

From: [Dana Rivas](#)
To: [executive](#); boe@hcpss.org; [Yungmann, David](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Friday, March 1, 2024 8:35:10 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,

I am extremely concerned about the potential staffing and program cuts in Howard County Schools.

I implore you to ensure that 3rd grade Orchestra is not cut and that class sizes DECREASE not increase!

I've been wondering why band doesn't begin in 3rd grade and why foreign language courses aren't part of a GT curriculum offered in elementary schools.

How can we say we want to attract more teachers and quality teachers to the teaching profession if you're not willing to make and maintain Howard County as one of the Best Places to work for a teacher?

Have the teachers reviewed the proposed budget and feel it is a good move and that it will help make Howard County one of the best school systems in the country?

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Dana Rivas

From: [Danielle Regester](#)
To: [BoE Email](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Cc: [CouncilMail](#); [Ball, Calvin](#)
Subject: Re: Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Friday, March 1, 2024 7:16:24 AM

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

I realize that a budget is still being debated. I would encourage the Board of Education to consider asking for the entire budget. I have heard elementary GT math and 3rd grade strings has been cut. The US is far behind other countries and this puts us even further behind.

I would also encourage the board and county council have private discussions on what is acceptable and what is not as far as a max number. This process needs to be changed and items can't be voted on in this manner. It needs to be done after testimony is done and all letters reviewed, not but by bit. It is causing way too much stress on your employees, that is not right.

Danielle Regester
danielle.regester@gmail.com

On Wed, Feb 28, 2024 at 7:22 AM Danielle Regester <danielle.regester@gmail.com> wrote:

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

As I'm sure you are aware our schools are facing a budget shortfall and proposing significant cuts that will impact teachers and children throughout the county. I'm disappointed that the school system is not asking for the full amount that is needed to keep our current standards of education in place.

I look to all of you to solve this problem together. It is not fair to the staff, teachers or children to increase the amount of students, reduce aids, or cut music programs. It is unacceptable to me that in one of the richest counties we are facing these cutbacks. Teachers are worried about their jobs and parents are worried for their children's education.

I have had a child in the school system for 7 years and it is exhausting year after year. Costs are up everywhere, of course the budget is going to increase, why is this not planned for? You all know when this will happen. Work together and figure out a plan. Having this drama every year is unnecessary.

The amount of home building that has occurred over the last decade has strained our schools. The schools should be given more resources, not less. It is always the schools that are punished, while the developers make money and this has to stop.

People move here for schools, and they will leave because of them too if all of these cuts occur.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Danielle Register
Daisy Road
Woodbine, MD

Danielle Register
danielle.register@gmail.com

From: [Danielle Regester](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#)
Cc: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: School Budget
Date: Friday, March 1, 2024 1:17:28 PM

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

Dr. Mr. Ball,

As our county executive, I realize you have to balance all of the needs of the county. However, this year as in years past the school system needs a budget to maintain the current level of service. You have a large county with various needs to service and I understand that is not easy. However, it is important to the future of Howard County to put the schools ahead of other services. Cutting music, art, and GT programs is a disservice to our children, not to mention the stress this process creates for your teachers. I'm very disappointed at this year's process and that the school is not asking for the money it needs to maintain current levels of service.

I implore you and the council to take steps to provide the full budget to the schools. There are other areas where budget cuts can be made. Please step in and help minimize the stress on teachers and staff who are now worried about their jobs. They are already doing more with less, and this is not something you can expect good teachers and staff to continue to do. We have some of the best teachers and treating them like numbers is a good way to lose them.

Getting rid of programs like this in schools is a good way to lose tax income and home value in our county because people will leave if the state of the schools declines. Please step up and help.

Thank you,
Danielle Regester
Howard Co resident since 2001

Danielle Regester
danielle.regester@gmail.com

From: [Idaines Anderson](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Friday, March 1, 2024 12:11:52 PM
Importance: High

[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 HCPSS 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 music education, in all its forms, plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My child is in 2nd grade and has been looking forward to starting the music program next year.

I am also extremely concerned about proposed increase classroom size. The class size is already large enough, increasing it will cause more children to fall through the cracks. Particularly good students who are at grade level and do not have additional support. I feel that more cuts to HCPSS will cause more families to leave the county. I know the reason my family purchased a home in Howard County and I endure a 1.5 hour commute each way daily is because of the quality of schools and diversity of the population. I believe cuts to schools should be the very last option and more so, any cuts in elementary schools will have huge effects on children, this is when the investments should be added not taken. The Loss of Elementary GT Programs, 3rd Grade Orchestra, Reduction in Summer programs, Loss of Media positions and programing has come as a shock to us since we thought Howard County valued these things.

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 damage that increasing classroom sizes and removing enrichment programs will have on our children. 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 and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Idaines Anderson

Idaines@hotmail.com

202-441-0031

From: [Lyndsy Beckman](#)
To: [executive](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: HCPSS Budget and Parent Requests
Date: Friday, March 1, 2024 6:50:00 PM

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

Hello,

I am writing to you to request more money from the county so that HCPSS can continue to be a world class school system. My oldest daughter is a kindergartener at Triadelphia Ridge Elementary School this year and we've been very happy with the school services and classroom sizes. We are interested in testing her for the GT program when eligible and are concerned that this program may be discontinued based on the information we've received from our PTA.

Finally, please DO NOT increase class sizes as this will be a disservice to all students.

Thank you,
Lyndsy Beckman

From: [Meeta Patel](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Elementary school programs
Date: Friday, March 1, 2024 7:07:33 AM

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

My family moved to Howard county specifically for the well-known school system. We are not the only family that has done so, as you know. It is shocking to me that you would do away with so many GT resources and also increase class sizes. In many local mom groups, I've noticed an increase in parents sending their kids to private school and wonder why would they think their kids would be better off there than a Howard County school? I know now it's because they don't have to worry about these types of issues. I would rather move to a more affordable area and send my kids to private school too if it means a better, student-focused education with available resources.

My kids have a private music program they participate in, but I also disagree with taking away the music program from the third graders.

Unless you want Howard County to lose their prestigious reputation, please reconsider where the budget needs to be cut.

Sincerely,
A mom of a second and third grader

From: [Megan Kramer](#)
To: [executive](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); dyoungmann@howardcountymd.gov
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Friday, March 1, 2024 9:23:56 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 parent, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). 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 funding for GT programs and 3rd grade Orchestra . Additionally reducing staffing and increasing class sizes will have an impact on the quality of education our children receive. 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.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Megan Kramer

(Children at Triadelphia Ridge ES)

From: [Meghan Lovett Capone](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Cc: [Board of Education](#)
Subject: Funding Our Schools
Date: Friday, March 1, 2024 2:06:21 PM

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

Good morning,

I am writing you as a parent, teacher, and resident of Howard County in regards to the school budget.

I am disappointed in the lack of support our school system has been given this year. The School Board has worked to meet the gap in spending, but I am appalled by the fact that Howard County, one of the wealthiest counties in this state, even has a crisis with its school budget.

These are the things that we should be able to afford to give our children:

- **Adequate facilities:**

- We have too many schools that are falling into disrepair and creating an unsafe and unhealthy environment for students and staff alike. The problem of deferred maintenance needs to be directly addressed and fixed. Burst pipes, unsafe temperatures, mold, and permanent use of temporary structures (portables) should not be the norm in any working or learning environment, and yet it is. I've been a teacher at three different schools in this county and it has been a consistent problem in all three.

- **Smaller class sizes:**

- All learners benefit from a [smaller teacher to student ratio](#) (at any age). This is especially true as well since many classrooms really aren't designed to hold 30+ students in all three middle school buildings I've taught in in Howard County. Additionally, smaller class sizes allows for better differentiated instruction for all types of learners.

- **Fairly compensated staff:**

- I decided to move and teach in Howard County because of the competitive salary. As a teacher with 12 years experience, I was stressed about my own financial status and demoralized by the lack of financial compensation in my previous school districts. We deserve a salary that recognizes our professional and personal investment that we all put into our career. Any minute of the day, you will find a teacher who is working beyond the expected hours, essentially volunteering their time to provide a better learning community for our students. In most other professions, people

would not stand for being asked to work for free—why should teachers not be given the same respect?

- I also urge you to consider how well our support staff are compensated. They play valuable and vital roles in supporting teachers and students alike. This compensation should not just be financial, but should also include training and educational opportunities as well.
- More staff!
 - To meet the individual needs of all students in an equitable and consistent way, we need more personnel. The bench is not deep enough. Ask any teacher, administrator, or supporting staff; there is not enough hours in the day to accomplish what needs to be done. We had one of our Assistant Principals serving lunch so students would be able to have enough time to eat! When personnel have to take on extra duties like that not only is it demoralizing, but it is a terrible use of our resources.

I strongly urge you to consider your role in underfunding our schools and our children. If Howard County wishes to remain a top performing county that attracts the best educators, then we need a continuation of financial support, not a slash in funds.

Thank you,

Meghan Lovett Capone

Art Teacher

Mayfield Woods Middle School

From: [Centennial SGA](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Cc: [Joelle Miller](#); [Shalonda Holt](#); [Kelli McDonough](#)
Subject: Centennial Students' Voices Regarding Proposed Budget Cuts
Date: Friday, March 1, 2024 6:14:20 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 Members,

I hope this email finds you well. My name is Renee Wu, and I am reaching out on behalf of the Centennial High School Student Government Association (SGA). We have recently conducted a comprehensive survey to gather student perspectives on the FY25 proposed budget cuts, and we believe it is crucial to share these insights with the esteemed members of the Howard County Council.

Attached to [THIS LINK](#), you will find a spreadsheet with responses submitted by individual Centennial High School students. The survey aimed to capture the thoughts, concerns, and suggestions of our student body regarding the proposed budget cuts, which undoubtedly have a direct impact on the quality of education and extracurricular activities in our school.

The students at Centennial High School are deeply invested in their education and the overall well-being of our school community. We believe that their voices deserve attention and consideration as the Howard County Council deliberates on the budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Renee Wu
President
Student Government Association
Centennial High School

From: [Sarah Chao](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Educational Budget Cuts
Date: Friday, March 1, 2024 10:02:21 PM

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

Dear Council Members:

I am writing to encourage you to work with the Howard County Public School System to adequately fund our schools. This year millions of dollars in cuts have been proposed that will greatly impact our school system. I am specifically writing to implore you:

Not to change class size ratios, increasing class sizes by 2. I volunteer in my children's classrooms on a weekly basis and there is already barely enough space to move between the desks as it is. I cannot imagine how additional desks can physical fit in these classrooms.

Not to cut Elementary Gifted and Talented seminars and Curriculum Extension Units (CEUs). My oldest son has thrived with this program this year. The extra stimulation has helped challenge and excite him about learning.

Not to eliminate curricular field trips (kindergarten trips to the library). Getting the kids excited about books and introducing them to access points for books is so important early on in their education.

Not to eliminate personal aids for students receiving special education services. I have witnessed first hand, while volunteering in their classrooms, the need for MORE 1:1 support for students receiving special education services. Previous cuts are evident in classrooms where a large portion of the teacher's attention is pulled away to a single student due to the lack of 1:1 support. To eliminate further positions will deeply impact the quality of education for all students as they will not receive the already small amount of direct attention they receive.

Not to cut 15 custodial positions. We has kids trashing and destroying school property for the sake of a TikTok challenge. Have you seen an elementary school bathroom after 1 day of use? Cleaning up after this little mess tornadoes is a MASSIVE and often thankless job. Increasing the already large workload for our Custodial Staff will directly impact the cleanliness and appearance of our schools.

I appreciate your time and implore you to act and ensure our children have the best educational opportunities possible.

Sarah Chao, mother of 3 public school children.

From: [Azelin Powell](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Saturday, March 2, 2024 9:28:09 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 gifted and talented, 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).

As Howard County is the highest taxes county in Maryland, 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.

The importance of the gifted and talented program cannot be overstated. My child is challenged in this program and thrives as he is engaged and excited to learn new topics that are not in a typical class of his grade. This program allows high achieving students to maintain their interest in school and prevent boredom - which can lead to disruptive behavior and, over time, a complete disengagement from school due to the lack of stimulation for our exceptional students.

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,

Azelin Powell
Cell: 814-449-9116

From: [Kevin Allen](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal: Support for Howard County School Systems and Preservation of Fine Arts Programs
Date: Saturday, March 2, 2024 11:53:51 PM

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

Dear Esteemed Members of the Howard County Council,

I hope this email finds you in good health. As a passionate advocate for education and the arts, I write to express my deep concern regarding the proposed budget cuts that could significantly impact our county's school system and fine arts programs. I implore you to take decisive action to fully fund our schools and collaborate with the school system to develop a sustainable transportation plan.

1. School System Funding:

- Our schools are the bedrock of our community, shaping the future of our children and drive the growth of our county.
- Your inability to fully fund the school system is being met with draconian cuts being planned with almost zero public knowledge or feedback.
- As responsible stewards of public funds, we must prioritize investing in our schools to ensure a brighter future for Howard County.

2. Questionable Transportation Costs:

- Over the past two years, transportation costs have surged by an alarming 31% under the Zum contract, and increasing by \$9M between year 1 and year 2 of the contract
- It is imperative that the county pressure the BOE and Superintendent to cancel the Zum contract and properly compete transportation contracts - we are now facing teacher layoffs because of this terrible and frankly questionable contract.
- Our students' well-being and educational experience should not be compromised due to budget constraints and bad transportation provider decisions.

3. Fine Arts Programs at Risk:

- The proposed plan to dismantle the county's fine arts programs, including music education, is distressing.
- Music, visual arts, theater, and dance are not mere extracurricular activities; they are essential components of a holistic education.
- These programs foster creativity, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence, producing well-rounded individuals.

4. Academic Benefits of Fine Arts:

- Research consistently shows that students engaged in fine arts perform better academically:
 - Music education enhances cognitive skills, memory, and mathematical abilities.
 - Visual arts encourage abstract thinking and problem-solving.
 - Theater and dance build confidence, communication skills, and empathy.

5. Howard County's Responsibility:

- As residents of one of the wealthiest counties in the nation, we have a moral obligation to fully fund our schools and protect our cultural heritage.
- Our children deserve access to robust fine arts programs that ignite their passion and enrich their lives.

In conclusion, I urge you to champion our schools, preserve our fine arts programs, and work collaboratively to pressure HPCSS to focus on teaching our children rather than increasing the profits of a Silicon Valley startup. Let us invest wisely in our children's education and secure a vibrant future for Howard County.

Thank you for your dedicated service to our community. Together, we can prevent poor leadership at HCPSS from destroying our schools.

Sincerely,

Kevin Allen

10077 Century Drive, Ellicott City, MD 21042

kmallen111@gmail.com

443-202-5066

From: [Paula Barriga Sanchez](#)
To: boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Cc: [Michael Ruiz](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding- TITLE I schools
Date: Saturday, March 2, 2024 11:43:54 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 hope this letter finds you well. As a proud parent of a second grader with and IEP in the GT program, music-loving student who is beyond excited for third grade music program, attending Deep Run Elementary School (Title I 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. 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,

Paula Barriga Sánchez
4439023805

From: [Enid Colon](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Sunday, March 3, 2024 11:42:30 AM

[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 a student that has benefited from the Gifted and talented program, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). My son has an ADHD diagnosis and an IEP at Deep Run Elementary. His participation in the Gifted and Talented program has really boosted his self esteem and confidence. Before participating in the program he was more focused on his struggles rather than focusing on the areas where he excels. He also loves music and will be in third grade next school year. It has been proven that music enhances concentration and performance in children with ADHD. I'm looking forward for my son to benefit from music's positive effect.

