From:	Amy Pfeiffer-Smith <apfeiffersmith@gmail.com></apfeiffersmith@gmail.com>
Sent:	Monday, May 12, 2025 8:55 PM
To:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Restore full funding for HCPSS in FY 26
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Completed

Dear Howard County Council,

I'm writing as a concerned Manor Woods Elementary parent to urge you to fully fund the Howard County Public School System in the FY26 Operating Budget.

HCPSS has faced years of underfunding. This year, the system needs \$29.2 million just to maintain current services. Without it, we'll see larger class sizes, fewer programs, and staff layoffs — all of which hurt our students.

It's unacceptable that our schools are the first to face cuts when budgets tighten. Education is a core service and should be protected, not sacrificed. The percentage of Howard County Public Schools System share of the recurring General Fund Revenue has not kept up with historic norms and inflation.

My child and every other student in HCPSS deserves to have access to a quality education. We can not expect our students to flourish given less resources. Please prioritize students and restore funding to HCPSS.

Thank you,

Amy Smith 9754 Michaels Way, Ellicott City, MD 21042

From:	Anna Wang <annaw7473@gmail.com></annaw7473@gmail.com>
Sent:	Monday, May 12, 2025 7:37 PM
To:	Ball, Calvin; CouncilMail
Subject:	Demand to Fully Restore HCPSS FY26 Funding
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear County Executive Ball and County Council Members

As you work together with the Board of Education to close the gap for the HCPSS FY26 Operating Budget, understand that students, parents, and all county residents rely upon maintaining the excellence of Howard County schools many people move here for.

We would like to respond County Executive Ball's memo sent on May 8th which suggested HCPSS use their budget in a different way so that more than 222 positions won't be cut from the FY26 school budget. We appreciate the need for transparency and dialogue in order to use County funds more efficiently and we emphasize the County's role in obtaining the necessary funding to avoid a second year of class size increase, program cuts, and extensive firings.

We agree on the following steps for HCPSS:

- HCPSS should use the health fund surplus as long as county guarantees future support if required

- HCPSS General Fund Balance should be used if greater than 1% recommended balance specified by HCPSS policy

- HCPSS investment income may be available, although likely less than last year due to less funds available for investment

We urge the county to continue partnering with HCPSS by doing the following:

- Increase County conservative estimate of investment income and direct surplus to HCPSS.

- Review County salary growth (27% since 2018, compared to teachers 17%) and reduce if needed to allow HCPSS teachers to catch up to other county colleagues.

- Consider the recent history of record surplus revenue, and Pay Go funds being used repeatedly for some programs. Curren investment fund report notes that fund balance is approximately \$200M above expected level for FY25. Whether through additional revenue or additional sacrifice, we expect that support for HCPSS will allow for continuance of current programs and staffing levels. We must balance fiscal responsibility for the future and our children's educational needs today. Drawing down the surplus health fund balances increases shortage risks in the future which the county will have to cover. HCPSS General fund balance dropping below 1% risks requiring additional appropriations like the county is voting on this month (5.5M to HCPSS to cover unexpected additional cost in CR88-2025). No one can predict the future – but overly conservative estimates of investment income come at its own opportunity cost. Costs like increased class sizes for the second year in a row, 48% reduction in Elementary school gifted and talented program, and 3 rd grade strings. Teachers can't withstand another

increase in workload. Students can't withstand losing even more teachers from each school and some

classrooms cannot physically fit one more desk in the room.

We ask the County to prioritize residents' commitment to their own educational needs. Thank you,

Anna Wang, Centennial High School, Ellicott City, MD 21042 District 1

From:	Ari Ashe <arijashe@gmail.com></arijashe@gmail.com>
Sent:	Monday, May 12, 2025 9:02 PM
To:	Thompson, Paul
Cc:	constituentservices; CouncilDistrict1@howardcountymd.gov; CouncilMail
Subject:	Re: FY26 School Budget Amendment
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Hi Paul,

Please extend my sincere thanks to County Executive Ball for proposing CB45-2025 and taking the important step of allocating \$14.5 million in one-time Policy Reserve funds to support the HCPSS FY26 operating budget. As a parent of a kindergartener with moderate autism, I deeply appreciate this recognition of the urgency and challenges many families are facing.

My son attends Atholton Elementary and requires significant classroom supports to succeed—speech therapy, occupational therapy, ABA, and Parent-Child Interactive Therapy. Like so many parents of children with disabilities, I've poured time, energy, and personal resources into giving him the best possible chance at long-term independence. It's exhausting and expensive, but I do it willingly—because he's worth it. And as a father yourself, I know you understand that level of commitment.

That's why I need to be honest: we're not there yet.

Even with the \$14.5 million addition, HCPSS remains \$14.7 million short of what the Superintendent and Board have said is needed just to avoid reductions to existing staff and services—not to fund new initiatives, but simply to meet rising costs and legal mandates like IEP compliance and pension obligations.

The encouraging news is that we can still close this gap without affecting the daily lives of most residents or touching the Elkridge Community and 50+ Center project.

Here's a path I believe is fair, pragmatic, and politically feasible:

• Postpone half of the \$13.7 million in Recreation and Parks upgrades

These include aesthetic improvements to trails, fields, and nature centers—valuable, yes, but not urgent. Deferring half of this total would yield **approximately \$6.85 million** in capital savings. Getting "one half" of it done still moves the needle, but doesn't come at the cost of student safety.

- Raise the hotel tax from 7% to 8% (enabled by HB1523) → \$0.8 million
- Increase the tobacco fee by just $0.15/pack \rightarrow 0.5$ million

• Delay <u>some (not all) of the \$9.1 million in non-urgent HVAC and roof replacements</u> These are routine systemic upgrades that can be safely rescheduled.

Combined, these modest steps get us to the \$14.7 million mark without raising income taxes, disrupting high-priority capital projects, or making painful cuts elsewhere.

I'm also concerned about the \$19 million in "internal savings" referenced in the May 8 budget letter. If those savings involve increasing class sizes or reducing paraeducator positions, the consequences will fall disproportionately on students like my son. Every unfilled special-ed or support staff role increases the chance of regression, classroom outbursts, or worst of all—<u>elopement</u>.

As I wrote in my original letter: what father wants to get a phone call saying his child with autism escaped the school building and was struck by a car because there weren't enough adults available to intervene? That is not abstract for me. That is a real fear I live with every day. Elopement is a known, documented issue among children on the spectrum. You're a father, how would you react if you got that phone call?

I respectfully request transparency around what specific programs, staff, or positions might be impacted by HCPSS's internal savings plan.

If we can postpone half of the Recreation and Parks upgrades, raise the hotel tax, increase the tobacco fee, delay some non-urgent facility renovations, and find internal HCPSS savings that do NOT come at the expense of special-ed support, I believe we can get across the finish line together.

Thank you again for your leadership and commitment to our children. These are difficult choices, but I trust we can find a solution that protects students, upholds legal responsibilities, and reflects the best of Howard County's values. I have faith in my elected leaders to do the right thing.

