCPSS to fully restore the entire HCPSS budget. Please fund our teachers and schools.

Sincerely,
Erin Skoda