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 understand the budgetary challenges that HCPSS faces, but I urge you to consider the invaluable contribution that music and, gifted and talented 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 and continue to support all programs that are considered well-managed and essential in our county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Enid Colon

Sincerely, Sent from my iPhone

From: [Melinda Collins](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Increase the money being allocated to Howard County Public Schools
Date: Sunday, March 3, 2024 5:42:09 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,

Howard County touts itself as a world-class school system, but if we cut some of the programming that makes us above average, then we will quickly lose that status, leading to a fast downward spiral. Please increase the money being allocated to Howard County Public Schools.

Increasing class sizes by 2 students tells our students and teachers that their education is not top priority. Teachers are already strained, they do not need higher class sizes preventing them from truly delving into each student's individual education.

Young students thrive in the Elementary GT seminars and CEUs. The GT program challenges our next generation of inventors, leaders, caretakers, etc. to think beyond the classroom and see all the incredible possibilities this world has to offer. For many students, this opportunity becomes a defining moment in their education experience at Howard County.

3rd Grade strings develop a student's confidence as well as providing a well-rounded and in-depth education. Just like the GT programming, beginning strings at an early age encourages students to develop a solid foundation, helping them see the possibilities beyond themselves. Our students have created an incredible bond with their teacher as well as with one another due to this incredible opportunity in which we are truly grateful.

We cannot afford to decrease maintenance positions. Our schools are already falling apart and many need to be replaced. By eliminating maintenance positions, we will only make the necessity of replacement more critical.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Melinda Collins
VP1 Northfield PTA
[Check out our Website](#) and [Like us On Facebook](#)

[Northfield Elementary School](#)
9125 Northfield Road
Ellicott City, MD 21042

From: [Melinda Collins](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Please fully fund what is required to maintain our current level of education
Date: Sunday, March 3, 2024 5:40:48 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,

As a mother of three, I was excited to hear about the incredible schools here in Howard County when we moved here six years ago. But, I have been filled with disappointment over and over. Please fully fund what is required to maintain our current level of education so we can hopefully continue to be seen as an excellent education system.

It is essential to keep class sizes small and manageable. Increasing class sizes by 2 students may not seem like a big change, but it is significant. We have amazing teachers and I am honored to have them helping my children learn and grow. By increasing class sizes, we are adding unnecessary strain on these outstanding individuals as well as putting a burden on our children.

All of my children have been tremendously impacted by the various offerings of the GT program, from accelerated math, challenging CEUs and seminars offered during recess. The importance of having social interaction with like-minded students has become incredibly prevalent in our household. Pulling students together for CEUs has helped my boys bond with other students and challenge one another in ways that don't exist within the homeroom classroom. It also provides an opportunity for my child to know that there is another teacher that has their back and wants to see them thrive and grow to the best of their ability. The Seminars at our school have been a helpful way for students to interact with one another in a unique and interesting way.

Third grade orchestra has been a staple in our household. The amount of confidence my children have gained from this experience is exceptional! They have a love of music that does not exist from standard music lessons. Starting an instrument at such an early age is an incredible bonus in the develop of a students skills and confidence.

As a mom who has considered private school, these three aspects have made public school a contender. By taking these, as well as other benefits, away, Howard County will lose the ability to be among the best. Please provide funding for these areas so we can ensure our future generations have an outstanding education that not only prepared them for the future, but gave them the tools to make a significant impact and change to our community, nation and world.

The Collins Family

From: [Catherine Steiner](#)
To: [executive](#); [CouncilMail](#); [Yungmann, David](#)
Subject: Do not ignore our children.
Date: Monday, March 4, 2024 6:35:39 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:

I am writing to encourage you to increase the money provided to the Howard County Public school system so that cuts in current levels of services do not need to be made.

I am writing to encourage you to work with the Howard County Public School System to adequately fund our schools. This year millions of dollars in cuts have been proposed that will greatly impact our school system.

I implore you to work with our Governor to find more funding. At a minimum the County should be able to find the schools so that class sizes do not increase. The way the building of new homes is being allowed in this county is deplorable and of the building is being allowed the county should be able to provide in the schools.

Please please help our schools. Do not ignore the children.

Thank you,
Catherine Steiner

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Elizabeth Yeager](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [BoE Email](#); [CouncilMail](#); [Bill Barnes](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Monday, March 4, 2024 4:26:34 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 an HCPSS Instrumental Music Teacher and Howard County resident, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). Year after year we are faced with cuts instead of support. We are constantly taking resources from our students, and asking teachers to do more with less, and for an insulting salary. I have been teaching for 8 years and I have never experienced a positive outcome from a budget. Every year I am scared that my job will be taken away and that these students will lose an opportunity to learn and be supported in their 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. 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'd like to also emphasize the importance of these programs for our Title 1 schools and students from low income households.

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 by **fully funding our budget for next school year.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Yeager, Instrumental Music Teacher
Clemens Crossing ES

From: [Hayley Eusebio](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [BoE Email](#); [CouncilMail](#); [Bill Barnes](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Monday, March 4, 2024 9:08:28 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 and Howard County resident, 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. The primary reason I want to live in Howard County is so that one day, when I have children, they can grow up in a school system that provides access to opportunities that other districts lack. Chief among these opportunities is early access to an excellent music education that includes ensemble performance.

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,

Hayley Eusebio

(She/Her)

Vocal/General Music

Ilchester Elementary

410-313-2524

From: [Jackie Dutrow](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS Funding (Class Sizes, Elementary GT, 3rd Gr Strings)
Date: Monday, March 4, 2024 12:16:39 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. 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 particularly concerned with the proposed increased class sizes, reduction in elementary GT offerings and the elimination of 3rd grade strings.

It is shocking to see so many proposed cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS), particularly in a county ranked #7 in wealth in 2023 by US News and continual property tax increases. Students and teachers have already endured increased class sizes over the last few years. This news is devastating to our entire county and detrimental to our county standards of education. I urge 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 volunteer at my child's elementary school quite often and I can tell you that the classrooms in his aging school would be unable to safely hold any additional students. Not to mention, our valued teachers already carry the burden of large class sizes; are spread too thin and cannot always meet the needs of ALL students.

Meeting the needs of students, includes those that struggle and those that excel. My child is a bright 3rd grader who has had the wonderful opportunity to participate in the GT seminars and lower elementary CEUs with the school's GT educators. They are his favorite classes and keep him engaged in a way that his homeroom classes cannot always provide. To reduce funding in this area would be a detriment to children who are craving a deeper learning experience and wish to be challenged beyond the typical classroom experience.

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 child's involvement in 3rd grade strings at his Howard County school has not only enriched his academic experience but has also contributed to his overall personal development. It is terrible that his strings teacher's job is at risk because HCPSS does not see the value in giving our children the opportunity of learning a strings instrument at this point in their education.

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 smaller class sizes, challenging curriculum and 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 teacher funding, GT programs and 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,

Jacqueline Dutrow
HCPSS Parent

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Melinda Laging](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Increase Funding to Maintain HOWARD COUNTY Public School Services
Date: Monday, March 4, 2024 8:01:52 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:

It is crucial that the money being allocated to Howard County Public Schools is increased to maintain our current level of services while still complying with the new Blueprint mandates. As one of the country's best school systems, we need to prioritize our funding on what is best for our students. Therefore, I ask that you continue to fund the following:

GT seminars and CEUs at the Elementary Level

3rd Grade Orchestra

Most importantly, we cannot afford to increase class sizes by 2 students. This will not only hurt teachers, it will negatively impact students.

--

Melinda Laging Collins
Chief Content Officer; Nine Media, Inc.



Nine Media, Inc.
PO Box 680593, Franklin, TN 37068-0593
melinda@ninemedia.org
W: 833.9MEDIA9 (833.963.3429)
C: 303.482.5130

From: [Ross S. Rawlings](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [BoE Email](#); [CouncilMail](#); [Bill Barnes](#)
Subject: Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Monday, March 4, 2024 7:23:55 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 Music teacher for over 20 years, 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 hundreds of music 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 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,

Ross Rawlings

Director of Choral Activities
Marriotts Ridge High School

From: [Andrew Karaba](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Public School Funding
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 9:39:30 PM

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

Dear Council Members:

I am writing to encourage you to work with the Howard County Public School System to adequately fund our schools. This year millions of dollars in cuts have been proposed that will greatly impact our school system. If we want to keep up with the rest of the state and the country we need to make funding our schools the top priority. Having good schools attracts motivated, diverse, and intelligent people to the county to raise their families which provides a vibrant community and a strong tax base with which to fund and complete additional county programs and objectives. Please provide the money the schools requested to continue their excellent educational programing.

Sincerely,

Andrew H. Karaba
4273 Hermitage Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21042

From: [Anthony DeBella](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Adequately Fund HCPSS- FY25 Budget Analysis
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 7:49:48 AM
Attachments: [DeBellaBudgetAnalysis-FY25.pdf](#)

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

To the Howard County Council- please consider this analysis of HCPSS funding over the past decade and a half based on Approved Operating Budgets. It shows that there is ample room above the Superintendent's Proposed FY25 Operating Budget to fund HCPSS to historic norms when measured against the County Executive's metric of percentage of General Fund Revenue. Even in tougher economic times in 2011 and 2012, Ken Ullman protected the school system from cuts, even going as far as furloughs and cuts for county employees. While such drastic measures will likely not be required, reallocating funds from other county programs will be required now that the funding received in corona times has ended.

Respectfully Submitted,
Anthony DeBella
Laurel, MD

From: [Jennifer Waskiewicz](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Full funding of HCPSS
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 3:46:56 PM

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

The purpose of this email is to implore you to support increasing the money provided to the Howard County Public School System. The proposed budget cuts are not in line with Howard County's mission of excellence in education.

As I am sure you are well aware, many citizens choose to reside in Howard County because of the excellent schools. Personally, we moved out of Baltimore City in 2019 as our eldest was beginning Kindergarten. Our family will be very disheartened if these budget cuts to the Howard County School system are realized. Please, for the sake of our future leaders, we need to fully fund HCPSS.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Waskiewicz

From: [Margot Celano](#)
To: [executive](#); [CouncilMail](#); katiefry.hester@senate.state.md.us; clarence.lam@senate.state.md.us; chao.wu@house.state.md.us; natalie.ziegler@house.state.md.us; Guy.guzzone@senate.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: Funding to benefit our students and communities
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 8:30:03 PM

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

Hello,

I'm a mom and substitute in HCPSS. I'm writing to ask you to increase the funding provided to HCPSS so cuts in current levels of services don't need to be made.

I encourage you to adequately fund our schools to both keep current programming and add to them.

Many increases to budget needs are due to blueprint. Please increase state funding for schools to meet current operations and implement blueprint initiatives.

Thank you,
Margot

301-943-5721
A8751.PaperPie.com

From: [Natalie Kahla](#)
To: [executive](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); [Yungmann, David](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 1:44:23 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 to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). I have two children in elementary school in Howard County. We specifically moved to Howard County before my oldest child started Kindergarten because of the wonderful school system. 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 funding for GT programs and 3rd grade Orchestra . Additionally reducing staffing and increasing class sizes will have an impact on the quality of education our children receive.

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.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Natalie Kahla

From: [Carolyn Zerhusen](#)
To: bill_barnes@hcpss.org; boe@hcpss.org; [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Music funding
Date: Thursday, March 7, 2024 10:21:11 AM

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

Hello!

Please reconsider cutting the third grade strings music program. Music is a critical part of our students' learning!

Carolyn Zerhusen
7th Grade English Language Arts Teacher
Thomas Viaduct Middle School

From: [CLES 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: Support the will of the people! Save Music in HCPSS!
Date: Thursday, March 7, 2024 7:54:25 AM
Attachments: [Signatures March 7 - petition signatures jobs_37915273_20240307124153.pdf](#)
[Comments March 7 - petition comments jobs_37915273_20240307124502.pdf](#)

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

Once again, we are writing to call your attention to the petition [Save Music in HCPSS!!!!](#) At the time of this writing, the petition has reached **4,852 signatures**.

Do not ignore the will of nearly 5,000 individuals that you are charged to represent. It is the responsibility of the BOE and County Council to work to incorporate the will of the people into their work. However, as evidenced by the budget process thus far, the people's will is not being considered.

The inclusion of 3rd Grade Strings in the HCPSS budget is \$795,000, only .06% of the requested budget. However, if strings remain excluded, 12 phenomenal music educators will be eliminated, thousands of 3rd graders will miss out on the opportunity to participate in their first instrumental experience, and the foundation for the revered music program in HCPSS will be dismantled.

Do NOT let this happen. Include 3rd grade strings in the 2024-25 HCPSS budget.

Attached are the most up to date lists of signatures and comments at the time of this email. Please read, see the will of the people, and follow their lead.

From: [Linfeng Chen](#)
To: [CLES Music Boosters](#); [BoE Email](#); [Bill Barnes](#); [Karalee Turner-Little](#); [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Cc: [Terry Eberhardt](#); [Ebony Langford-Brown](#)
Subject: RE: [External] Support the will of the people! Save Music in HCPSS!
Date: Thursday, March 7, 2024 8:35:47 AM

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

Thank you for your advocacy!

From: CLES Music Boosters <clesmusicboosters@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 7, 2024 7:54 AM
To: BoE Email <boe@hcpss.org>; Bill Barnes <Bill_Barnes@hcpss.org>; Karalee Turner-Little <Karalee_TurnerLittle@hcpss.org>; cball@howardcountymd.gov; councilmail@howardcountymd.gov
Cc: Terry Eberhardt <Terry_Eberhardt@hcpss.org>; Ebony Langford-Brown <Ebony_Langford-Brown@hcpss.org>
Subject: [External] Support the will of the people! Save Music in HCPSS!

Some people who received this message don't often get email from clesmusicboosters@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

! CAUTION: This email originated from outside of HCPSS. Do not click links or open attachments, unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Once again, we are writing to call your attention to the petition [Save Music in HCPSS!!!!](#) At the time of this writing, the petition has reached **4,852 signatures**.

Do not ignore the will of nearly 5,000 individuals that you are charged to represent. It is the responsibility of the BOE and County Council to work to incorporate the will of the people into their work. However, as evidenced by the budget process thus far, the people's will is not being considered.

The inclusion of 3rd Grade Strings in the HCPSS budget is \$795,000, only .06% of the requested budget. However, if strings remain excluded, 12 phenomenal music educators will be eliminated, thousands of 3rd graders will miss out on the opportunity to participate in their first instrumental experience, and the foundation for the revered music program in HCPSS will be dismantled.

Do NOT let this happen. Include 3rd grade strings in the 2024-25 HCPSS budget.

Attached are the most up to date lists of signatures and comments at the time of this email. Please read, see the will of the people, and follow their lead.

From: [Marilyn Ayala](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org; Jacquelin_McCoy@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Thursday, March 7, 2024 9:10:58 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,

Ms. Ayala (Senior Orquestra student's mom at WLHS)
mayala01@yahoo.com

From: [Meghan Taschenberger](#)
To: bill_barnes@hcpss.org; boe@hcpss.org; [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Thursday, March 7, 2024 10:24:00 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 and music 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 goal for in music in Howard County schools is not only to enrich student academic experience but to contribute 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. In fact, the HCPSS music community and reputation is the reason I chose to work here, rather than my home county in Maryland.