Ari Ashe

Kings Contrivance, Columbia 202-630-4601

On Mon, May 12, 2025 at 7:10 PM Thompson, Paul <<u>pathompson@howardcountymd.gov</u>> wrote: Thank you for contacting the Office of the County Executive regarding the proposed FY26 Budget for the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). As a former educator and father of two daughters who graduated from HCPSS, Dr. Ball understands firsthand the importance of fostering the best teaching and learning environment for all students and educators.

Today, County Executive Ball submitted emergency budget legislation to the Howard County Council to direct an additional \$14.5 million in funding from the County's Policy Reserve toward the FY26 HCPSS Operating Budget. This emergency budget legislation, CB45-2025, will authorize Howard County to draw upon this one-time funding to direct toward the FY26 school budget, providing critical resources for the school system to address core staffing and programming needs in the year ahead.

Historic Proposed Operating Budget

Currently, our proposed FY26 Operating Budget provides a historic \$800 million in County funding to HCPSS, contributing to a total HCPSS budget of approximately \$1.2 billion when combined with State and other funding sources. Our proposed budget reflects a 5.1% increase of \$39 million in new recurring

county funding for HCPSS, exceeding the state-mandated Maintenance of Effort by approximately \$39.3 million. Furthermore, we are allocating an additional \$6.7 million to educator pension liabilities, a new cost passed on to Howard County from the State this year. In total, we proposed \$45.7 million in new revenue for HCPSS expenses in our budget, representing approximately 64% of all new General Fund revenue growth in FY26.

Despite this record level of investment during a year of great uncertainty at the State and Federal level, HCPSS continues to experience severe budget challenges. During their May 5, 2025, presentation to the Council, HCPSS identified outstanding funding needs of approximately \$29.2 million in order to maintain core services without making reductions or adjustments to programs and staffing.

Collective Budget Strategies to Further Increase Funding

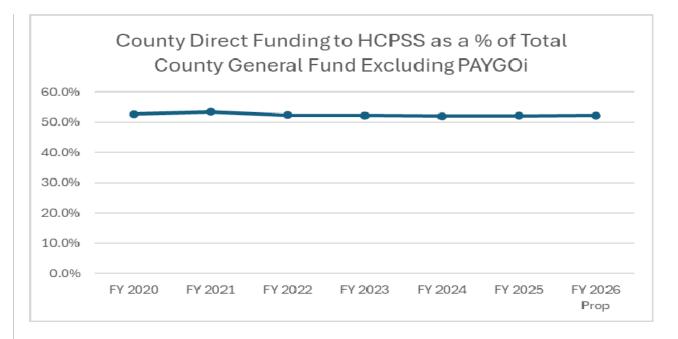
Subsequently, on May 8, 2025, we sent a <u>letter</u> to the Board of Education identifying three strategies to generate savings and additional revenues within the HCPSS Operating Budget. The County Executive's budget amendment will appropriate \$14.5 million from the County's Policy Reserve to the HCPSS Operating Budget. Coupled with internal HCPSS savings, our proposal to direct \$14.5 million in one-time County funds is intended to help meet the \$29.2 million funding threshold identified by HCPSS to avoid program and staffing reductions.

The County Executive will submit a budget amendment appropriating \$14.5 million from the County's excess surplus revenue to the HCPSS Operating Budget. This excess surplus revenue will be drawn from the County's Policy Reserve, which we fully implemented in FY21. Our Policy Reserve sets aside 3% of the budget on top of the Rainy Day Fund as a fiscal strategy to prepare for emergencies and unforeseen fiscal challenges that may arise.

This emergency authority has only been invoked once in the last two decades for the operating budget, when the County directed \$7.5 million in one-time funds to cover operating expenses during the COVID-19 pandemic. This underscores the significance of this proposed budget action, which is intended to ensure HCPSS can meet core services in the upcoming year.

Funding History

Our fiscal choices maintain historic funding trends for HCPSS. Direct County funding to HCPSS as a share of the County general fund, excluding one-time funds, has remained stable at approximately 52%-52.5% in the last several years.



Additionally, in the last 15 years, Howard County has cumulatively funded approximately \$325 million above MOE. However, approximately 70% of that funding above MOE occurred within the last five years alone, totaling nearly \$230 million above MOE.

As the Budget process continues, we are committed to working with our partners, including the Superintendent, Board of Education, and County Council to find paths forward as our FY26 Operating Budget proposal moves through the budget process this Spring.

To learn more about the County Council's budget process, which includes public hearings and work sessions, please visit: <u>https://cc.howardcountymd.gov/ongoing-efforts/howard-county-budget</u>. The FY26 Operating Budget is scheduled for a final vote by the County Council on Wednesday, May 21, 2025.

We thank you for your input and feedback during this budget process.



Mours in Service,

Paul Thompson Constituent Services & Community Partnerships Howard County Executive Calvin Ball Phone: 410.313.3395 Cell : 240.245.0393 Email: pathompson@howardcountymd.gov 3430 Court House Dr Ellicott City, MD 21043

www.howardcountymd.gov

From:	Brittany Jacobs <brittanyplaysviola@gmail.com></brittanyplaysviola@gmail.com>
Sent:	Monday, May 12, 2025 9:56 PM
To:	CouncilMail; Budget Testimony
Subject:	Fully Fund HCPSS Budget
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear County Council members,

Here in Howard County we are once again facing a budget crisis. As a parent of an elementary-aged child in our school system, I am deeply concerned about the shortfalls in funding for HCPSS. My husband and I chose to live and raise our child in Howard County because of its excellent school system, where our child can experience programs and opportunities we did not have during our PreK-12 educations. We cannot have the best education for the children of Howard County if we do not invest in it. The Board of Education is proposing numerous cuts that would disproportionately impact our youngest learners. I implore you to fully fund the HCPSS budget to prevent these cuts from occurring, and to allow the children of Howard County to have the best public education possible.

Respectfully,

Brittany Jacobs

Sent from my iPhone

From: Sent:	snap@howardcountymd.gov Monday, May 12, 2025 9:45 AM
	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068064 – opened and unassigned

Howard County	Case
Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget	
Case Number: CS0068064	
Case Opened: 05-12-2025	
Constituent:	
VIEW CASE	
Details:	
05-12-2025 09:43:41 AM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional comme	ents
From: Carolyn Torsiello <carolyn_torsiello@hcpss.org> Sent: Monday, May 12, 2025 8:49 AM To: Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: One quick question about our School budget</crigby@howardcountymd.gov></carolyn_torsiello@hcpss.org>	
[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. P click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]	lease only
County Councilperson Christiana Rigby,	
Dear County Executive Ball and County Council members,	
Right now HCPSS is staring down a \$29 million hole in its budg cannot fill. County Executive Ball sent educators a list of reason can't fully fund schools, but I still have one question for him and County Council:	ns why he

What would you cut from HCPSS?
It's easy to cut school funding and leave the hard choices to the Board of Education. But if you think HCPSS should have no additional funding this year, then how much would you raise class size? Which programs would you eliminate? How many staff should be laid off? Should you freeze pay increases for educators during a teacher shortage?
If you can't, or won't answer those questions, then do the right thing and restore the funding that HCPSS students and educators deserve.
Thank you,
Carolyn Torsiello carolyn_torsiello@hcpss.org <mailto:carolyn_torsiello@hcpss.org> 7905 Nottingham Way Ellicott City, Maryland 21043</mailto:carolyn_torsiello@hcpss.org>
howardcountymd.gov f 🎔 🗈

Ref:MSG6130481

From:	Charity Dugan <hamilton.charity@gmail.com></hamilton.charity@gmail.com>
Sent:	Monday, May 12, 2025 10:05 PM
To:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Restore Full Funding to HCPSS in FY26
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear Howard County Council,

I'm writing as a concerned [parent/teacher/resident] to urge you to fully fund the Howard County Public School System in the FY26 Operating Budget.