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,

Meghan Taschenberger ([she/her](#))

From: [Pamela Cheung](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org; Jacquelin_McCoy@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Thursday, March 7, 2024 7:13:22 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,

Pamela Cheung

Parent of 4 boys who started orchestra in 3rd grade at Longfellow Elementary with Ms. Williams, then continued at Harper's Choice middle school with Mr. McFate and now younger 3 sons are at Wilde Lake HS with Ms. Spiro

James Moore violin- now in college UCLA

Sean Moore viola- 12th grade

Chris Moore violin- 10th grade

Samuel Moore cello- 9th grade

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Sara Karaba](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Public School Funding
Date: Thursday, March 7, 2024 8:53:37 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 to encourage you to work with the Howard County Public School System to adequately fund our schools. This year millions of dollars in cuts have been proposed that will greatly impact our school system. If we want to keep up with the rest of the state and the country we need to make funding our schools the top priority. Having good schools attracts motivated, diverse, and intelligent people to the county to raise their families which provides a vibrant community and a strong tax base with which to fund and complete additional county programs and objectives. Please provide the money the schools requested to continue their excellent educational programing.

Sincerely,

Sara Karaba
4273 Hermitage Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21042

From: [Tiffany T-Randall](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org; jacquelin_mccoy@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Thursday, March 7, 2024 5:41:57 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 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,

Tiffany Thomas-Randall

From: [Zoe Perkins](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [BoE Email](#); [CouncilMail](#); [Bill Barnes](#); [Jacquelin McCoy](#)
Subject: Music
Date: Thursday, March 7, 2024 9:59:17 PM

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

Hi,

I don't know who any of you are, but I'd like to ask you to keep allowing music in the elementary school curriculum. I remember waiting for the day that I'd get to pick an instrument to play. Music is a really big part of who we are, and I think that the sooner we teach kids how powerful music can be, the better. We use it to express ourselves and connect with others. I remember when I was first learning how to use a cello, and I was laughing with the other kids my age while we tried to hold a bow. Now, I'm in high school. I've been playing the cello for about six years, but I don't think I would've come as far as I have if I hadn't started playing when I did. Please let other students also experience music in the way I have. I know the budget has been cut, and I don't know a lot about that, but I'd really like it if you could keep funding the musical arts. None of my orchestra teachers could afford expensive rosin, and they've all mentioned in some way or another that they don't have the funding to replace the school instruments if they break, but they keep teaching music. If you have to pay out of your own pocket for instrument repairs, and you still keep teaching, then you're definitely not in it for the paycheck, you're in it for the music and for teaching how to appreciate the music. My teacher has told me to write this email to you, and I want you to know that I'm not just writing this just because she wants students to appreciate music, but I do, too. There's something about playing in an orchestra. When everyone's playing together (which will happen sooner if they start learning in 3rd grade) and they're perfectly in sync, it's such a great feeling. Even if you're going to vote to push the learning time anyways (I can't choose for you), I hope there's a way we can get money to fund this in the future so that we won't have to even consider making cuts like this in the future.

Thank you for reading,

-Zoe Perkins

From: [Adam Burstein](#)
To: boe@hcpss.org; [Ball, Calvin](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Music and Arts Budget
Date: Friday, March 8, 2024 8:15:05 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 have been looking over the published Excel spreadsheet that shows historical and proposal amounts for the Howard County Public School System. Something makes no sense to me. Since your spreadsheet did not create a bottom-line summary sheet, I've taken the opportunity to do that on my own. According to the calculations as I see them:

2020 Budget: \$1,091,384,593
2020 Actual: \$1,086,284,382
2020 Delta: \$5,100,211 saved

2021 Budget: \$1,116,495,767
2021 Actual: \$1,073,858,452
2021 Delta: \$42,637,225 saved

2022 Budget: \$1,174,103,586
2022 Actual: \$1,151,315,399
2022 Delta: \$22,788,187 saved

2023 Budget: \$1,286,288,399
2024 Proposal: \$1,383,099,907
Delta: \$126,811,568 increase

Looking at the individual line items, some of them simply don't make sense. For instance:

- Why is there an 848% increase in Elementary Language Arts?
 - Do we have 8.5 times as many students enrolling in our elementary schools as we did in the past?
 - Were our children failing so incredibly horribly in elementary school?
 - While I do not suggest we should not invest in elementary language arts, is the amount proposed proportional to the need?
- Why is there a 459% increase in AP programs?
 - Are we expecting 45 times as many students to enroll in AP programming?
 - While I do not suggest we should not invest in AP programming, is the amount proposed proportional to the need?
- Why is there a 279% increase in Dual Enrollment?
 - While I understand that there may be more students engaging in dual enrollment programming, more of those costs are being passed along to the parents
 - My family needs to foot more of the bill for some of my daughter's dual enrollment because the change in policy that requires that some courses be completed before the county pitches in
- Why is there a 37% increase in high school athletics?

- You've seen my other emails already, so you know how I feel about this
- Is it necessary to hire more coaches, build more fields, etc., at the county's expense, while students are not getting their needs met in the classroom?
- The music programs have relied on fundraising efforts. Shouldn't the football team?
- Why is there a nearly 100% increase in grounds maintenance?
 - Has our need for grounds maintenance truly doubled with the addition of one new physical structure?
 - Are all of the other buildings coming to age at exactly the same time?

But now, this part makes no sense. According to the budget, there is an *increase* of over \$2 million for music, but we're talking about cuts. How did we get here?

Am I missing something? Am I referencing the wrong Excel spreadsheet? Even if this version is out of date, I have a great sense that this is still reflective of the spirit of the latest budget proposals. It's imperative that the county disperse funds proportionate to the needs, and that the budget be applied equitably across the county.

Thank you,
Adam Burstein

From: [Arlene Reddy](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org; Jacquelin_McCoy@hcpss.org
Subject: [SUSPECTED SPAM] Save Music at the Elementary Level
Date: Friday, March 8, 2024 12:04:33 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 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 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,

Arlene Reddy 
Branch Manager
Email: areddy@docfcu.org
Phone: 301-658-7274
Fax: 301-589-2321
WWW.DOCFCU.ORG

From: [Brooke Dalesio](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [BoE Email](#); [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org; Jacquelin_McCoy@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS Funding of Music and G/T Programs
Date: Friday, March 8, 2024 10:26:09 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 THREE orchestra and G/T students (one WLHS, two LoES 5th graders), 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 and G/T programs play a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals, fostering creativity, discipline, and teamwork. My child's involvement in music and G/T 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 and G/T programs make to our students' lives. **We should be investing in our kids instead of investing in subpar scripted curriculum programs or transportation "solutions" such as Zum** (finding an alternative to Zum would potentially provide enough funding to fund the music and G/T programs). 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 and G/T 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,

Brooke Dalesio
Parent of HCPSS Students

--

Brooke Dalesio, M.S.Ed
Senior Faculty Specialist/PDS Coordinator
Dept. of Teaching and Learning, Policy and Leadership
College of Education, University of Maryland
College Park, MD 20742
(c) 301-775-4278

From: [Meeta Patel](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); boe@hcpss.org; [CouncilMail](#); bill_barnes@hcpss.org
Subject: Re: Elementary school programs
Date: Friday, March 8, 2024 8:33:37 AM

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

Great job, Board! Cut the GT program for elementary school kids instead of letting their minds flourish. Howard county is such a great place that really cares about education.

Since the Board so eagerly cut the funding for GT, what is plan for the kids that are in GT or were supposed to be in GT next year? Dumb them down a little by moving them back a year or two in their education, in the name of equity of course. Because if there is extra money in the budget it wouldn't go to GT programs in schools where parents work hard enough to not need the FARMS program, but somehow we are punished for that. Howard county has become a shit show from the Zum bus fiasco to your idea of what is important in the educational system.

Would love some answers. Also wonder if anyone of your kids are affected by this? Because then maybe you would care enough to fund this program.

On Fri, Mar 1, 2024, 7:07 AM Meeta Patel <mp0681@gmail.com> wrote:

My family moved to Howard county specifically for the well-known school system. We are not the only family that has done so, as you know. It is shocking to me that you would do away with so many GT resources and also increase class sizes. In many local mom groups, I've noticed an increase in parents sending their kids to private school and wonder why would they think their kids would be better off there than a Howard County school? I know now it's because they don't have to worry about these types of issues. I would rather move to a more affordable area and send my kids to private school too if it means a better, student-focused education with available resources.

My kids have a private music program they participate in, but I also disagree with taking away the music program from the third graders.

Unless you want Howard County to lose their prestigious reputation, please reconsider where the budget needs to be cut.

Sincerely,
A mom of a second and third grader

From: [Jenna Dietrich](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Sunday, March 10, 2024 9:30:21 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,

I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts to music education in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

I 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 experience as a student involved in music in Howard County schools has not only enriched my academic experience but has also contributed to my overall personal development. **I would have never had the opportunities provided to me thus far in my life without the early music education program in HCPSS.**

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 strongly urge you to reinstate the request for \$795k, **just 0.06% of the requested budget**, to fully fund Music in HCPSS.

With over 4,380 signatures in just *three* days, and a petition that now has about 5,500 signatures, it's clear how important music education is. **It's disappointing that despite thousands of letters, testimonies, and signatures, board members did not even take thirty seconds to deliberate the cut of this essential program.**

If Howard County is the top tier school system they pride themselves to be, they would find a way to keep the programs that make them top tier. Cutting this program would be admitting failure to the students who benefit from this once great school system.

Therefore, I 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 critical matter.

Sincerely,
Jenna Dietrich

--

Jenna Dietrich
University of Maryland, College Park
Music Education & Clarinet Performance, '24
jdietri5@terpmail.umd.edu
[she/her]

From: [Tyler Tom](mailto:Tyler.Tom)
To: CouncilDistrict1@howardcountymd.gov; Robyn_Scates@hcpss.org
Cc: boe@hcpss.org; CouncilMail
Subject: HCPSS Budget Atrocity
Date: Sunday, March 10, 2024 1:25:22 PM

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

TL;DR - the proposed HCPSS budget cuts based on a programmatic assessment of the population that qualifies for FARM is a misplaced attempt at achieving equity by disadvantaging children of opportunities because they attend schools in areas where the primary residential population has the means to provide for them. I am enraged by this proposal and respectfully ask that the County Executive and County Representatives work with the HCPSS Superintendent and Board of Education to try again in order to either preserve or make available key elementary school programs for all of our county's children. The outcome of this budget fiasco is being closely watched by myself and many other parents and will drive voting in the upcoming cycles. A copy of this message was also submitted to County Executive Ball via the webform.

County Executive Ball, Councilmember Walsh, BOE Member Scates,

I am a resident of District 1 with two children who attend Ilchester Elementary School. I recently reviewed the Superintendent's Proposed FY2025 HCPSS Operating Budget and several of the HCPSS Board of Education members' comments, and I am appalled.

When my wife and I chose to set down roots and start our family, we specifically chose Howard County for its great schools. We further spent time researching what areas of Howard County would best allow our new family to grow, our family to flourish, and our children to benefit from one of the best public school systems in America, and chose to live in District 1. I am a strong believer in our country's public education system and find it generally ludicrous that people in Howard County choose to send their children to private schools.

That being said, the HCPSS proposed operating budget with programmatic cuts to key elementary school programs such as the GT program and early introduction to music (e.g. 3rd Grade Orchestra), in addition to the transportation cuts that already affected my family AND increases in our taxes are insane.

While I understand the need to balance the operating budget, doing so on the false claim of "equity" and cutting programs from schools where less than 40% of the population qualifies for FARM programs will not result in the outcome parity those who support this proposal claim to aspire towards. Equity is the uneven distribution of resources to achieve equal or parity in outcomes. And if there are schools that are underperforming due to socioeconomic pressures, I am very supportive of appropriately allocating resources to help achieve parity with other schools in the district. Funding headstart programs, expanding before and after care (which you did not do when you cut transportation services), and ensuring appropriate academic support is present for children who are differently abled or may not be as fortunate as others in our county is how we would truly use our funds in the name of equity. If we need to cut programs like GT and strings to insure that every child in the county has the same outcome as they enter middle school, then I am all for it.

However, that is not what is being done. Instead the proposed cuts disproportionately disadvantage students who attend schools where fewer than 40% of the student population requires additional assistance in the way of FARM. By cutting GT programs and things like 3rd grade strings we are taking away opportunities from the majority of our children instead of ensuring that we're truly leveraging equitable distribution of resources to obtain parity in outcome. While it's noble to try to make sure that these less fortunate populations are given opportunities to succeed, doing it at the expense of the other children in the district surely can't be the intent of the Superintendent and the HCPSS School Board, can it?

Although noble in intent, these proposed cuts will negatively impact outcomes for students from schools where families are able to provide for their children. Most of these families are two parent working families with limited capacity for extracurricular private tutoring (to achieve GT like outcomes or participation in an instrumental program). It is decisions like these that drive behaviors at the polls and whether residents choose to remain in this county. I truly believe that Howard County is one of the best in the country - but the continued assault on the families of Howard County and the perpetuation of social experiments in the name of progress will drive this county into the ground.

Respectfully,
Tyler Tom
District 1 Resident

From: [Kelly Caponera](#)
To: [executive](#); [CouncilMail](#); [Budget Testimony](#)
Subject: HCPSS Budget concerns
Date: Monday, March 11, 2024 9:38:23 AM

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

Dear County Executive Ball,

I am very concerned with the proposed HCPSS budget. I understand that due to budget shortfall, HCPSS is forced to make large cuts to balance the budget. **Currently the plan to increase class sizes to an unreasonable size, cut 3rd grade strings in all but a few schools with high FARMS numbers, and elementary education will harm not only our students, but our County.**

My husband and I moved to Howard County to be closer to his job in Baltimore. Once we were here we realized that HCPSS offered more to our children than our prior school district in Loudoun County, VA. Additionally, living in Howard County provided many cultural and recreational benefits that we enjoyed. We have 4 children and all 4 have had the opportunity to participate in the GT program. When we first moved to Howard County in 2012 my oldest children were in kindergarten and 2nd grade. Their classes had 20-22 students. There are now 28-30 kids in those same classrooms. Children who fell behind during the 13 months that schools were closed/virtual, and need more from their teachers, not less! **Limiting class sizes need to be a priority in the budget!**

The 3rd grade strings program and GT program is often cited as a reason families move to Howard County. For our family, it was the reason we chose to stay here rather than move back to Virginia when my husband changed jobs to one based in Arlington. The current proposal to only provide 3rd grade strings and GT programs to select schools based on their FARMS subsidy is not in the best interest of all Howard County students. While I support providing additional academic supports to schools with higher needs to ensure their students can keep up with the HCPSS curriculum, providing enrichment programs only to those students and not to all students does not meet the HCPSS objective to providing a fair and equitable education for all students. **All children in HCPSS schools should have the same opportunity to reach their full potential regardless of their parent's household income.** Additionally, adjusting the school start times has created unreasonable cost increases in the transportation budget and strained a system that was already struggling. The expensive plan was supposed to allow high school students additional sleep in the morning, but the cost of providing what has turned out to be 20-40 min sleep is unreasonable. In response to the adjusted school start times, HCPSS made an abrupt decision to increase the student walk zone without input from either the Howard County Office of Transportation, or the Maryland State Highway (SHA). Making this change without coordination with transportation professionals to ensure that pedestrian accommodations were in place for the students was reckless and put students in danger. As a traffic engineer, I was appalled by the decision to exclude transportation professionals from the planning. **Howard County Public School System should return to the original**

staged start times, to substantially reduce the transportation budget so that those funds can be used to keep other services, such as maintaining or reducing class sizes and restoring the the 3rd grade strings and GT programs currently set to be eliminated.

The State of Maryland's Blueprint for Education has created substantial requirements which the state has failed to provide additional funding for. ***We need you to fight for our County and insist that the state either increase the funding provided, or remove requirements that strain our already stressed school budget.***

The HCPSS administrative costs have ballooned in the 12 years we have lived in Howard County. ***Our school system should not be allowed to propose cuts to teaching positions without also reducing their staffing by an equal percentage.*** We all need to learn to do more, with less, while prioritizing the goals of our school system.

Thank you for your careful review of our school budget. ***Please keep all students and families in mind when you make the difficult decision to accept or reject the budget, as proposed, as there will be ramifications to our County if the proposed budget is accepted.***

Sincerely,

Kelly Caponera

From: [Anjali Sandhu](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#)
Cc: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Howard County Budget Cuts
Date: Tuesday, March 12, 2024 9:45:25 PM

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

Dr Ball,

Good evening! I'm writing to you to please reconsider.

The last BOE decision is to reinstate 3rd grade strings and GT staff support for only schools with a 40% + FARMS rate. This in itself is admirable - EXCEPT now students in all the other schools do not have the same opportunity to have these services! This change assumes that it is believed all students in the other schools would have access to these services otherwise, which is simply just not the case at all.

It is not an equitable decision. In fact, this is the definition of NOT being equitable. Not all students will be lifted up to their best potential. Letting that sink in - YOUR student isn't allowed to play 3rd grade strings - others will.

YOUR student will not have early opportunities for CEU's and seminars from our GT department - others will.

YOUR student's home room teachers will need to conduct early intervention and independently support additional needs on top of their current (and full) duties - but others will have the additional GT support staff to ensure this is done effectively..

Our students & school has been specifically targeted as not being valued enough to receive the same support as the over 40% FARMS schools. We will be doing our school and students a disservice if we don't fight for them.

You are affecting my children personally at Dayton Oaks Elementary school from opportunities he should be exposed too. We are to uplift the next generation to their max potential.

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. While it might look somewhat different than a student who is underperforming and needs additional boosts - it's the same idea that there is a specific need for these students in order to give them what they need to fully succeed.

Losing Ms. McErlean, our 0.5 GT teacher, means that a larger number of our students who fall into this category will not receive GT services.

In fact, even those students at DOES who do not necessarily need those services, will now not be able to have the opportunity to see if those services would benefit them.

See the list of GT loss below per grade - plus”_I made because I'm a visual learner.

BOLD in RED is what will no longer be offered at DOES after losing 0.5

staffing. <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1VkySzRvEzOpNkrcAlr7pnLZA2oMyoQEsD46wuhY1mwU/edit?usp=sharing>

What's at risk in a nutshell & some terminology for clarity:

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 &
times per year
every student
7-8**

- 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
40% student enrollment rate
each

- **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

As you can see, GT services will basically no longer exist for K-3 in a truly impactful way. It's a matter of just not having enough bodies in our school to support what our students need. **Quick Strings memo:**

- 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.

Please consider everything said.

Thank you!

From: [g12352](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: HCPSS funding shortfall
Date: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 9:01:51 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 Members,

I am writing to encourage you to work with the Howard County Public School System to adequately fund our schools. This year millions of dollars in cuts are set to take place that will greatly impact our school system and not in a good way.

A weaker public school system will have ripple effects on the local economy, which will lead to future losses in tax revenue for the county. Please see the white paper in the link below, which says that a "one dollar increase in state aid increases aggregate housing values per pupil between \$19 and \$20. These results suggest that increases in state aid increase property values which reflects that potential residents value the education expenditure" (as seen on page 23). <https://www.nber.org/papers/w9054>

Howard County is a sought after area due largely to the wonderful public school system. Residents pay a little more in taxes to get an education quality that rivals private schools. If cuts proceed, classes increase in size, and there is a reduction in field trips and music, the appeal of paying extra in taxes to live here goes away with it. This will in turn lead to a weaker local housing market, lower home values relative to the rest of the state, and less tax revenue compared to the ratios seen today. The ripple effect is when this impact forces even more school budget cuts 5 to 10 years from now, compounding the problem further. Please stop this from snowballing while it's still manageable. Please fully fund the HCPSS.

Thank you,
Gordon Webb
Howard County Public School System parent

From: [Huirong Zheng](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: HCPSS budget cuts
Date: Tuesday, March 12, 2024 12:06:20 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:

HCPSS is going to cut the school programs and services to solve the budget issue. Education is very important to each kid. How each child will turn out is important to our society and our country in the future. School is where the children getting their education every day. Think about if you have children in the current school system and whose school programs and services will be cut, you will feel my heart! I am sincerely encourage you to provide more money to the HCPSS so that those cuts in current levels of services will not happen.

Thank you for your understanding and support!

Jinny Jarrett

Dear Council Members Walsh, Jones, Rigby, Jung, and Yungmann, and County Executive Calvin Ball,

After listening to testimony and learning more about the impact this budget will have in our schools, it is important to fully fund the budget for the Board of Education. When the initial budget came out, it originally targeted 245.8 school based positions, which does not include the additional positions removed at central office. Our community was shocked at the number of positions, especially since HCPSS has always been a place where teachers strive to be employed. With these cuts on the horizon, the reputation of HCPSS schools are in jeopardy. Attracting and retaining teachers and appealing to families to become part of the HCPSS family should be a priority for the Howard County Council and County Executive.

This current budget presented to you, which was adopted on March 7th, was created in response to the huge outpouring from the community in support of numerous school based programs and positions initially planned for removal. The school based positions being restored in this budget will support the overarching HCPSS Call to Action mission statement in which, "HCPSS ensures academic success and social-emotional well-being for each student in an inclusive and nurturing environment that closes opportunity gaps." The increase of 8.2m from the original budget presented is a small amount to pay to restore these important and essential student supports it has returned to the HCPSS budget.

Part of the budget to be approved will support high school Media Specialists. Library Media Specialists are more than a warm body helping students sign in to use the Media Center and checking out books. We are a central hub in the school building for academic and technical instruction for every curriculum area. To be this resource for all the students and staff in a high school, it requires the training and expertise of two certified Library Media Specialists who use their knowledge in curriculum, research, and best practices to provide informational materials and instruction which is particularly important in schools that serve families with reduced resources like Wilde Lake High School.

Each day we are working with students before school starts, throughout the school day, and past the last bell to provide instruction and resources for technology and academic success. On a given day, we use a wide range of skills to meet the academic demands as a Library Media Specialist to serve our diverse population. At Wilde Lake High School, we know every student can succeed, but many of our students come to school at a disadvantage. 48.3% of our students qualify for free or reduced meals*. This means that 48.3% of our Wilde Lake families earn less than \$45,991 (for a family of 3) a year. This statistic does not even account for the many families at WL that make more than \$45,991, but earn significantly less than the median household income in Howard County of \$140,971.** Without a fully staffed Library Media program and with our classroom numbers increasing by 2 students, as proposed in this budget, students at Wilde Lake High School who depend on Library Media Specialists will slip through the cracks without the academic and technical instruction we provide daily:

- Discover, interpret and integrate academic online resources for academic research
- Plan, coordinate, and facilitate with classroom teachers

- Collection development: certified Library Media Specialists are experts in selecting books for grade appropriate materials that support academic subjects and reflective of our diverse community. This reduces the likelihood of the banning of books at HCPSS.
 - 668 materials added to collection (2022-23)
- Inventory books, delete older materials, and curate online databases.
 - 558 materials deleted from the collection (2022-23)
- Partnership with Howard County Public Library
- Teach Video Production and Video Production GT
- Classroom co-teacher for Digital Education courses: Chinese I, Chinese II, Math
- Schedule, co-plan, and facilitate specific academic classroom needs while scheduled in the Media Center
- Facilitate and interact with an average of 182 individual students each day (2022-23)
- Install, integrate, troubleshoot online software and applications
- Manage Chromebooks throughout the school day (2022-23) by providing technology instruction and support for over 2000 times throughout the year and submitted 689 Chromebook work orders
- Collection of senior Chromebooks, remove from CID, submit work orders as needed for each device
- Manage Computer and Audio Visual repair orders throughout the building
 - 231 staff laptop, computer, device, and AV work order submissions (2022-23)
- Inventory of Chromebooks, laptops, projectors, LCDs, printers, and other devices
- Coordinate with Print Services for printer setup and connection to the server
- Provide instruction to facilitate student and staff printing, and troubleshoot as needed
- Purchasing of books, supplies, and AV equipment through Workday
- Coordinating repairs and replacement equipment
- Regularly update community facing online interfaces: [WLHS website](#), Media Center [website](#) and [social media](#), staff Canvas community page and membership, and student Canvas community page
- Sponsor and host clubs
- Rainbow Representative
- Certificate of Excellence for School Library Month (2022)
- Semifinalist Winner Follett Challenge (2020)

Wilde Lake High School has many specialized programs within our community that benefit from having a Media Center that is fully staffed by 2 certified Library Media Specialists: Teen Parenting, Academic Life Skills, and English Learners. Students in these programs can rely on Library Media Specialists to provide instruction both academically, technologically to help them navigate the demands of the educational experience. Additionally, throughout the school year we are one of the first resources available for students enrolling (121 enrolled/134 withdrew in 2022-23) throughout the school year to acquire or return a Chromebook, receive a username

and password to log into and instruction on how to use HCPSS online resources, and understand the basics within our school community. Having 2 certified Library Media Specialists allows us to take the time we need to attend to the academic and technology needs of our WL community. Library Media Specialists are a centralized academic and community resource at Wilde Lake High School. Please support the Board of Education budget to keep ALL the positions supported by this budget in the schools from kindergarten to 12th grade.

Sincerely,
Annora Bailey
Library Media Specialist
Wilde Lake High School

*FARMS: <https://www.hcpss.org/food-services/farms/#chart>

**Census data: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/howardcountymaryland/AFN120217>

From: [Danielle Regester](#)
To: [Budget Testimony](#)
Cc: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: County Budget
Date: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 7:06:07 AM

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

Hello,

I would like to request that schools be funded fully, this to include any shortfall they did not request. Our schools are the most important service in Howard County. I would like to see GT and music restored to all schools. What has been done is not equity. You don't take away from one group and give to another. Equity is giving more support to those who need it.

Thank you for your time,
Danielle Regester

Danielle Regester
danielle.regester@gmail.com

From: [Judi Sgambato](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: HCPSS budget
Date: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 10:26:59 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 because I believe it is important that the County increases the money allocated to HCPSS in order 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. Please work with the HCPSS to adequately fund our school system.

I implore you not to cut 3rd grade orchestra program. Research has shown music education contributes to improved creativity and confidence, better mental health and emotional stability, and student performance, according to a paper published last year by the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health.

<https://today.usc.edu/music-education-research/>

Thank you,

~Judi

From: [Lauren Frey](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Appeal to FULLY fund HCPSS budget
Date: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 11:32:47 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 Council Members,

I am writing to encourage you to work with the Howard County Public School System to adequately fund our schools. This year millions of dollars in cuts have been proposed that will greatly impact our school system. It is important to prioritize and 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.

The percentage of our population (approximately 17%) enrolled in HCPSS remains steady, therefore, the percentage of county funding used to fund HCPSS should remain unchanged. From 2009 to 2025, the share (percentage) of Howard County funding used for HCPSS has decreased from 61% to 54% over this time. The FY25 budget fails short of historic norms and the children and teachers of our county are the ones that will suffer. Please work on a budget solution that prioritizes our schools and its current needs over luxurious new investments such as the \$5 million allocated for a "conceptual design" of the Lakefront Columbia Library.

I am writing to implore you NOT to cut funding for HCPSS schools. The current underfunding has HCPSS Class Size Ratios increasing by 2 students per class, elimination of 3rd Grade Strings, reducing Elementary Gifted and Talented Programs and Positions, cutting Special Educators/Paraeducators and much more.

Class size increases coupled with the loss of programs and support staff put more strain on our hardworking, devoted teachers. Teachers with smaller class sizes can devote more time to individualized lessons, employ effective teaching strategies, and remediate early learning delays before students fall too far behind. Smaller classes in grades K-3 improve student achievement in reading and math. Students in smaller classes performed better than students in larger classes on reading and mathematics achievement tests (Mitchell & Mitchell, 1999; Molnar, Smith, & Zahorik, 1999). From the School Superintendents Association website: "Conclusive research has shown the benefits of class sizes of 1:15, especially in the primary grades. Since the early 1980s, a large-scale project in Indiana, a major experiment in Tennessee, numerous smaller studies and evaluations of projects that use low adult-to-student ratios have found that youngsters in small classes (1:15 or so) as compared to youngsters in

larger classes:

- obtain higher test scores;
- participate more in school;
- demonstrate improved behavior; and
- retain many benefits of early class-size reductions in their later years of schooling.”

Also, take into consideration other school assistance measures, including programs for gifted and talented students and special education services, implemented to support smaller class sizes while addressing students' instructional needs. Gifted and Talented Programs provide specialized instruction and enrichment opportunities tailored to the advanced learning needs of gifted individuals, ensuring they are adequately challenged and can reach their full academic and personal potential. By investing in gifted and talented programs, schools not only foster the intellectual growth of these students but also contribute to the enrichment of the entire learning community, promoting diversity, innovation, and excellence in education.

Additionally, there is a plethora of scientific and academic research available in support of early instrumental music opportunities. HCPSS's 3rd grade strings programs are essential for fostering holistic development and academic excellence among students. Studies show playing a string instrument provides numerous benefits beyond musical proficiency, such as stimulating cognitive activity, enhancing imagination, maintaining muscle memory, increasing fine motor skills, reducing stress, and easing anxiety/depression.

In closing, I urge the County Council to consider the immense value of fully funding our budget. Investing in education is an investment in the future of our community and ALL of our children in Howard County. Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Lauren & Frederick Frey

Parents of 4th, 1st, and future Kindergartener in HCPSS

PTA members Dayton Oaks Elementary School

Ladybug4656@gmail.com

443-486-8092

From: [Jessica Stern](#)
To: [executive](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: HCPSS Budget
Date: Sunday, March 17, 2024 8:49:54 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 am writing to you as both a teacher in a Howard County Public School and as a parent to an HCPSS student to let you know that the budget the BOE sent to you recently is insufficient, disgraceful, and an embarrassment. It will lead to many negative impacts to both students and staff in the next school year. It is an absolutely disgusting that this county, one of the wealthiest in the country, one that believes in supporting public schools and every single person who steps foot into them, would so brazenly campaign on issues related to promoting schools all of the great things WE as teachers do to make them wonderful, would so heinously disrespect what we are aiming to accomplish for our students. Costs are rising in every facet of life - it should be obvious that school costs are increasing. Additionally, as we continue to see the impacts of COVID on our children it is apparent that their needs are greater. How can you all continue to assume that parents and teachers will support you when what you will do by not providing above and beyond what the BOE has asked for will do nothing but damage the students and community as a whole? It is genuinely cruel what will be happening in the coming years.