HCPSS has faced years of underfunding. This year, the system needs \$29.2 million just to maintain current services. Without it, we'll see larger class sizes, fewer programs, and staff layoffs — all of which hurt our students.

It's unacceptable that our schools are the first to face cuts when budgets tighten. Education is a core service and should be protected, not sacrificed. The percentage of Howard County Public Schools System share of the recurring General Fund Revenue has not kept up with historic norms and inflation.

Under staffing is a persistent issue since the pandemic. Without having these resources available to students we cannot expect them to excel at the level our county stands for.

Please prioritize students and restore funding to HCPSS.

Thank you,

Charity E. Dugan, D.O., F.A.C.O.S German Road, Ellicott City, MD 21042

From:	Chunxia Pan <panchunxia@hotmail.com></panchunxia@hotmail.com>
Sent:	Monday, May 12, 2025 4:43 PM
To:	Ball, Calvin; CouncilMail
Subject:	Please fully restore HCPSS FY26 Funding
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear County Executive Ball and County Council Members

This is Chunxia Pan, a mother of two HCPSS students. My kids go to Marriotts Ridge High School and Mount View Middle School. We live in district 5.

As you work together with the Board of Education to close the gap for the HCPSS FY26 Operating Budget, understand that students, parents, and all county residents rely upon maintaining the excellence of Howard County schools many people move here for.

We would like to respond County Executive Ball's memo sent on May 8th which suggested HCPSS use their budget in a different way so that more than 222 positions won't be cut from the FY26 school budget. We appreciate the need for transparency and dialogue in order to use County funds more efficiently and we emphasize the County's role in obtaining the necessary funding to avoid a second year of class size increase, program cuts, and extensive firings.

We agree on the following steps for HCPSS:

- HCPSS should use the health fund surplus as long as county guarantees future support if required
- HCPSS General Fund Balance should be used if greater than 1% recommended balance specified by HCPSS policy
- HCPSS investment income may be available, although likely less than last year due to less funds available for investment

We urge the county to continue partnering with HCPSS by doing the following:

- Increase County conservative estimate of investment income and direct surplus to HCPSS.
- Review County salary growth (27% since 2018, compared to teachers 17%) and reduce if needed to allow HCPSS teachers to catch up to other county colleagues.

 Consider the recent history of record surplus revenue, and Pay Go funds being used repeatedly for some programs. Curren investment fund report notes that fund balance is approximately \$200M above expected level for FY25. Whether through additional revenue or additional sacrifice, we expect that support for HCPSS will allow for continuance of current programs and staffing levels.

We must balance fiscal responsibility for the future and our children's educational needs today. Drawing down the surplus health fund balances increases shortage risks in the future which the county will have to cover. HCPSS General fund balance dropping below 1% risks requiring additional appropriations like the county is voting on this month (5.5M to HCPSS to cover unexpected additional cost in CR88-2025).

No one can predict the future – but overly conservative estimates of investment income come at its own opportunity cost. Costs like increased class sizes for the second year in a row, 48% reduction in Elementary school gifted and talented program, and 3^e grade strings. Teachers can't withstand another increase in workload. Students can't withstand losing even moreteachers from each school and some classrooms cannot physically fit one more desk in the room.

We ask the County to prioritize residents' commitment to their own educational needs.

Thanks,

Chunxia Pan

发自我的 iPhone

From:	Erin Kim <ejlee124@gmail.com></ejlee124@gmail.com>
Sent:	Monday, May 12, 2025 10:25 AM
To:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Restore Full Funding to HCPSS in FY26
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear Howard County Council,

I'm writing as a concerned parent to urge you to fully fund the Howard County Public School System in the FY26 Operating Budget.

HCPSS has faced years of underfunding. This year, the system needs \$29.2 million just to maintain current services. Without it, we'll see larger class sizes, fewer programs, and staff layoffs — all of which hurt our students.

It's unacceptable that our schools are the first to face cuts when budgets tighten. Education is a core service and should be protected, not sacrificed. The percentage of Howard County Public Schools System share of the recurring General Fund Revenue has not kept up with historic norms and inflation.

One of the reasons we moved to Howard County is for the schools. The great teachers and programming have made such a difference in both my children's education. My kindergartener has made amazing progress in his ability to read. The extra attention he has received has made a difference. Being challenged in GT Math has allowed my 4th grader to grow and be engaged in the classroom. My child's school is already stretched thin. We can't afford more cuts.

Please prioritize students and restore funding to HCPSS.

Thank you,

Erin Kim, District 1

From:	Han Na Kim <hnkiminmd@gmail.com></hnkiminmd@gmail.com>
Sent:	Monday, May 12, 2025 8:00 AM
To:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Restore Full Funding to HCPSS in FY26
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear Howard County Council,

I'm writing as a concerned parent to urge you to fully fund the Howard County Public School System in the FY26 Operating Budget.

HCPSS has faced years of underfunding. This year, the system needs \$29.2 million just to maintain current services. Without it, we'll see larger class sizes, fewer programs, and staff layoffs — all of which hurt our students.

It's unacceptable that our schools are the first to face cuts when budgets tighten. Education is a core service and should be protected, not sacrificed. The percentage of Howard County Public Schools System share of the recurring General Fund Revenue has not kept up with historic norms and inflation.

As a parent at Manor Woods Elementary school, I have witnessed firsthand the value of our school's programs in nurturing students' academic growth, confidence, and love for learning. However, I am deeply concerned about the proposed cuts to staffing, including the significant reduction in elementary Gifted and Talented (G/T) teachers—from 81 to just 41 positions across 42 elementary schools. For our school, Manor Woods Elementary, this could mean a loss of critical enrichment opportunities that have helped my child thrive.

These cuts would not only limit access to advanced learning opportunities but also increase class sizes and strain already limited resources, affecting all students—not just those in G/T programs.

Please prioritize students and restore funding to HCPSS.

Thank you,

Han Na Kim

3127 Dunes Dr

Ellicott City, MD 21042

From:	Jade Chang <jadechang888@outlook.com></jadechang888@outlook.com>
Sent:	Monday, May 12, 2025 3:17 PM
То:	Ball, Calvin
Cc:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Request to fully fund HCPSS FY26 budget
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	•
To: Cc: Subject: Follow Up Flag:	Ball, Calvin CouncilMail

Dear County Executive Ball and County Council Members,

As you work together with the Board of Education to close the gap for the HCPSS FY26 Operating Budget, understand that students, parents, and all county residents rely upon maintaining the excellence of Howard County schools many people move here for.