In my school alone class sizes will be increasing on average by about 5 students per class (despite what the BOE is advertising) and each content area is losing about 3 sections of classes. This is going to limit our opportunities to provide individual attention to our students that they deserve and put more strain on us as teachers. It will take us longer to grade assignments, or in order to stay atop of grading, the feedback we would normally provide will be reduced. Due to the increased class sizes other extracurricular activities are likely to suffer or fall apart completely due to teacher and staff burnout. This will be detrimental to the student experience that we strive to provide.

In the high school, electives that allow for students to specialize in areas of interest are being completely eliminated. This will create fewer opportunities for our students as they prepare to head off to college or other pursuits after graduation. Wilde Lake HS is set to cut FIFTEEN educators due to these cuts and every other high school is in similar positions, even if they are increasing their enrollment next year.

My own child currently is a 5th grader at a Title 1 school and so some of the cuts other elementary schools will see they will not. However, why is it acceptable to only fund GT programs and 3rd grade strings in Title 1 schools and deny students in other schools the same opportunities? Where is the equity in that?

Many teachers are currently trying to decide whether it is worth staying in this county or in this profession given the stress and ongoing disrespect we feel nationwide but various groups and political forces, but also more locally with burgers that require us to function at a less than skeletal levels. This includes our custodial staff and maintenance of our aging buildings.

I would love to welcome you to my school building in Laurel so we can meet with you to

discuss this in more detail. I can be reached at 240-472-3224. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Jessica Stern

From: [Don Benson](#)
To: [Budget Testimony](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Bd of Ed Budget
Date: Tuesday, March 19, 2024 11:34:37 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 Walsh, Jones, Rigby, Jung and Yungmann, and County Executive Calvin Ball,

Please fully fund the Board of Education budget. This budget, which was adopted on March 7th, was created in response to the huge outpouring from the community in support of numerous school based programs and positions initially planned for removal. The school based positions being restored in this budget will support the overarching HCPSS Call to Action mission statement in which, “HCPSS ensures academic success and social-emotional well-being for each student in an inclusive and nurturing environment that closes opportunity gaps.” With the student percent of the population remaining consistent (17% to 18%) and the Maryland Blueprint fully funded in Howard County, it is now important for the county to return to pre-pandemic funding levels for HCPSS based on a consistent percentage of the General Fund revenue.

The increase of 8.2m from the original budget presented is a small amount to pay to restore these important and essential student supports it has returned to the HCPSS budget. With this budget in place, there will be positive effects for every grade level. For the elementary schools, restoring 3rd grade strings in schools with more than 40% FARMS students is in line with the Maryland Blueprint, which increases financial support for students in high-need populations. Research consistently supports the positive effect that music instruction has on academic performance and enhances concentration, teamwork, and problem-solving strategies. Music education is a fundamental part of Howard County Public Schools and I unequivocally support keeping 3rd grade strings in schools.

High school Media Specialists are an essential need for students. Media Specialists instruct students in the use of online software and resources for research that are essential for success in the classroom and their post-graduate careers. To be able to access these resources, Media Specialists are the technology experts in the building to instruct, troubleshoot and/or swap out the student assigned Chromebooks. For many students that are in schools with FARMS over 40%, this may be the only computer in the household and can make the difference in the equity support they receive giving them an equal chance at success. In addition, librarians inventory all the equipment, manage classroom equipment, manage the book collection, online databases, book displays, and create a place where everyone is seen.

With the restoration of the HCPSS Environmental Educator and science paraeducators, students will have access to hands-on outdoor science experiences at an absolutely critical time for our climate. Programs like the Watershed Report Card, Climate kNOWLEDge and Youth Climate Institute rely on this position to provide hands-on STEM learning for county students. These incredibly important programs that provide science education and inspire future stewards of the world environment for the next generation; an essential need for the future of our Earth.

Thank you for fully funding the HCPSS 2025 budget,
Donald Benson and Elaine Buderer
Columbia, MD

From: [Lori Ann Suffredini](#)
To: [executive](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Re: Proposed HCPSS program cuts for 2025
Date: Tuesday, March 19, 2024 1:57:36 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 and the Howard County Council,

I am writing again to reiterate how important it is to ask for additional funding so that our school budget can be funded at 100% for the upcoming academic year. People move to Howard County primarily for the excellent school systems. My family moved to Western Howard County for this exact reason. We moved here for our children, so that they may receive a world class education in a public school setting. We live in district 5, where our GT and third grade strings programs will be cut next year, as we do not have a high enough ratio of children receiving Free and Reduced Meals. This is not equitable nor fair to our children, let alone those children who are part of the FARM program and are redistricted to our school system to help evenly distribute the FARM rates among Howard County public schools. Why would we continue to stay in this county, paying these taxes, if the school system that we came here for will not serve our children equitably? This will lead our family, as well as other families, to strongly consider leaving the county altogether. Additionally, you can expect property values to plummet as people willing to move into this county will also inevitably decrease. Without the excellent reputation of the school system, with equal opportunities for EVERY STUDENT (to quote our acting Superintendent), why would anyone come to Howard County? Why would anyone stay?

Sincerely,

Dr. Lori Suffredini

Mother of two current Bushy Park Elementary School students (Anthony Suffredini, 2nd grade; Regina Suffredini, first grade) and two future Bushy Park students

On Wed, Feb 21, 2024 at 11:51 AM Lori Ann Suffredini <lorisuffredini@gmail.com> wrote:
Dear Dr. Ball and the Howard County Council,

I am writing because I think it is important that you ask for the money needed to maintain our current level of services in the HCPSS and comply with the new Blueprint for Education mandates. If we want to continue to have one of the nation's best school systems, we need the money to make it a priority.

We cannot afford to cut resources to gifted and talented programs. These are the programs that make the Howard county school system stand out and give our children an advantage compared to children in area private schools. We also cannot afford to expand class sizes by two more children; at 24 kids in my first grader's class, it cannot be any larger. You cannot expect the teachers to be able to teach a group that large in an effective manner. Children will inevitably be left behind.

Additionally, our county cannot cut any resources for special education programs. Our county is known for the excellent education and assistance we can give to these children; cutting funding for any of these resources will negatively impact the educational experience

for these children.

It is imperative that we ask for more funding for our county so as not to lose the services we offer. Our children will suffer if we do.

Sincerely,

Dr. Lori Suffredini

Mother of two current Bushy Park Elementary School students (Anthony Suffredini, 2nd grade; Regina Suffredini, first grade) and two future Bushy Park students

Dear Council Members Walsh, Jones, Rigby, Jung, and Yungmann, and County Executive Ball,

Please fully fund the revised Board of Education budget. This budget was created in response to the huge outpouring from the community in support of numerous school-based programs and positions initially planned for removal. The school-based positions being restored in this budget will support our school system's stated mission of ensuring academic success and social-emotional well-being for each student in an inclusive, equitable, and nurturing environment.

To maintain that goal as the student percent of the population remains consistent and the Maryland Blueprint is fully funded in Howard County, it is now important for the county to return to pre-pandemic funding levels for HCPSS based on a consistent percentage of the General Fund revenue.

The increase of \$8.2 million from the previously proposed budget is a small amount to pay to restore important and essential student supports. With the revised budget in place, there will be positive effects for every grade level. For the elementary schools, restoring 3rd grade strings in schools with more than 40% FARMS students is in line with the Maryland Blueprint, which increases financial support for students in high-need populations. Research consistently supports the positive effect that music instruction has on performance, concentration, teamwork, and problem-solving strategies.

High school Media Specialists are an essential need for students. Media Specialists instruct students in the use of online software and resources for research that are essential for success in the classroom and their post-graduate careers. To ensure access these resources, Media Specialists are the technology experts in each building. They instruct, troubleshoot, and maintain the student assigned Chromebooks. For many students that are in schools with FARMS over 40%, this is the only computer available in the household. It is one concrete example of support they receive from librarians to give them an equal chance at success. In addition, librarians inventory and manage all classroom equipment, manage the book collection, maintain online databases, develop curiosity and broaden thinking through book displays and discussion, and create a place where every student and staff member is seen.

Without the restoration of the HCPSS Environmental Educator and science paraeducators, students will have less access to hands-on outdoor science experiences as they become the researchers and of stewards of our planet. This position too needs to be restored to the budget.

Thank you for fully funding the HCPSS 2025 budget,
Harriett G. Katzen,
Resident

From: [Harriett Katzen](#)
To: [Budget Testimony](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Pass Revised School Budget
Date: Wednesday, March 20, 2024 12:42:46 PM
Attachments: [Letter Budget vH.docx](#)

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

I strongly urge you to pass the revised Board of Education budget for the coming school year and continue to make Howard County schools the best learning environment for students of all economic levels.

Harriett Katzen,
Resident and Concerned Citizen

Dear Council Members Walsh, Jones, Rigby, Jung, and Yungmann, and County Executive Ball,

Please fully fund the revised Board of Education budget. This budget was created in response to the huge outpouring from the community in support of numerous school-based programs and positions initially planned for removal. The school-based positions being restored in this budget will support our school system's stated mission of ensuring academic success and social-emotional well-being for each student in an inclusive, equitable, and nurturing environment.

To maintain that goal as the student percent of the population remains consistent and the Maryland Blueprint is fully funded in Howard County, it is now important for the county to return to pre-pandemic funding levels for HCPSS based on a consistent percentage of the General Fund revenue.

The increase of \$8.2 million from the previously proposed budget is a small amount to pay to restore important and essential student supports. With the revised budget in place, there will be positive effects for every grade level. For the elementary schools, restoring 3rd grade strings in schools with more than 40% FARMS students is in line with the Maryland Blueprint, which increases financial support for students in high-need populations. Research consistently supports the positive effect that music instruction has on performance, concentration, teamwork, and problem-solving strategies.

High school Media Specialists are an essential need for students. Media Specialists instruct students in the use of online software and resources for research that are essential for success in the classroom and their post-graduate careers. To ensure access these resources, Media Specialists are the technology experts in each building. They instruct, troubleshoot, and maintain the student assigned Chromebooks. For many students that are in schools with FARMS over 40%, this is the only computer available in the household. It is one concrete example of support they receive from librarians to give them an equal chance at success. In addition, librarians inventory and manage all classroom equipment, manage the book collection, maintain online databases, develop curiosity and broaden thinking through book displays and discussion, and create a place where every student and staff member is seen.

Without the restoration of the HCPSS Environmental Educator and science paraeducators, students will have less access to hands-on outdoor science experiences as they become the researchers and of stewards of our planet. This position too needs to be restored to the budget.

Thank you for fully funding the HCPSS 2025 budget,
Harriett G. Katzen,
Resident

From: [Jamie Daniller](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Fund the School System
Date: Wednesday, March 20, 2024 6:00:54 PM

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

Council Members,

I write to you with a message I know you've heard over and over, but for some reason does not seem to be sinking in. The school system is floundering. The funding you provide is simply not enough. There is no other way to put this. Currently, every single school in HCPSS is finding out about devastating cuts to our programs and staff. Staff is being surplussed left and right, including people who have been in their jobs for decades. Multiple staff members in every single building are having their positions cut and are being left to find out where they *might* work next year. Supports for students are being cut. Class sizes are swelling. Staff members are broken and beat down, knowing that we will not be able to provide the education that students deserve next year. Our reputation and our community will never recover from the impact of these cuts. HCPSS leaders are simply not being honest about the impact of their decisions, and the school board members do not know what they need to be asking for. I am broken hearted at the absolute downfall of this school system, and cannot believe that you are unable to take action to fix it. There is simply no choice, you must do something.

Thank you,
Jamie Daniller

Dear Council Members Walsh, Jones, Rigby, Jung, and Yungmann, and County Executive Ball,

Please fully fund the revised Board of Education budget. This budget was created in response to the huge outpouring from the community in support of numerous school-based programs and positions initially planned for removal. The school-based positions being restored in this budget will support our school system's stated mission of ensuring academic success and social-emotional well-being for each student in an inclusive, equitable, and nurturing environment.

To maintain that goal as the student percent of the population remains consistent and the Maryland Blueprint is fully funded in Howard County, it is now important for the county to return to pre-pandemic funding levels for HCPSS based on a consistent percentage of the General Fund revenue.

The increase of \$8.2 million from the previously proposed budget is a small amount to pay to restore important and essential student supports. With the revised budget in place, there will be positive effects for every grade level. For the elementary schools, restoring 3rd grade strings in schools with more than 40% FARMS students is in line with the Maryland Blueprint, which increases financial support for students in high-need populations. Research consistently supports the positive effect that music instruction has on performance, concentration, teamwork, and problem-solving strategies.

High school Media Specialists are an essential need for students. Media Specialists instruct students in the use of online software and resources for research that are essential for success in the classroom and their post-graduate careers. To ensure access these resources, Media Specialists are the technology experts in each building. They instruct, troubleshoot, and maintain the student assigned Chromebooks. For many students that are in schools with FARMS over 40%, this is the only computer available in the household. It is one concrete example of support they receive from librarians to give them an equal chance at success. In addition, librarians inventory and manage all classroom equipment, manage the book collection, maintain online databases, develop curiosity and broaden thinking through book displays and discussion, and create a place where every student and staff member is seen.

Without the restoration of the HCPSS Environmental Educator and science paraeducators, students will have less access to hands-on outdoor science experiences as they become the researchers and of stewards of our planet. This position too needs to be restored to the budget.

Thank you for fully funding the HCPSS 2025 budget,
Kenneth Katzen
Resident

From: [Kenneth Katzen](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Pass HCPSS revised budget
Date: Wednesday, March 20, 2024 12:42:52 PM
Attachments: [Letter Budget vK.docx](#)

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

Please pass the revised school budget without deletions. See attached letter

Dear Council Members Walsh, Jones, Rigby, Jung, and Yungmann, and County Executive Ball,

Please fully fund the revised Board of Education budget. This budget was created in response to the huge outpouring from the community in support of numerous school-based programs and positions initially planned for removal. The school-based positions being restored in this budget will support our school system's stated mission of ensuring academic success and social-emotional well-being for each student in an inclusive, equitable, and nurturing environment.

To maintain that goal as the student percent of the population remains consistent and the Maryland Blueprint is fully funded in Howard County, it is now important for the county to return to pre-pandemic funding levels for HCPSS based on a consistent percentage of the General Fund revenue.

The increase of \$8.2 million from the previously proposed budget is a small amount to pay to restore important and essential student supports. With the revised budget in place, there will be positive effects for every grade level. For the elementary schools, restoring 3rd grade strings in schools with more than 40% FARMS students is in line with the Maryland Blueprint, which increases financial support for students in high-need populations. Research consistently supports the positive effect that music instruction has on performance, concentration, teamwork, and problem-solving strategies.

High school Media Specialists are an essential need for students. Media Specialists instruct students in the use of online software and resources for research that are essential for success in the classroom and their post-graduate careers. To ensure access these resources, Media Specialists are the technology experts in each building. They instruct, troubleshoot, and maintain the student assigned Chromebooks. For many students that are in schools with FARMS over 40%, this is the only computer available in the household. It is one concrete example of support they receive from librarians to give them an equal chance at success. In addition, librarians inventory and manage all classroom equipment, manage the book collection, maintain online databases, develop curiosity and broaden thinking through book displays and discussion, and create a place where every student and staff member is seen.

Without the restoration of the HCPSS Environmental Educator and science paraeducators, students will have less access to hands-on outdoor science experiences as they become the researchers and of stewards of our planet. This position too needs to be restored to the budget.

Thank you for fully funding the HCPSS 2025 budget,
Kenneth Katzen
Resident

From: [Miya Paterniti](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: HCPSS Budget cuts are unacceptable
Date: Wednesday, March 20, 2024 10:10:36 PM

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

Hello,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the current budget cuts that are being proposed for next school year. I am incredibly disappointed by the proposed firing of many beloved teachers throughout the county that have devoted their careers to our children. The board of education needs to request additional funds from the county to fund, not only the salaries of the teachers that we already have, but also to continue funding the plethora of important programs that are also at risk of being modified or discontinued next year. We owe it to our children to provide them with the highest quality education possible and we owe it to our devoted teachers to show them that they are valued.

Miya Paterniti
HCPSS Parent

From: [Nora Flack](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: HCPSS Budget Crisis
Date: Wednesday, March 20, 2024 9:31:33 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 to encourage you to work with the Howard County Public School System to adequately fund our schools. This year millions of dollars in cuts have been proposed that will greatly impact our school system. Our county is failing our students. We have been known for having one of the best school systems in the nation. We should be providing more opportunities for our students, not making cuts. I am strongly advocating for the GT and Orchestra programs. This should be provided for all districts. All students should receive the same opportunity.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Nora Flack

--

Nora S. Flack, BA, RDH
Cell (202) 207-6299

From: [Leigh Roberts](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: FULLY fund the HCPSS budget
Date: Saturday, March 30, 2024 2:27:23 PM

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

Hello Mr. Ball and Members of the County Council,

I am writing to ask you to **fully fund the HCPSS budget and find money to preserve performing arts education.**

I am worried that if our HS theatre teacher is surplussed, Hammond High will not be able to produce the high level caliber productions that we have been able to do in the past. These productions bring the community together to support the high school and thus the high school is supporting the community. The ticket sales help with costs for the production such as costumes, building set, bringing in fight instructors, intimacy instructors. Last year's production of Beauty and the Beast had 4 sold out shows that brought people to the school to see the newly completed renovated auditorium.

Many times, the theatre instructor is also asked to help with lighting and sound for school assemblies and other productions (such as cultural arts, dance to name a few). She is able to assist with this because she is in the school building all day. If she is only at the school for 1/2 day, then it will not be feasible to assist admin and other teachers with the functioning of the auditorium.

Performing arts is near and dear to me. Personally, I grew up as a dancer and now I am a physical therapist who treats performers. I learned so many valuable skills from dancing about showing up and working as a team. I learned spatial awareness and body awareness and how important it is to stretch and exercise. Now I get to work with dancers, actors, musicians, performers as a health care professional. One of the most important things is that I can relate to them because of my own background. I speak their language and I understand the demands that are placed on their bodies.

Not every child wants to or is able to participate in sports, some may choose the arts instead. I have one son who found his passion in technical theatre and another son who found his passion on the stage. My 11th grade son was production manager the recent Hammond High School production of Guys and Dolls. He aspires to major in Electrical Engineering with a minor in technical theatre so that he can bring these two fields together for a future career. My 9th grade son has gained so much confidence from participating in theatre. during the shut down he became quite introverted. He found his confidence in being on stage and also his "tribe" of likeminded friends. When he started high school, he instantly had a group of friends from all different grades and backgrounds who share an interest in theatre.

Our theatre teacher teaches many classes such as Theatre I, Theatre Company, Musical Theatre, Technical Theatre and Apprenticeship. If she is only on site for 2 periods, then many of these classes would not be able to run. I know many of our students have gone on to study theatre in college. Having this coursework in high school contributes to their artistic development and being able to build a portfolio for college auditions. Not all students can afford to do outside theatre, so these experiences might be all they have access to.

Being involved in a theatre production teaches students to how to work as a team. It teaches them that no role is small and that everyone involved is important. It teaches them time management and responsibility as well as the importance of communication. If HaHS theatre teacher becomes surplus then we run the risk of not being able to produce high caliber full length shows at our school.

We MUST fully fund the HCPSS budget. Having the arts in high school is vital to support our school, our teachers and our students.

Thank you,

Leigh Roberts, PT, DPT
Performing Arts Physical Therapist
Proud Hammond High School theatre parent

From: [Angela Stark](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Please fix the HCPSS budget crisis
Date: Thursday, April 4, 2024 10:34:37 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 my sincere concern over the budget crisis facing Howard County Public School System. The BOE's request that has been sent to the county for approval is woefully inadequate. The cuts they have made to music programs, GT programs, teacher positions, paraeducator and other support staff are not just "difficult decisions" - they are bad decisions that have direct negative impacts on our county's ability to properly educate children. Just listen to any of the testimony of the teachers and you will understand the dire impacts of class size increases and staff cuts to our childrens' education. Teachers don't want to work in HCPSS anymore and it's because of budget decisions like this.

I implore you to consider creative ways to find more money for HCPSS than what the BOE is requesting. If you don't, you will be directly contributing to the erosion of HCPSS.

We moved here 9 years ago because of the public schools - our taxes have increased regularly over this time while cuts to the school system have occurred regularly over the same time period. We have seen firsthand programs being cut for our children and enriching educational experiences being diluted or eliminated. This is not what we signed up for when we decided to join this community and we do not feel that this BOE, county council or county executive are doing what we elected them to do - ensure HCPSS remains a national leader in public education.

We truly are at a tipping point and without more funding for HCPSS we are on a downward slope that will have lasting effects not only for our county's children, but future economic prosperity of this county when people stop moving here for the schools.

Please find more money for HCPSS this year. Your civic duty should guide you to ensuring public education is adequately funded.

Sincerely,
Angela Stark
HCPSS parent
Columbia, MD

From: [Torie Grant](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: GT teachers and programs
Date: Friday, April 5, 2024 11:16:54 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,

Restoration of elementary GT positions at all elementary schools remains a top priority for parents of HCPSS students. There is strong momentum in the community, with a petition gathering nearly 2,000 signatures. <https://www.change.org/p/save-our-gt-teachers-howard-county>

GT teachers are a priceless resource to HCPSS and our county. It is unimaginable to think a county as prosperous as ours would cut elementary teachers, when the cost to save them is ~ \$1.1 million, or less than 0.11% of the budget for schools. Why is HCPSS receiving a lower percentage of the overall county budget than in years past? The County Executive's Office reports historic funding levels, but the overall percentage allocated to HCPSS is lower than the historical norms.

Thousands of students at elementary schools in HCPSS will feel the loss of GT teachers. Elementary GT teachers serve a majority of HCPSS students - 67% according to the HCPSS website. This percentage is even higher at some of the schools slated to be cut. Math, science, and social studies classes will be larger. Homeroom teachers will have to pick up the work left behind by GT teacher cuts. Our homeroom teachers are already taxed and doing extra work and this will be another reason some may choose to leave teaching or HCPSS.

Early enrichment is critical to fostering academic success. Many families who will be affected by the teacher cuts do not have the resources to provide enrichment to students outside of school. Students in non-GT math classes will receive less support and less attention as a result of these cuts. Cutting GT teachers hurts students of all abilities. As a county who prides itself on our education system, students of every ability level deserve the right to be challenged appropriately. These cuts undermine our values as a county.

Our GT teachers are highly skilled and specialized teachers as well as engaging, dedicated public servants. Please find the funding to save ALL GT teachers.

Best Regards,
Torie Grant

From: Annie McLean <annie.w.mclean@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 11, 2024 8:11 AM
To: boe@hcpss.org
Cc: budgetfeedback@hcpss.org; Ball, Calvin; Budget Testimony; Rob McLean; CouncilMail
Subject: Please Don't Cut the Budget for our Teachers

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 Board of Education members,

As a parent whose children attend Manor Woods Elementary School, I am writing to express my very strong concerns with the budget that you requested in March. Decreasing GT and Orchestra teacher positions within the school will have a very negative impact on our children and the quality of their education. These teachers and programs are absolutely fantastic and should be viewed as an integral part of schools that MUST be funded. Why you ask?

1. GT and Orchestra are the two things my child enjoys MOST about school. These programs make him excited to attend school and excited about learning. In an age of increased truancy, we should value ALL teachers and programs that contribute to children's positive feelings about school.
2. They reduce class sizes for all children. By removing children attending those programs from regular classes, the teachers of those classes are better able to focus and provide attention to the smaller number of students remaining in their classes so that they can receive a better education as well. Students attending GT programs who are not fully engaged and challenged will become a distraction to the other students.
3. The teachers are HCPSS's most important resource. Don't cut them. They should absolutely be valued and treated with respect for the important role they play in our children's lives and education. At MWES, Mrs. Broadhurst, Mrs. Zeitler, Mrs. Lahan, Mrs. Parker are all EXCEPTIONAL teachers and it would be tragic for HCPSS to lose them and the incredible energy and love for learning and music that they bring to the school and the kids.
4. The GT and Orchestra programs are available to ALL children to participate in and are a wonderful opportunity for each and every child to receive an excellent education.
5. Having Strings beginning in 3rd grade makes big difference in children's ability and studies have shown that the earlier and more children engage in music, the better it is for their brains. For the many children in our school who are unable to take private lessons, having 3rd grade strings is all the more important. My youngest is in kindergarten now and has been talking about how much he is looking forward to being a 3rd grader, so he can take Orchestra just like his big brother. The MWES Orchestra program is phenomenal and a huge part of our school's culture. I was shocked the first time I attended a concert. There were over 100 kids in the third grade orchestra alone, and the community interest was so large that we have to have the concerts at Marriotts Ridge High School. Cutting such a successful program would be an absolute shame.

For a school district that touts its excellence, making cuts that increase class sizes, decrease the number of teachers in the building, and degrade the quality of education in the schools is a grave mistake. I implore you to do whatever is necessary to reverse this decision and fully fund these teachers and programs.

Sincerely,
Annie McLean, HCPSS Parent

From: [John Roberts](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: FULLY fund the HCPSS Budget
Date: Thursday, April 11, 2024 10:51:27 PM

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

Hello Mr. Ball and Members of the County Council,

I am writing this email as a high school student, asking you to **fully fund the HCPSS budget in order to preserve performing arts education.**

I am a freshman at Hammond High School, and it has recently been announced that the theatre teacher, Mrs. Tobiason, will be surplussed next year, and only be at my school for two periods of the day. I worry that this will lead to a severe lack of quality in our theatre productions and classes and affect our established theatre programs. A theatre teacher needs to be at ONE school.

Hammond HS produces two after school shows every year. We do a play in the fall and a musical in the winter; this year our fall show was Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and our musical was *Guys and Dolls*. Mrs. Tobiason often stays after school daily for two or more hours to put these productions on. I am concerned that we would not be able to put on two full length productions if she is surplussed, or that the productions that we do put on would be much lower quality. When she is split between two schools, she will not be able to give each school the planning, dedication, and attention needed to put on a good show.

There are also extracurricular theatre activities outside of the shows, including an International Thespian Society (ITS) troupe, an improv team, and more. These provide students with the opportunity to work on unique branches of theatre such as improv, which is not available at many schools. With ITS, we attend workshops such as the Maryland Thespian Festival and meet other students from around the county and state at places like the ITS Cabaret (on Friday, April 19th this year!!! You should come!) If she is split between two schools, these activities that bring the department much closer together will likely not happen because Mrs. Tobiason will not have the time and will have to prioritize the shows over these projects.

If Mrs. Tobiason is only at Hammond for two periods, I am nervous that theatre classes will suffer in a similar way. Mrs. Tobiason teaches five different theatre classes, her main two of which are Theatre Company GT and Theatre I. Due to the popularity of theatre at Hammond, there are currently two periods of Theatre Company. Reducing the number of classes would diminish the quality of education. Theatre is something that you can only learn by doing, and twice as many people in one class would reduce the opportunity to *do* substantially.

Many classes, such as Theatre Apprenticeship (the highest level theatre course) would have to run either at the same time as other classes, or not at all. Almost all of the work during apprenticeship goes directly into helping prepare the production. (The people taking this class include the student director, the costume head, and the production manager.) This class requires a lot of one-on-one work between students and teacher, and having this at the same time as another class would reduce that opportunity. This class needs its own period.

Very often, Mrs. Tobiason is needed in the building for more than just teaching. She often gets called in to help administration with lighting, sound, or any other technical issue for assemblies or performances. She is only able to assist with this because she is in the school building full time. Additionally, she is a support for students because the actors get to know her so well from spending time with her outside of the classroom. Frequently, I and other theatre students come into her room throughout the day asking questions. I once walked in on her consoling a student at 8:00 in the morning. She is always there to help other faculty, staff or students.

Theatre and Mrs. Tobiason have made my freshman year truly wonderful. Because I came from a middle school that had a small feed into Hammond High, I knew very few people. However, the day that rehearsals started for our fall play, I immediately had 20 close friends, including upperclassmen. Theatre is one of the most supportive communities that you can join, and it really gives you something to be proud of. I came into this school with low confidence and being in theatre has helped me to come out of my shell. Mrs. Tobiason is a wonderful director and teacher, and I don't know how we can keep doing these high caliber productions and activities if she is split.

Even if she manages to somehow pull off doing everything at our school the same way she did this year, I worry about the school she is split with. She will absolutely not be able to provide the level of dedication and commitment that I have described in two different schools. I think about all of the rising freshmen at the other school, and how they won't receive the same opportunities that I did. A theatre teacher needs to be at ONE school.

Theatre helps develop many important life skills. It teaches collaboration, having to work with both adults and other students. It teaches time management, and how to get things done with a far away deadline. It helps students learn communication. It teaches you to live in the moment. It gives students confidence and public speaking skills. It helps people realize that there is no small role. From lighting to acting to stage crew, there is a place for everybody in the theatre. And most importantly, it is a place where everyone can be themselves, and develop the most supportive community imaginable.

We **MUST fully fund the HCPSS budget**. Having the arts, and specifically theatre, in high school is vital to support our school, our teachers, and our student community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
John Roberts

From: [Grace Wu](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: HCPSS Budget Concerns
Date: Sunday, April 14, 2024 9:21:53 PM
Attachments: [Letter to County Council HCPSS Budget.pdf](#)

[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,

Please see the attached letter regarding our family's concerns regarding the HCPSS budget cuts.

Thank you,
Grace Wu

Dear Council Members:

I am writing to encourage you to work with the Howard County Public School System to adequately fund our schools. This year millions of dollars in cuts have been proposed that will greatly impact our school system and the families who live in this community.

The very programs that are being cut are what stood out to us when deciding to move our family to Howard County. As an educator, parent and member of this community, I urge you to help fully fund the BOE's requests for the sake of enriching the lives of children in Howard County.

Sincerely,

Grace Wu

From: [Jason Mabee](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#); [Adrienne Mabee](#)
Subject: In Support of Additional HCPSS Funding
Date: Wednesday, April 17, 2024 1:57:22 PM

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

Good afternoon,

As a longtime Howard County resident and parent of three current HCPSS students, I would like to voice my ardent support of the recent operating budget request as it pertains to additional funding for Howard County Public Schools.

Specifically, I would ask the county council to support funding for G/T education in ALL schools, third grade strings, and environmental education programs. These programs have been some of the educational cornerstones of our own children's educational experiences, and these programs must be maintained for the benefit of all families in Howard County.