We would like to respond to County Executive Ball's memo sent on May 8th which suggested HCPSS use their budget in a different way so that more than 222 positions won't be cut from the FY26 school budget. We appreciate the need for transparency and dialogue in order to use County funds more efficiently and we emphasize the County's role in obtaining the necessary funding to avoid a second year of class size increase, program cuts, and extensive firings.

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- Consider the recent history of record surplus revenue, and Pay Go funds being used repeatedly for some programs. Curren investment fund report notes that fund balance is approximately \$200M above expected level for FY25. Whether through additional revenue or additional sacrifice, we expect that support for HCPSS will allow for continuance of current programs and staffing levels.

•

• We must balance fiscal responsibility for the future and our children's educational needs today. Drawing down the surplus health fund balances increases shortage risks in the future which the county will have to cover. HCPSS General fund balance dropping below 1% risks requiring additional appropriations like the county is voting on this month (5.5M to HCPSS to cover unexpected additional cost in CR88-2025).

No one can predict the future – but overly conservative estimates of investment income come at its own opportunity cost. Costs like increased class sizes for the second year in a row, 48% reduction in Elementary school gifted and talented program, and 3rd grade strings. Teachers can't withstand another increase in workload. Students can't withstand losing even more teachers from each school and some classrooms cannot physically fit one more desk in the room.

We ask the County to prioritize residents' commitment to their own educational needs.

Thank you,

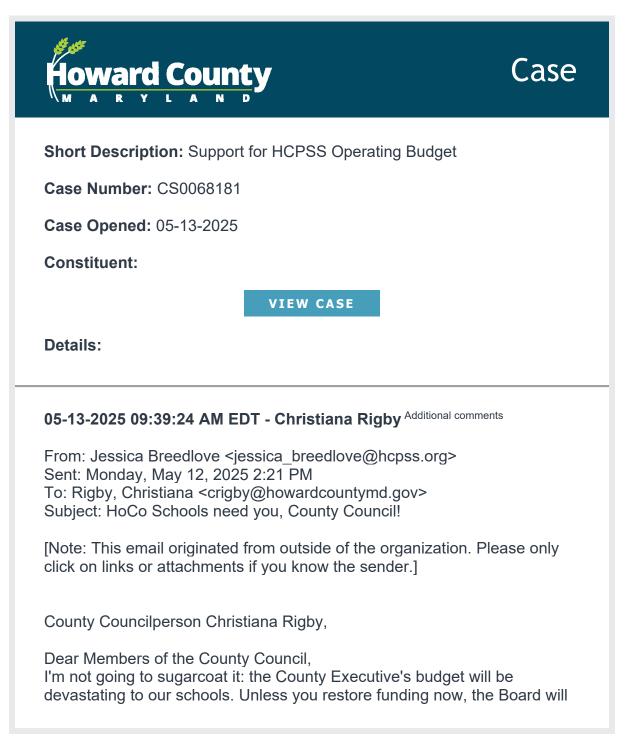
Sincerely,

Jade Chang

Parent of Centennial High School, Centennial Lane Elementary School, Ellicott City, MD 21042

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Tuesday, May 13, 2025 9:40 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068181 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged



be forced to make "tough decisions" to balance the budget, including increased class sizes, broken contracts for educators, program reductions, and reduced services for students.

As an HCPSS educator, I have seen firsthand how budget cuts year after year have squeezed the classroom and made educator workloads impossible. While it is understandable to be concerned about the outlook of the federal budget, it would be a grave mistake to underfund the main resource still attracting families to our county: public schools.

Please keep the orchestra program for our students in third grade. It is so beneficial to students and their learning. It's crucial for elementary aged students and so important. Please do not get rid of it!

Sincerely, Jess Breedlove

Jessica Breedlove jessica_breedlove@hcpss.org<mailto:jessica_breedlove@hcpss.org> 9334 Rock Ripple Lane Laurel, Maryland 20723

f

howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6136697

From:	Jessica Estrogano <jessica.estrogano@gmail.com></jessica.estrogano@gmail.com>
Sent:	Monday, May 12, 2025 1:57 PM
To:	Ball, Calvin
Cc:	Jones, Opel; CouncilDistrict1@howardcountymd.gov; Linfeng Chen; boe@hcpss.org; CouncilMail
Subject:	Budget Input: Fund Our Schools
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Hello County Executive Ball,

I am writing as a parent of a student at Jeffers Hill Elementary School (JHES). I am writing to implore you to fund schools. The emails you are sending that portray schools as "fully funded" by the county, are false. Schools are in disrepair. You were at the JHES 50th anniversary celebration on Friday, 9 May, and that school has never had a renovation in half a century. The county does not have enough public schools and Council continues to approve more development and housing. Stop allowing development until the current schools are up to code and date, and until we have enough schools to comfortably serve every Howard County student.

In 2025, we were already hit with 192 positions eliminated, class size increases of 11 even in schools that have older footprints and truly do not have space for even one more desk in the classroom, reduced student supports, fewer special educators for a growing special education student population, decreased summer opportunities, and diminished centralized functions and supports.

If the proposed budget is passed as it is, we will be hit with *another* class size increase in spaces that simply cannot handle the additional desk or student, elimination of at least 222 FTE positions to include elimination of middle school general education paraeducators, reduced elementary school paraeducators, reduced high school teacher secretaries, reduced high school media specialists, reduced dual enrollment, reduced elementary gifted and talented (G&T) teachers; and elimination of third grade strings - and that's not even the full extent of cuts we will experience. My child is in second grade and is very excited to move to the G&T program and pick up strings next year. The idea that those things should be taken away from children because adults are not making responsible decisions, is shameful.

The Spending Affordability Advisory Committee projects a budget deficit of nearly \$340 million by 2031, just 5.5 years away. This accumulated decline affects the most vulnerable. Taxes and fees on residents continue to rise while developers continue to receive favorable zoning and land use decisions. Howard Hughes Corporation resides on public amenities paid for by taxpayer dollars to increase its property values. Remember: You serve your constituents, not corporations. You are funding a new Performing Arts Center at \$68 million and a new central library and parking garage at \$150 million- these are nice-to-haves, not requirements. Nobody is negatively impacted by not building a new arts center or a new library and parking garage. Children and families will be significantly and negatively impacted if schools

are not funded at the HCPSS Board of Education's full budget request. Your and the County Council's decision making reflects misaligned priorities.

I don't want to hear that we don't have the money. We absolutely have the money, we just need you- the people with decision making power-to make ethical decisions because they are the right thing to do, rather than careless decisions to please your boss or generate personal revenue for yourselves. You owe this to the children and the County.

Make the right choice: Fund the full HCPSS Board of Education budget request. There is no other ethical or moral choice.

Jessica Estrogano

From:	Jessica Estrogano <jessica.estrogano@gmail.com></jessica.estrogano@gmail.com>
Sent:	Monday, May 12, 2025 8:30 PM
То:	Thompson, Paul; Ball, Calvin
Cc:	constituentservices; boe@hcpss.org; CouncilMail; Jones, Opel; Email - Mine
Subject:	Re: FY26 School Budget Amendment
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 Evening Mr. Thompson,

I appreciate the gesture of one-time funding and recognize that this will help HCPSS for FY26. **One-time funding is a small bandage and does not address the systemic budgetary issues that cause HCPSS to be chronically underfunded.** While Dr. Ball has given more dollars to HCPSS each year, the percentage of the budget allocated to schools has decreased year over year. Howard County has plenty of funding and could easily fund schools if it so chose.

The Spending Affordability Advisory Committee projects a budget deficit of nearly \$340 million by 2031, just 5.5 years away. This accumulated decline affects the most vulnerable. Taxes and fees on residents continue to rise while developers continue to receive favorable zoning and land use decisions. Howard Hughes Corporation resides on public amenities paid for by taxpayer dollars to increase its property values. **Remember: You serve your constituents, not corporations.** You are funding a new Performing Arts Center at \$68 million and a new central library and parking garage at \$150 million- these are nice-to-haves, not requirements. Nobody is negatively impacted by not building a new arts center or a new library and parking garage. Children and families will be significantly and negatively impacted if schools are not funded at the HCPSS Board of Education's full budget request every year.

I don't want to hear that we don't have the money. **We absolutely have the money, we just need youthe people with decision making power-to make ethical decisions** because they are the right thing to do, rather than careless decisions to please your boss(es) or generate personal revenue for yourselves. You owe this to the children, families, and the future of this county, country, and world.

Make the right choice: Fund the full HCPSS Board of Education budget request every year. Eliminate the nice-to-haves, not the necessities. There is no other ethical or moral choice.

I will not vote for any incumbent if the Council and County Executive do not fund HCPSS at the level the Board of Education requests, every year.

With Great Concern, Jessica Estrogano

On Mon, May 12, 2025 at 7:01 PM Thompson, Paul <<u>pathompson@howardcountymd.gov</u>> wrote:

Thank you for contacting the Office of the County Executive regarding the proposed FY26 Budget for the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS). As a former educator and father of two daughters who graduated from HCPSS, Dr. Ball understands firsthand the importance of fostering the best teaching and learning environment for all students and educators.

Today, County Executive Ball submitted emergency budget legislation to the Howard County Council to direct an additional \$14.5 million in funding from the County's Policy Reserve toward the FY26 HCPSS Operating Budget. This emergency budget legislation, CB45-2025, will authorize Howard County to draw upon this one-time funding to direct toward the FY26 school budget, providing critical resources for the school system to address core staffing and programming needs in the year ahead.

Historic Proposed Operating Budget

Currently, our proposed FY26 Operating Budget provides a historic \$800 million in County funding to HCPSS, contributing to a total HCPSS budget of approximately \$1.2 billion when combined with State and other funding sources. Our proposed budget reflects a 5.1% increase of \$39 million in new recurring county funding for HCPSS, exceeding the state-mandated Maintenance of Effort by approximately \$39.3 million. Furthermore, we are allocating an additional \$6.7 million to educator pension liabilities, a new cost passed on to Howard County from the State this year. In total, we proposed \$45.7 million in new revenue for HCPSS expenses in our budget, representing approximately 64% of all new General Fund revenue growth in FY26.

Despite this record level of investment during a year of great uncertainty at the State and Federal level, HCPSS continues to experience severe budget challenges. During their May 5, 2025, presentation to the Council, HCPSS identified outstanding funding needs of approximately \$29.2 million in order to maintain core services without making reductions or adjustments to programs and staffing.

Collective Budget Strategies to Further Increase Funding

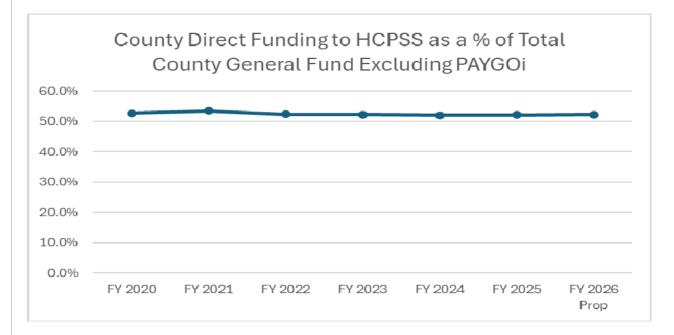
Subsequently, on May 8, 2025, we sent a <u>letter</u> to the Board of Education identifying three strategies to generate savings and additional revenues within the HCPSS Operating Budget. The County Executive's budget amendment will appropriate \$14.5 million from the County's Policy Reserve to the HCPSS Operating Budget. **Coupled with internal HCPSS savings, our proposal to direct \$14.5 million in one-time County funds is intended to help meet the \$29.2 million funding threshold identified by HCPSS to avoid program and staffing reductions.**

The County Executive will submit a budget amendment appropriating \$14.5 million from the County's excess surplus revenue to the HCPSS Operating Budget. This excess surplus revenue will be drawn from the County's Policy Reserve, which we fully implemented in FY21. Our Policy Reserve sets aside 3% of the budget on top of the Rainy Day Fund as a fiscal strategy to prepare for emergencies and unforeseen fiscal challenges that may arise.

This emergency authority has only been invoked once in the last two decades for the operating budget, when the County directed \$7.5 million in one-time funds to cover operating expenses during the COVID-19 pandemic. This underscores the significance of this proposed budget action, which is intended to ensure HCPSS can meet core services in the upcoming year.

Funding History

Our fiscal choices maintain historic funding trends for HCPSS. Direct County funding to HCPSS as a share of the County general fund, excluding one-time funds, has remained stable at approximately 52%-52.5% in the last several years.



Additionally, in the last 15 years, Howard County has cumulatively funded approximately \$325 million above MOE. However, approximately 70% of that funding above MOE occurred within the last five years alone, totaling nearly \$230 million above MOE.

As the Budget process continues, we are committed to working with our partners, including the Superintendent, Board of Education, and County Council to find paths forward as our FY26 Operating Budget proposal moves through the budget process this Spring.

To learn more about the County Council's budget process, which includes public hearings and work sessions, please visit: <u>https://cc.howardcountymd.gov/ongoing-efforts/howard-county-budget</u>. The FY26 Operating Budget is scheduled for a final vote by the County Council on Wednesday, May 21, 2025.

We thank you for your input and feedback during this budget process.