In fact, our family feels so strongly on these issues that our concerns were recently published in a Baltimore Sun article, and my 6th grade daughter testified recently at an HCPSS school board meeting. My daughter is learning an early lesson on the power of advocacy, and it would be a shame to see her efforts to speak her truth fall short.

I urge you to support education in Howard County, for the decisions we make today have the power to greatly affect the potential of future generations.

Thank you for all that you do for the residents of Howard County!

The Mabee Family
Jason, Adrienne, Lila, Bryn, Grant Mabee
jason.mabee1@gmail.com
2918 Greenway Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21042

From: [Bonnie Zeitler](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Please fund the schools!
Date: Saturday, April 20, 2024 8:50:23 AM

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

Hello! I am writing to urge you to fully fund the school system. I am most upset about elementary strings and GT programs being cut and have written to Calvin Ball. Now I write to you. The reason we move here and pay exorbitant prices and taxes is because we want the best for our children. If you do not fund the schools enough for those programs to exist, people might as well pay less and live somewhere else where we can get the same education for less money. It really seems like education might not be your top priority, but it should be because that is why we are all here. Please adjust your priorities and give the schools enough funding to have the best programs and teachers. Thank you very much! Bonnie

From: [Charles Zeitler](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Support for Comprehensive Education - Restore 3rd Grade STRING and GT Programs
Date: Saturday, April 20, 2024 9:20:36 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 Member,

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to express my strong support for County Executive Calvin Ball's recent proposal to preserve essential educational programs within our schools. I believe it is imperative that we follow Mr. Ball's lead in ensuring the restoration of the 3rd grade STRING and Gifted and Talented (GT) programs to every school in our district.

The proposed Fiscal Year 2025 Operating Budget minimally fulfills the State-mandated Maintenance of Effort to fund the Blueprint for Maryland's Future in Howard County. Calvin Ball's recent proposal is a testament to our community's commitment to fostering an environment where every child has access to a well-rounded and enriching education. I would urge your support to allocate an additional 3 million dollars to fully fund the Board of Education's request.

The 3rd grade STRING program and the Elementary School GT program are more than just extracurricular activities; they are vital components of a comprehensive education that supports cognitive development, creativity, and academic excellence. These programs offer our children the opportunity to explore their talents and passions, setting them on a path to success in an increasingly competitive world. Frankly, educational components like these in Howard county set us apart and are a main reason many come to Howard county to live.

It is crucial that we do not let budgetary constraints diminish the quality of education in our county. I urge you to consider the long-term benefits of these programs and to advocate for their full restoration across all schools. By doing so, we can ensure that our students receive the best possible education, one that prepares them for the future and honors the legacy of excellence that our county is known for.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your positive response and to seeing our children and community thrive with the opportunities that these programs provide.

Sincerely,
Dr. Zeitler

From: [Dan Williams](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#); boe@hcpss.org; superintendent@hcpss.org
Subject: Request to Fully Fund HCPSS Budget
Date: Monday, April 22, 2024 10:07:42 PM

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

Dear Mr. Barnes and the Howard County Executive Council,

My name is Dan Williams, and I have two boys in the Howard County system. They are both very active in music and theater, on top of excelling in GT classes and seminars that give them opportunities to learn and experience things that the regular curriculum may not offer.

I understand that you are working with Dr. Ball to secure a larger budget this year, and that so far these efforts have been largely successful. I also understand that there are still about 30 positions which are in danger of being eliminated, with GT and Arts being targeted. I wanted to write to express my disappointment that these areas are considered when there is a need for cuts.

I'm sure you're aware of the countless studies that show the tremendous benefits music and arts programs provide for students. These programs build on themselves year over year, and students' talents develop due to continuing practice and participation. So many kids pour their hearts and souls into the performances each year.

Cutting these instructors' positions results in cancelled programs, even if only temporarily. The children suffer in these situations as they end up losing a year of practice, both in losing focus on developing talents and missing the time to develop bonds with other talented students.

Children waiting an additional year or two to start learning to play an instrument limits their potential to develop outstanding talent. Missing just one drama season would break up the confidence and creativity they spent the previous year building. Reducing access to GT material would result in children who grow bored instead of passionate about learning. Bored children tend to become disruptive children, especially for those who are accustomed to daily challenged thinking.

I'm glad to hear that you are all still working to retain those positions that are on the chopping block. I urge you to make restoring these positions and programs a priority. It may be difficult to see the impact to kids from the HCPSS big picture, but through my own experiences watching these children grow over the last few years, it would be as much as devastating to many of these students if they lost their outlet for their talent.

Thank you for your time, and I hope you are able to get everything worked out and restored.

Thanks,

Dan and Megan Williams

From: [Priya Rebello](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Cc: BOE@hcpss.org
Subject: Urgent Appeal for Full Funding of HCPSS Budget
Date: Tuesday, April 23, 2024 8:20:39 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 parent of a student who cherishes music, I am writing to express my deep concern about the potential program and staffing cuts in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

Our students and teachers have already been burdened by increased class sizes in recent years. We appreciate Dr. Ball's initiative in encouraging the Superintendent and Board of Education to restore funding for targeted cuts to 3rd-grade strings and other programs. However, even a single cut to the Board of Education's budget request can have a profound impact on the quality of education in HCPSS. I urge the County Council to allocate an additional \$3.2 million in the operating budget to restore the entire HCPSS budget. Besides the cuts to elementary instrumental music, we are also facing staff surpluses in both middle and high school music programs, along with the complete loss of transportation for curricular-based music field trips.

Howard County's exceptional music programs contribute significantly to fostering a sense of community within our schools. Musical ensembles teach students teamwork, discipline, and perseverance—skills that are invaluable in their academic and professional lives.

We are fortunate to have robust music programs in Howard County, but they are fragile. It takes years to develop programs of this caliber, and even longer to build a dedicated team of specialists. The Board of Education made tough decisions to create a budget that was already challenging. By not fully funding their request, we risk larger class sizes and reduced access to advanced music courses.

I kindly ask you to work collaboratively to avoid any cuts to the HCPSS budget and to continue supporting the students and educators who make Howard County's schools exceptional.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Priya Rebello

From: [Amity Tripp](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: HCPSS Education Operating Budget Public Hearing
Date: Wednesday, April 24, 2024 1:42:54 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 and Council Members:

I am writing to 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 cuts in both middle school and high school for music, and the complete loss of music transportation for curricular based fieldtrips, as well. Music is a vital program for our students' health and well-being, as well as their academic success.

Our personal story is how cutting staff from 1.0 to 0.6 profoundly affected our middle school student. Chorus is her art of choice, she does not play an instrument in school and does not take visual art because she chose a foreign language as her second elective. Miss Marcotte, our chorus teacher at Clarksville Middle School, is phenomenal, and has brought our very introverted and shy girl out from her shell through their shared love of music. The higher level chorus was cut from CMS b/c Marcotte had to move into the General Music teacher's position when that was cut in FY23. This year my daughter noted that the one chorus class was a challenge b/c it included the people who just wanted to get the music credit and didn't care to learn or do well. Marcotte pivoted by offering an after school chorus to anyone who was serious enough to want to spend their free time singing, and Marcotte too had to use her personal time for this (even after having a baby). This too will be cut if Marcotte goes from 1.0 down to .6 as will most likely the Hershey Park trip b/c of transportation cuts, the favorite of all middle school students.

The higher level 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.

This cut looks good on paper, easy enough of a change. But in reality, when a teacher is moved to half time, this means she can no longer do the extras that provide quality instruction and exposure. She is pulled in two directions at two schools doing neither well, stretched too thin.

In our story, my daughter sees that music is not supported by her own county gov and hence chose a different path in high school. This to me is the biggest travesty of all. I will encourage her to come back to music again assuming our County shows their support. Music is not something that can be substituted by math, science, etc. It is not only a completely different part of the brain but also students vary in what lights them up. For many, music lights them up and middle and high school is the time to expose

them to this potential in each of them.

Our music programs are uniquely strong in Howard County, but they are also fragile as it takes years to grow programs of this nature back to this level once they are cut. 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. As a taxpayer of Howard County, 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.

--

Amity Tripp
7094 Garden Walk, 21044
CPCC, Professional Life Transition Coach



[Book a time to meet with me!](#)

[linkedin.com/in/amity-tripp](https://www.linkedin.com/in/amity-tripp)

m: 410.530.7505

From: [Karen Van de Velde](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Support for fully restoring the budget
Date: Wednesday, April 24, 2024 5:53:02 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,

Thank you for your consideration and time to hear from many parents in our community.

I write to share our story and plea as a parent of two children who have attended Howard Country Public Schools, eldest now a freshman in college and youngest, in 8th grade at CMS.

We moved to Howard County specifically because of the reputation of the public schools for academics and with a strong emphasis and opportunity to learn music. Both my children started learning instruments in 3rd grade through the wonderful springs program at Pointers Run. My husband and I are not musical, so having the music programs begin in elementary school was a major draw in our decision to move to Howard County. The chance for them to learn to read music, sing in a choir, act in the afterschool musicals, play the violin, flute and piano, starting at the ages of 7 years old and continuing through HS, have been an enriching and important component of our children's education.

We were so disappointed to learn of the budget cuts, specifically affecting four teachers at CMS. We started to feel this looming impact when our daughter entered 7th grade as the chamber choir program was cut. We could see the changes occurring as her wonderful and incredibly talented teacher, Ms. Caroline Marcotte, held classes with 55 – 60 students. Ms. Marcotte kept these students engaged, interested and exceling, though we know the past two years have been challenging to have such large classes.

We have heard that in the Fall, Ms. Marcotte will be reduced to a .6 music teacher at CMS and travel to another school for .4 of her time. We are saddened for the families coming up behind us who's children will not have the enriching opportunities for advancing in choir and music during their three years at CMS. They will also miss the growth and incredible experiences of participating in the after-school extracurricular, theater and choral programs, which will not be offered.

The Howard County Public Schools' music, choir and theater programs are so important to our daughter, in learning of the major budget reductions, we have chosen for her not to attend a Howard County Public High School next year. We purchased our home 14 years ago specifically to send our kids to River Hill High School. It is because of the budget cuts affecting so many of the outstanding Howard County music, choir, dance and theater teachers and the classes they are unable to offer, that we sadly have opted to pull our daughter and will instead pay for a private high school, where these programs are fully funded.

I would like to 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. These programs make a difference in the lives of children, engage them and give them a necessary outlet.

We are truly grateful for the overall experience our two children had in the Howard County Public Schools. We hope you will find a way to maintain these programs and fully fund the budget. The strong academics are expected, but it is the extracurriculars that bring families to Howard County and make these exceptional schools.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Karen Van de Velde

Email. kfranks1@jhmi.edu

From: [Rebecca Palmquist](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Wednesday, April 24, 2024 6:35:08 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,

Rebecca Palmquist

From: alicia.bxkeys1487@gmail.com
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Wednesday, May 1, 2024 11:05:10 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 (soon to be 3) academically-engaged, 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 gifted and talented, 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 GT and music programs contribute to building a sense of community within our schools. GT courses and CEUs teach rigor, problem solving, and perseverance. 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 GT and music programs are uniquely strong and well known in Howard County, attracting potential and incoming students to the region. 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 GT and 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,

Dr. Alicia Chen
301-928-5210

From: [Bethann Ritter Snyder](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Cc: CouncilDistrict1@howardcountymd.gov
Subject: Budget Advocacy for HCPSS
Date: Wednesday, May 1, 2024 10:10:51 PM
Attachments: [B Snyder letter to HoCo Council re HCPSS Budget May 2024.docx](#)

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

Greetings.

Please see the attached letter in support of funding HCPSS' FULL budget request for the 2024-2025 school year.

Thank you.

Bethann Snyder, Elkridge resident

May 2, 2024

Dear County Council Members:

Thank you for speaking with HCPSS leadership for most of the day yesterday. With the surprisingly large amount of fund balance dollars now apparently available for either one-time or recurring needs, the PTA Council urges use of those funds toward either capital or operating expenses of our school system. The budget request made by the Board of Education set a low bar for funding our education needs, which was not fully met by County Executive's proposed increase. Unless the County Council directs additional funding toward HCPSS, that already low bar will not be met.

If the Council determines that dollars should go toward one-time expenses, we would encourage use of those dollars to combat our massive amount of deferred maintenance or toward future school planning and construction needs.

On the operating side, PTAs support stability for our teachers and staff members. The anticipated cuts to staffing and programs have created a lot of stress and anxiety for parents and staff members. While the County Executive has increased funds to restore some of these programs, larger class sizes across the county's middle and high schools is a significant problem that the County Executive's budget has not addressed. Larger class sizes mean that teachers will be repurposed or laid-off. Either way, educational staff will experience significant disruptions to what they thought their jobs would look like next year. The increased class sizes will also decrease the number and variety of classes that students will be able to take next year.

When teachers must be laid off according to the last hired/first fired rule, we lose new teachers we have fought hard to attract to the county. These new teachers are often the most motivated and enthusiastic staff members. At the middle and high school levels, they are vital to providing the staff supervision role needed to offer after-school, extra-curricular programs, sports, and clubs. Letting go of new teachers also flies counter to our stated goal of hiring and retaining new teachers in the midst of a nation-wide teacher shortage. Who will want to work in Howard County when the cost of living is almost the highest in the state, the pay is not at a commensurate level, and the knowledge of whether you will have a job next year is a constant threat?

Maintaining smaller class sizes is necessary for student achievement and teacher sanity. Smaller class sizes benefit all students, but especially bilingual students, those from less advantaged family backgrounds, and those with special needs. Larger class sizes make it harder for students to concentrate, harder to get a teacher's attention, harder to learn anything. Students in middle and high schools still need attention from their teachers. When they don't get that attention, they can feel frustrated and become prone to acting out. When students act out, teachers have to spend more time managing behaviors and less time actually teaching. Students learn less and teachers burn out. When students don't feel like they matter in a classroom, they often fail and/or fall between the cracks.

In some of our middle and high schools, adding students to classes also raises questions about the square footage of classes and the physical space in which teachers have to teach and ratios of professionals to students in those classrooms.

We know the Council sees a lot of the problems currently faced by HCPSS. As an organization representing over 10,000 parents and educators in the county, we strongly urge the Council to use these fund balance dollars toward either one-time or recurring funds this budget cycle. More importantly, we would encourage the Council, the Board of Education, and the County Executive to come up with sustainable sources of funding for the school system, so the school system's significant needs are not subject to the unpredictability of each year's fund balance.

Thank you for all your work on the budget this year.

Terri Marcus
President, PTA Council of Howard County

From: [Terri Marcus, President](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: PTACHC Budget Testimony
Date: Thursday, May 2, 2024 1:54:07 PM
Attachments: [2025 Budget Testimony.docx](#)

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

Dear Council Members,

Attached is the PTA Council's testimony supporting increased funding for HCPSS next year.

Thank you for all your hard work on the budget this year.

Terri Marcus
President, PTA Council of Howard County

From: [Pamela V-V](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: HCPSS budget request
Date: Sunday, May 5, 2024 5:31:00 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,

Thank you for your consideration and time in reading this email.

I write to share our story and plea as a parent of two children who attend Howard County Public Schools, one in fourth grade and the other is in 8th grade at CMS.