Mours in Service,

Paul Thompson Constituent Services & Community Partnerships Howard County Executive Calvin Ball Phone: 410.313.3395 Cell : 240.245.0393 Email: pathompson@howardcountymd.gov 3430 Court House Dr Ellicott City, MD 21043 www.howardcountymd.gov

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Monday, May 12, 2025 9:44 AM
To:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068063 – opened and unassigned

Howard County Case	
Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget	
Case Number: CS0068063	
Case Opened: 05-12-2025	
Constituent:	
VIEW CASE	
Details:	
05-12-2025 09:43:40 AM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional comments	
From: JIMARA KOCIK <noreply@adv.actionnetwork.org> Sent: Monday, May 12, 2025 8:51 AM To: Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: One quick question about our School budget</crigby@howardcountymd.gov></noreply@adv.actionnetwork.org>	
[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]	
County Councilperson Christiana Rigby,	
Dear County Executive Ball and County Council members,	
Right now, HCPSS is staring down a \$29 million hole in its budget that it cannot fill. County Executive Ball sent educators a list of reasons why he can't fully fund schools, but I still have one question for him and for the County Council:	

What would you cut from HCPSS?

It's easy to cut school funding and leave the hard choices to the Board of Education. But if you think HCPSS should have no additional funding this year, then how much would you raise class size? Which programs would you eliminate? How many staff should be laid off? Should you freeze pay increases for educators during a teacher shortage?

If you can't or won't answer those questions, then do the right thing and restore the funding that HCPSS students and educators deserve. I also want to add that my son with an IEP can't have a high score to pass the algebra class, and I paid 650 for him to attend the class in the summer. Plus another up 1000 for hire and advocate for school help him. Part of he falling is because the school has little support for him to access accommodation and learn difficult subjects like math. Also, a large class affects his ability to focus.

When students drop out of school in High school, it is because the credit classes in the summer are not free.

I felt sad for my son's education and students like him.

Howard is creating a storm with young students making to difficult to get a diploma education.

Please fund our school, and as a mom with three boys in the school system, their education should always be free.

Thank you,

JIMARA KOCIK jimarac@yahoo.com<mailto:jimarac@yahoo.com> 9519 Rommel Dr Columbia, Maryland 21046

howardcountymd.gov

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Ref:MSG6130461

From:	Jing Tian <mydream8951@gmail.com></mydream8951@gmail.com>
Sent:	Monday, May 12, 2025 6:48 PM
To:	Ball, Calvin
Cc:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Demand to fully restore HCPSS funding for FY26
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear County Executive Ball and County Council Members

As you work together with the Board of Education to close the gap for the HCPSS FY26 Operating Budget, understand that students, parents, and all county residents rely upon maintaining the excellence of Howard County schools many people move here for.

We would like to respond County Executive Ball's memo sent on May 8th which suggested HCPSS use their budget in a different way so that more than 222 positions won't be cut from the FY26 school budget. We appreciate the need for transparency and dialogue in order to use County funds more efficiently and we emphasize the County's role in obtaining the necessary funding to avoid a second year of class size increase, program cuts, and extensive firings.

We agree on the following steps for HCPSS:

- HCPSS should use the health fund surplus as long as county guarantees future support if required

- HCPSS General Fund Balance should be used if greater than 1% recommended balance specified by HCPSS policy

- HCPSS investment income may be available, although likely less than last year due to less funds available for investment

We urge the county to continue partnering with HCPSS by doing the following:

- Increase County conservative estimate of investment income and direct surplus to HCPSS.

- Review County salary growth (27% since 2018, compared to teachers 17%) and reduce if needed to allow HCPSS teachers to catch up to other county colleagues.

- Consider the recent history of record surplus revenue, and Pay Go funds being used repeatedly for some programs. Curren investment fund report notes that fund balance is approximately \$200M above expected level for FY25. Whether through additional revenue or additional sacrifice, we expect that support for HCPSS will allow for continuance of current programs and staffing levels.

We must balance fiscal responsibility for the future and our children's educational needs today. Drawing down the surplus health fund balances increases shortage risks in the future which the county will have to cover. HCPSS General fund balance dropping below 1% risks requiring additional appropriations like the county is voting on this month (5.5M to HCPSS to cover unexpected additional cost in CR88-2025).

No one can predict the future – but overly conservative estimates of investment income come at its own opportunity cost. Costs like increased class sizes for the second year in a row, 48% reduction in Elementary school gifted and talented program, and 3^a grade strings. Teachers can't withstand another increase in workload. Students can't withstand losing even moreteachers from each school and some classrooms cannot physically fit one more desk in the room.

We ask the County to prioritize residents' commitment to their own educational needs.

Best, Jing Centennial Lane Elementary school, district #1 Ellicott city, 21042

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Tuesday, May 13, 2025 9:40 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068169 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

ward County Case Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget Case Number: CS0068169 Case Opened: 05-13-2025 Constituent: VIEW CASE **Details:** 05-13-2025 09:39:19 AM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional comments From: Kelli Pope <noreply@adv.actionnetwork.org> Sent: Monday, May 12, 2025 3:51 PM To: Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: One quick question about our School budget [Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.] County Councilperson Christiana Rigby, Dear County Executive Ball and County Council members, Right now HCPSS is staring down a \$29 million hole in its budget that it

cannot fill. County Executive Ball sent educators a list of reasons why he can't fully fund schools, but I still have one question for him and for the County Council:

What would you cut from HCPSS?

It's easy to cut school funding and leave the hard choices to the Board of Education. But if you think HCPSS should have no additional funding this year, then how much would you raise class size? Which programs would you eliminate? How many staff should be laid off? Should you freeze pay increases for educators during a teacher shortage?

If you can't, or won't answer those questions, then do the right thing and restore the funding that HCPSS students and educators deserve.

Thank you,

Kelli Pope kellifpope@gmail.com<mailto:kellifpope@gmail.com> 6051 Camelback Lane Columbia, Maryland 21045

howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6136688

f

From:	Lulu Dang <luludangumd@gmail.com></luludangumd@gmail.com>
Sent:	Monday, May 12, 2025 3:39 PM
To:	Ball, Calvin
Cc:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Restore Full Funding to HCPSS in FY26
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear County Executive Ball and County Council Members,

As you work together with the Board of Education to close the gap for the HCPSS FY26 Operating Budget, understand that students, parents, and all county residents rely upon maintaining the excellence of Howard County schools many people move here for.We would like to respond County Executive Ball's memo sent on May 8th which suggested HCPSS use their budget in a different way so that more than 222 positions won't be cut from the FY26 school budget. We appreciate the need for transparency and dialogue in order to use County funds more efficiently and we emphasize the County's role in obtaining the necessary funding to avoid a second year of class size increase, program cuts, and extensive firings.

We agree on the following steps for HCPSS:

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We urge the county to continue partnering with HCPSS by doing the following:

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We must balance fiscal responsibility for the future and our children's educational needs today. Drawing down the surplus health fund balances increases shortage risks in the future which the county will have to cover. HCPSS General fund balance dropping below 1% risks requiring additional appropriations like the county is voting on this month (5.5M to HCPSS to cover unexpected additional cost in CR88-2025). No one can predict the future – but overly conservative estimates of investment income come at its own opportunity cost. Costs like increased class sizes for the second year in a row, 48% reduction in Elementary school gifted and talented program, and 3rd grade strings. Teachers can't withstand another increase in workload. Students can't withstand losing even more teachers from each school and some classrooms cannot physically fit one more desk in the room.

We ask the County to prioritize residents' commitment to their own educational needs.

Lulu Dang Centennial Lane Elementary School Ellicott City, 21042 District 1

From:	Ly Tran <lythaotran@gmail.com></lythaotran@gmail.com>
Sent:	Monday, May 12, 2025 4:13 PM
To:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Urgent Request for Full Funding of HCPSS in the FY26 Operating Budget
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear Howard County Council,

I am reaching out as a deeply concerned parent to implore you to ensure the full funding of the Howard County Public School System in the FY26 Operating Budget.

The HCPSS has endured years of financial shortfalls, and this year alone, the system requires an additional \$29.2 million merely to sustain its current level of services. The implications of not meeting this funding request are dire: we risk increased class sizes, reduced program offerings, and potential staff layoffs, all of which significantly diminish the educational experience for our children.

It is disheartening that our schools are often the first to encounter budget cuts during tough financial times. Education is a fundamental service that should be safeguarded, not compromised. The share of funding allocated to the Howard County Public Schools from the recurring General Fund Revenue has not kept pace with historical averages or inflation, leading to a concerning trend in diminishing support for our students.

My child's school is already operating on limited resources and is stretched incredibly thin. Our teachers are facing overwhelming challenges, and any further reductions in funding would only exacerbate the strain. We simply cannot afford to see our educational offerings diminished any further. Our children deserve the quality education they are entitled to, and this can only be achieved with appropriate funding.

I urge you to prioritize our students' futures and take the necessary steps to restore funding for HCPSS.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. Sincerely, Ly Tran 10358 Lomardi Dr Ellicott City, MD 21042

From:	Lyndsy Beckman <lyndsy.beckman@gmail.com></lyndsy.beckman@gmail.com>
Sent:	Monday, May 12, 2025 7:25 PM
To:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Restore Full Funding to HCPSS in FY26
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear Howard County Council,

I'm writing as a concerned parent to urge you to fully fund the Howard County Public School System in the FY26 Operating Budget.

HCPSS has faced years of underfunding. This year, the system needs \$29.2 million just to maintain current services. Without it, we'll see larger class sizes, fewer programs, and staff layoffs – all of which hurt our students.

It's unacceptable that our schools are the first to face cuts when budgets tighten. Education is a core service and should be protected, not sacrificed. The percentage of Howard County Public Schools System share of the recurring General Fund Revenue has not kept up with historic norms and inflation.

Please prioritize students and restore funding to HCPSS.

Thank you,

Beckman Family

West Friendship, MD

Triadelphia Ridge ES

From:	Meghna Lipcon <meghnalipcon@gmail.com></meghnalipcon@gmail.com>
Sent:	Monday, May 12, 2025 1:51 PM
To:	CouncilMail; Ball, Calvin; Thompson, Paul; Budget Testimony
Subject:	Fully Funding HCPSS
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Hello Dr. Ball and County Council Members,

I am writing to ask that you fully fund HCPSS' budget request. I have been a Howard County resident since my graduate college graduation. After earning my undergraduate degree from The Johns Hopkins University, I went on to get a teaching degree from Columbia. Upon graduation, I chose to move back here instead of staying in NYC because of the amazing schools and services this county provides. I saw myself raising a family here. Since 2001, I HAVE done exactly that. My kids are now in 8th and 11th grade, and we have been thrilled with the schools and all they have to offer. Their teachers have been top notch, and we have especially loved the GT instruction and arts instruction that is unparalleled here. Many times talking to family out of state, they are amazed at what our music, art and theater programs accomplish.

Growing up in NY, budget cuts had a huge impact on GT and music programs. Our class sizes were huge, and as a student who needed a challenge I was often bored because of the lack of enrichment programs. In fact, my mother had to volunteer to run an advanced reading program! She worked just as many hours as a teacher/para would- without pay! I don't feel that this would ever happen now- and even if we had someone willing to do that- a stellar school system should not be cutting arts education and gifted education.

My daughter is about to be a senior - she intends to major in Biology in college- but has taken orchestra all four years in HS and intends to add choir and theater to her schedule. The arts programs at our high school, Reservoir, are amazing and have provided her with opportunities beyond our wildest imaginations. She's gained a community of friends, support, confidence and poise that she would not have gotten through any other endeavor. She even added an HCC class so she'd have room during the day to take visual art- and her teacher has been amazing. Needless to say we love the arts in our family. My son is ready for HS next year- he is excited to join his sister at RHS in the music department- his ES and MS teachers have been that great! He also has been challenged through GT classes and seminars. Students of course need core courses in high school- but it's through the arts that we stay in touch with our humanity to solve the world's problems. STEM is not as powerful without STEAM! Lastly, small classes where students can gain confidence and speak with teachers help students achieve to their highest potential. I ask that you fully fund HCPSS- I realize this is just one part of the budget- but if we don't invest in our children then who will want to stay or come back to Howard County when they graduate college and are looking for a place to raise their family like I did now 25 years ago?

Thank you for your time,

Meghna Lipcon, NBCT Laurel, MD

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From:	G R <pooh67br@yahoo.com></pooh67br@yahoo.com>
Sent:	Monday, May 12, 2025 3:43 PM
To:	Ball, Calvin
Cc:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Demand to fully restore HCPSS FY26 Funding
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear County Executive Ball and County Council Members

As you work together with the Board of Education to close the gap for the HCPSS FY26 Operating Budget, understand that students, parents, and all county residents rely upon maintaining the excellence of Howard County schools many people move here for.

We would like to respond County Executive Ball's memo sent on May 8th which suggested HCPSS use their budget in a different way so that more than 222 positions won't be cut from the FY26 school budget. We appreciate the need for transparency and dialogue in order to use County funds more efficiently and we emphasize the County's role in obtaining the necessary funding to avoid a second year of class size increase, program cuts, and extensive firings.

We agree on the following steps for HCPSS:

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We urge the county to continue partnering with HCPSS by doing the following:

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or additional sacrifice, we expect that support for HCPSS will allow for continuance of current programs and staffing levels.

We must balance fiscal responsibility for the future and our children's educational needs today. Drawing down the surplus health fund balances increases shortage risks in the future which the county will have to cover. HCPSS General fund balance dropping below 1% risks requiring additional appropriations like the county is voting on this month (5.5M to HCPSS to cover unexpected additional cost in CR88-2025).

No one can predict the future – but overly conservative estimates of investment income come at its own opportunity cost. Costs like increased class sizes for the second year in a row, 48% reduction in Elementary school gifted and talented program, and 3- grade strings. Teachers can't withstand another increase in workload. Students can't withstand losing even moreteachers from each school and some classrooms cannot physically fit one more desk in the room.

We ask the County to prioritize residents' commitment to their own educational needs.

Mike Ren

Dayton Osks Elementary School Highland, MD20777

From:	M <mars.bjzm@gmail.com></mars.bjzm@gmail.com>
Sent:	Monday, May 12, 2025 7:16 PM
To:	Ball, Calvin; CouncilMail
Subject:	Demand to fully restore HCPSS FY26 Funding
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear County Executive Ball and County Council Members

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We ask the County to prioritize residents' commitment to their own educational needs.