We are deeply concerned about budget cuts, specifically affecting four teachers at CMS that affect music, choir and theater programs. The Howard County Public Schools' music, choir and theater programs have been tremendously important for our children. Our son has benefited from the string classes starting in third grade. Our daughter has loved the theater program. We are facing a mental health crisis in children and adolescents across the country and in Howard County. Theater, music, and art classes are essential for the mental well-being and development of children and adolescents. They provide a creative outlet for expression, foster emotional regulation skills, boost self-esteem and confidence, promote social connection and community, and contribute to holistic development. In the face of the current mental health crisis in the U.S., characterized by rising rates of anxiety, depression, and suicide among young people, it is crucial not to cut these classes. Instead, we should prioritize expanding access to artistic programs to ensure all students have the opportunity to benefit from the positive impacts of artistic expression and creativity, thus nurturing emotionally resilient individuals better equipped to navigate the challenges of adolescence and beyond.

I would like to 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. These programs make a difference in the lives of children, engage them and give them a necessary outlet.

We are truly grateful for the overall experience our two children had in the Howard County Public Schools. We hope you will find a way to maintain these programs and fully fund the budget. The strong academics are expected, but it is the extracurriculars that bring families to Howard County and make these exceptional schools.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Pamela Velez-Vega

pamela.velezvega@gmail.com

From: [Emily Petersen](#)
To: [Ball, Calvin](#); [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Devastated teacher
Date: Monday, May 6, 2024 9:04:05 PM

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

Dr. Ball & County Council,

I grew up in Howard County. After college I returned and 7 years ago got a teaching job in Oakland Mills at a school I love, and just 3 years ago bought a small townhome in Columbia. I absolutely love Howard County and what we are building together. So I NEVER imagined I'd be contemplating the decision to sell and move counties (one of this country's wealthiest counties) because my salary wasn't keeping up with inflation or enough for me to pay my bills.

I have a master's degree, spend multiple days a week running after school programs for students, live very frugally, and work a second job to make living in this county possible. No matter how much I budget, nothing can prevent the reality of needing to now apply to other counties and consider selling my home because I can no longer trust that I'll be paid enough here by HCPSS.

For those of us who have a single income and are not high in our steps, the Board's refusal to negotiate minimal but critical pay increases has significant repercussions. I never thought, during teacher appreciation week of all weeks, I'd be processing the change and need to relocate to neighboring counties. Please PLEASE hold HCPSS accountable to funding COLA and fair pay. The other Howard County agencies and institutions are all doing so.

Our students don't deserve to lose us and I've poured my heart into this community the last 7 years. I'm truly devastated I might not be able to call Howard County home much longer and disheartened HCPSS leadership has let it get to this point.

Emily Petersen
Stevens Forest ES
Columbia Resident

From: [Svetlana Bautista](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Cc: [John Bautista](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, May 7, 2024 5:53:37 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 \$3.2 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,

Svetlana and John Bautista

From: [Lisa Marini](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: fully fund HCPSS...and then some
Date: Wednesday, May 8, 2024 2:06:44 PM

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

Dear Council members,

Please do everything you can to give as much money as possible to HCPSS next year. Start by fully funding the Board's initial request, then as soon as possible get to work on raising revenues and reallocating priorities for FY26. The Board's request is horribly inadequate for what is needed by Howard County's students, but I understand it tries to be within the realm of reality for the County's overall projected revenue. So that's where you come in - raise revenue. Start with the people and entities that can most easily afford tax increases. Use your relationships with our State and Federal delegations to increase the funding coming from them to us.

The budget you pass in June will not affect my family directly. My youngest child graduates from HCPSS in three weeks. Yet I am still distressed at what is happening in our county schools. I want my neighbors' children to have the kind of excellent HCPSS education that my children had. In fact, I want them to have better than that.

I know you have to juggle a lot of priorities in this county, and some of them compete. Things are out of whack with the way we've been funding our schools and it's time to increase our investment there - not just in raw dollars, but in the share of the overall budget. Please use all the tools at your disposal to make that happen.

Thank you,
Lisa Marini
District 4

From: [Anna Nemirovsky](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 5:36:12 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.

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,

Anna Nemirovsky

From: [Gussie Malpass](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: HCPSS
Date: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 6:19:05 PM

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

Hello,

I am writing to request the additional \$3.8 million to fund our school system and keep necessary programs and staff in place. Our schools need to be prioritized and I understand the council has already spent a large amount to fund the schools but please consider approving this additional funding.

Sincerely,
Augusta Malpass
Sent from my iPhone

From: [Bonnie Bricker](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Please support
Date: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 7:28:34 PM

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

Please support the HCPSS budget by fully funding the Board of Education request. Your support will make a difference to our students, families, and the entire community. It's time to prioritize our public schools.

--

Bonnie Bricker
301-648-8939
pronouns:she/her/hers

From: [Caroline Jatta-Thorpe](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS Funding
Date: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 10:23:04 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 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.

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,

Sent from my iPhone

From: Christina Shumaker <Christina_Shumaker@hcpss.org>
Sent: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 7:47 AM
To: CouncilMail
Cc: Ben Schmitt, HCEA Vice President; Jordyn Shumaker
Subject: Fully Fund

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.]

Good morning, I am reaching out to request that you fully fund the school board's requested budget in order to provide teachers and staff with a more sufficient negotiated contract. I am writing on behalf of myself and my youngest daughter, who is a first-year HCPSS teacher, and ALL teachers. Teachers deserve so much more!! I don't know any other profession that requires countless hours of unpaid overtime. Not all heroes wear capes. Thank you for your time and consideration. In solidarity,

Christie Shumaker
12 Month Secretary, Howard County Public Schools
Office of Early Intervention Services, Birth-Five
Ascend One Building
8930 Stanford Blvd
Columbia, MD 21045
410-313-7017 Office
667-240-7961 Cell

From: [Christina Lambert](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 4:40:59 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,

As a proud parent of two 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 I am grateful that Dr Ball has encouraged the Superintendent and Board of Education to restore funding for targeted cuts to the music programs, I 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.

Every part of the curriculum is important, but most importantly we need to ensure that educators are paid higher wages that are, at a minimum, keeping pace with inflation if not above it. Their health insurance and retirement benefits are also important to ensure that we can attract and retain quality teachers. Already we are suffering from a teacher shortage that is only getting worse.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Christina Lambert
AHS parent

From: [david.lopez](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 7:06:08 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).

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.

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,

David Lopez

From: [Joseph R.](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Urgent Appeal for HCPSS funding
Date: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 3:06:00 PM

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

Dear Members of the Howard County Council,

I hope this letter finds you well.

As a proud parent of 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,

Joseph Reninger

--

Check out my ramblings at <http://zombieparentsguide.blogspot.com/>

From: [Cheryl Lynn Jenkins](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Please restore the HCPSS budget and do NOT increase class sizes!
Date: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 9:53:41 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,

As a parent of two HCPSS students, I am writing to express my sincere concern regarding the potential program and staffing cuts for next year.

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 some programs, I am distressed that the main priority – supporting teachers and classrooms – has not been addressed. Increasing class sizes and losing teachers and class offerings at the HS level in particular is damaging to the level of education expected in HCPSS and what our children deserve. I urge the county council to fully restore the entire HCPSS budget so that class sizes are not increased resulting in the loss of teachers and class offerings.

My oldest will be a senior next year and it is shocking to me that she will not be able to take most of the classes she requested for next year. How can Howard County take pride in what it offers its students if the year before she graduates she will not be offered classes that both interest and challenge her. My youngest will be starting HS next year and we learned that Journalism has been cut. I don't understand how a school system can prepare our students for the future by ignoring the importance of maintaining such a program, particularly in an age of so much misinformation. I would have hope Howard County would be taking the lead in educating the next set of courageous and well-rounded journalists.

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,

Cheryl Lynn Jenkins

From: Linfeng Chen <Linfeng_Chen@hcpss.org>
Sent: Thursday, May 16, 2024 9:09 AM
To: CouncilMail
Cc: Board & Student Member; Bill Barnes
Subject: Fully fund the school board requested FY 2025 school budget

[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,

Please fully fund the school board requested FY 2025 school budget including \$3.8M, the gap btw Dr. Ball's funding level and the board's requested level. We can use this funding to increase teachers' salaries. Thank you for your teamwork and serving the community in the best way we can!

Linfeng Chen, Ph.D.
Phone: 443-774-8324
Howard County Board of Education Member



**OFFICE OF THE
BOARD OF EDUCATION
OF HOWARD COUNTY**

From: Nicole McFarland <nicole.l.mcfarland@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 15, 2024 9:45 PM
To: CouncilMail
Cc: BoE Email
Subject: Fwd: Teacher's Pay

[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,

Below is an email I sent last week to the HCPSS BoE advocating for better pay for HCPSS teachers. This week, Board Member Linfeng Chen advised Howard Countians to contact the county council to implore you to fully fund the requested budget which would enable the BoE to put \$3.8 million towards that effort. Please do so, so our teachers can get a much deserved pay increase and so Howard County can stay competitive with regards to hiring the best and brightest educators for our kids.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Nicole McFarland

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Nicole McFarland <nicole.l.mcfarland@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, May 9, 2024 at 4:24 PM
Subject: Teacher's Pay
To: BoE Email <boe@hcpss.org>
CC: <howard@mseanea.org>

Dear Members of the Board,

I was deeply disappointed to learn that our teachers and staff do not have a contract for next year, and that the Board's final offer would leave HCPSS unable to compete for teachers, and provide compensation increases below the rate of inflation. I have a child at Bryant Woods Elementary School, and a sister-in-law who teaches special education for HCPSS and lives in Howard County. One of the reasons our family chose to send our child to Howard County Public Schools is because of the reputation of its schools, which are excellent **because** of the high caliber teachers we can afford to hire. I care about the teachers and staff at Bryant Woods and throughout the district, and feel that your best offer falls well short of what our teachers deserve, and, frankly, a living wage by today's standards.

I understand that the Board is facing budgetary challenges, but we need to do better by our teachers so that our children continue to receive the best education Maryland can offer. It's my understanding that the union offered a three-year agreement that would have no impact on this year's budget. If that's true, then I see no reason why you should not agree. Just like you, my property taxes will be going up, so I know that the county will be able to afford it.

I need four of you to do the right thing and agree to a multi-year agreement with educators now, during educator appreciation week.

Sincerely,

Nicole McFarland

From: [Demetria Niforos](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Paraeducator fighting for higher wages
Date: Tuesday, May 21, 2024 10:03:57 PM

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

Dear councilmen, councilwomen, board members and whomever will listen to us.

My name is Demi Niforos. I work for HCPSS at Cedar Lane School in Fulton, MD. I am a paraeducator within the Cornerstone program. I am writing to you today to discuss the unfortunate situation regarding staffing issues & wages for staff. I'm hoping by the end of this letter you will better understand what we do, need and want to continue to make Howard County Public Schools one of the best in the state.

I want to first talk about the staffing issues. It is widely known that special education tends to fall under quota for staffing. Why is that? We have a difficult job. Let's focus on special education. The turnover rate for staff is at an all-time high. There were 90+ unfilled special education positions from this year and we're expecting this upcoming year to be much worse. We get new staff who are excited to work in this field but are quickly put off by what we have to endure on a daily basis. The behaviors we experience can be from students trying to hurt themselves or students trying to attack the staff. It can be traumatic to see a student in a bad behavior. I've witnessed firsthand teachers/paras getting bit, scratched, hair pulled, concussions, broken bones ect from students in crisis moments. Those teachers/paras don't typically return after the school year. We are left with scars and sometimes long-term injuries from the field we are in. Every precaution is taken to avoid injury, but it still occurs. It is a very mentally & physically taxing job, but the good days make the hard days' worth it in the end. It is the greatest feeling when you can see a student who was struggling make those improvements throughout the school year. It makes what we do very important.

A lot of the staffing issues go hand in hand with our wages. We are having a hard time retaining staff because wages are increasing at other companies/counties, and they are maintaining within HCPSS. With only a 1% cost of living increase and a 3.4% inflation rate we're essentially taking a 2.4% pay cut and because of less staff, we will have a heavier workload to balance.

I personally take what I do within the school system very seriously and I know many others just like me do as well. We love what we do, and we work very hard every day to be the best support we can be for our students. All we ask is that the county can see us more than just 'another staff member', a 'para', a 'teacher', related service/arts provider ect. We are people who just want to be able to afford to live. We want to be able to not have to carry multiple jobs to make sure we can pay our bills. We can only remain a great school system if the staff know & feel like they matter. It makes us work harder to know our voices can be heard. When we hear people within the county getting 4-5% raises & we, as educators, are fighting for crumbs (1%), it gives us the impression what we do is not important.

We are not important.

We see how other school systems are negotiating their contracts and sadly, HCPSS is not a competitive nor desirable pay salary. I could take my experience & knowledge to Montgomery County Public Schools or PG county schools and receive a higher income. I stay in HCPSS because I believe in this county & love the students, but because of the salary disadvantages we are currently seeing, there might be another special education position that may need to be filled. It would be

mine. There are many others, just within my building, who are planning to leave the county because of the pay. What we encounter every day does not match what we should earn. We are running ourselves into the ground to try to stay afloat. It hurts me to think I may have to leave the job & students I love & built a foundation with because I need to choose rent or my car payment.

I hope you can take this into consideration when making your final decision. I invite you or anyone on your team to come spend a day in our shoes & watch what we do to truly understand the stress & pressure we are under and why we are fighting so hard. We want to be great for our students, but how can our students be great when the staff are seeking other positions for higher pay?

Thank you for your time,

Demi Niforos
Paraeducator, Cornerstone
Cedar Lane School

From: [Jennifer Johannes](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Please pay teachers more
Date: Tuesday, May 21, 2024 4:52:01 PM

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

Dear Council Members,

Please restore the 3.8 million and pay teachers more. It is shameful to have teachers only getting a 1% COLA when the rate of inflation is 3.5%. Teachers can barely afford to live in HoCo. They work tons of extra hours, unpaid. Please do the right thing. A great county has great schools. Please do your part.

Kind regards,

Jen Johannes HCPSS teacher, parent & tax payer.

Jennifer Johannes NBCT
Mount Hebron High School - Art

From: [Ginger Segala](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Vote yes to fund HCPSS and additional \$ 3.8 mil
Date: Tuesday, May 21, 2024 4:02:26 PM

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

Thank you councilman Walsh for being the leader we need !

HoCo needs to be the leaders in MD on teacher salaries, as well as programming for signature programs and strong curriculum.

HCPSS should be prioritized in this county.

Jennifer and John Segala

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Lisa M. Cramer](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: please vote to support educator pay
Date: Tuesday, May 21, 2024 3:01:59 PM
Attachments: [Outlook-ub1fey1j.png](#)

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

Please vote to support educator pay. Whether we are on year 1 or year 23 like me we all deserve to be able to pay our bills and take care of our families. Teachers are required to have a master's degree and should be paid like the educated professionals that we are. Thank you!

Lisa Cramer
Kindergarten ITL
Centennial Lane E.S.

"We cannot change the cards we are dealt, just the way we play the hand," Randy Pausch.

All absences should be reported to clesabsence@hcpss.org

[Related arts color schedule](#)

[Handle with Care](#)



From: [Maury Zeitler](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Support for Council member Walsh on teachers salary bills
Date: Tuesday, May 21, 2024 1:51:05 PM

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

I write in support of bills to raise teachers salaries in Howard county. For too long teachers have been under paid for providing excellent education in our county.

Best, M. Zeitler

From: [Lisa Arbaugh](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Educator salaries
Date: Wednesday, May 22, 2024 2:25:50 PM

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

Vote yes please!