Mu Zhao, parent of kids in Veterans Elementary School, Ellicott city, 21043

From:	NaTasha Riley <natashanriley@gmail.com></natashanriley@gmail.com>
Sent:	Monday, May 12, 2025 8:39 AM
To:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Restore Full Funding to HCPSS in FY26
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear Howard County Council,

I'm writing as a concerned parent to urge you to fully fund the Howard County Public School System in the FY26 Operating Budget.

HCPSS has faced years of underfunding. This year, the system needs \$29.2 million just to maintain current services. Without it, we'll see larger class sizes, fewer programs, and staff layoffs — all of which hurt our students.

It's unacceptable that our schools are the first to face cuts when budgets tighten. Education is a core service and should be protected, not sacrificed. The percentage of Howard County Public Schools System share of the recurring General Fund Revenue has not kept up with historic norms and inflation.

We moved to this county because we believed in the promise and potential that Howard County had to offer. However, it's become clear that there is a stark divide between the "haves" and the "have-nots." Elkridge has consistently been the last to receive funding and support for growth. Given the high taxes being paid in this county, it's unacceptable that this disparity continues to exist. Families are already facing job losses, and the added stress from this lack of investment only makes things worse.

Please prioritize students and restore funding to HCPSS.

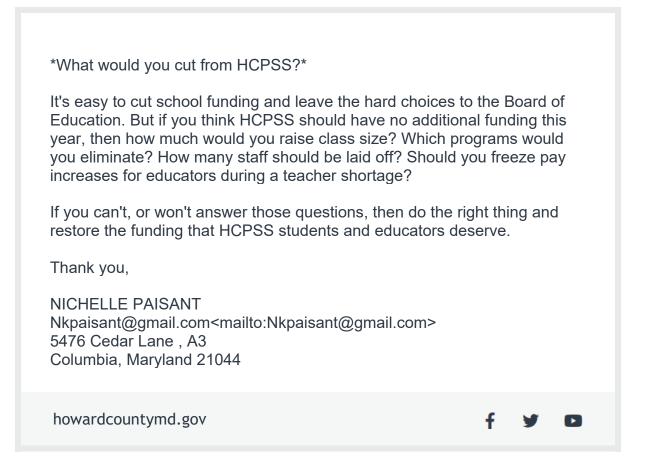
Thank you,

NaTasha Riley

5910 Lebanon Lane Elkridge, MD 21075

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Tuesday, May 13, 2025 9:40 AM
To:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068173 – opened and unassigned

Howard County Case	
Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget	
Case Number: CS0068173	
Case Opened: 05-13-2025	
Constituent:	
VIEW CASE	
Details:	
05-13-2025 09:39:21 AM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional comments	
From: NICHELLE PAISANT <noreply@adv.actionnetwork.org> Sent: Monday, May 12, 2025 4:07 PM To: Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: One quick question about our School budget</crigby@howardcountymd.gov></noreply@adv.actionnetwork.org>	
[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]	
County Councilperson Christiana Rigby,	
Dear County Executive Ball and County Council members,	
Right now HCPSS is staring down a \$29 million hole in its budget that it cannot fill. County Executive Ball sent educators a list of reasons why he can't fully fund schools, but I still have one question for him and for the County Council:	



Ref:MSG6136669

From:	Niki McGuigan <mcniki1@gmail.com></mcniki1@gmail.com>
Sent:	Monday, May 12, 2025 10:29 AM
To:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Prioritize Our Schools — Restore Full Funding to HCPSS
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear Chair Liz Walsh and members of the Howard County Council,

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony attached below.

Please Fully Fund HCPSS

Sincerely, Niki McGuigan District One Mom of 3 Proud Howard High School Media Specialist

May 12, 2025

Dear Chair Liz Walsh and members of the Howard County Council,

I am writing as a concerned parent and teacher in Howard County to urge you to restore full funding to the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) in the FY26 Operating Budget.

You are already familiar with the data and logistics. Instead, I'd like to speak from personal experience. Families move to this county for the promise of an exceptional public education, and many leave when that need has been met. But that promise is eroding. Our schools are increasingly overcrowded, and we are rapidly losing essential staff due to budget cuts. The workload on those who remain is unsustainable.

When educators are overwhelmed, overworked, and understaffed, students cannot receive the quality education they deserve. We need more support in our schools—not less. Staff are doing everything they can, but many are nearing a breaking point.

In today's political climate, where public education, libraries, and the freedom to read are under threat, Howard County must lead by example. HCPSS can be a national model of success, but only if we invest in it. The alternative is unacceptable: a weakened school system, an exodus of teachers, and a county where families no longer choose to stay.

In a future where a national teacher shortage looms, failing to act now will have long-lasting consequences for our children, our economy, and our community.

Please make our students your top priority. Fully fund HCPSS and protect the future of Howard County.

Thank you for your leadership and for your urgent attention to this matter.

From:	Oghoghosa Ogboe <oghoghosaogboe@gmail.com></oghoghosaogboe@gmail.com>
Sent:	Monday, May 12, 2025 9:52 AM
To:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Prioritize Our Schools-Restore Full Funding to HCPSS
Attachments:	Letter (1).pdf
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Good Morning,

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing this email to whom this may concern the Howard County budget shortage.Here I have attached a document with my letter.

Sincerely, Oghoghosa Star Ogboe Howard High School Student Dear Howard County Council Members,

My name is Oghoghosa Star Ogboe, and I am a proud student at Howard High School. I'm writing to ask that you fully fund our Howard County Public Schools.

This issue matters deeply to me because of teachers like Ms. McGuigian, who has made a huge difference in my life and the lives of so many others. She joined our school this year and has completely transformed the library into a safe, creative, and welcoming space. Before, I only came to the library to print assignments. Now, I spend time there almost every day—along with many of my classmates.

Ms. McGuigian has created more than just a place to read books. She's created a community. Her work shows how valuable our teachers and school staff are not just in the classroom but in shaping the culture and spirit of our school. Her impact reminds me why we need to invest in people who make education meaningful.

Please don't let budget cuts take away the teachers, programs, and resources that students like me rely on. Fully funding our schools is an investment in our future. We need your support.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to our community.

Sincerely,

Oghoghosa Star Ogboe

Howard High School Student

From:	Renee Bulatowicz <reeneyb@gmail.com></reeneyb@gmail.com>
Sent:	Monday, May 12, 2025 9:21 AM
To:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Restore Full Funding to HCPSS in FY26
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear Howard County Council,

I'm writing as a concerned grandparent to urge you to fully fund the Howard County Public School System in the FY26 Operating Budget.

HCPSS has faced years of underfunding. This year, the system needs \$29.2 million just to maintain current services. Without it, we'll see larger class sizes, fewer programs, and staff layoffs – all of which hurt our students.

It's unacceptable that our schools are the first to face cuts when budgets tighten. Education is a core service and should be protected, not sacrificed. The percentage of Howard County Public Schools System share of the recurring General Fund Revenue has not kept up with historic norms and inflation.

My grandsons' school is already stretched thin. We can't afford more cuts, especially to programs that challenge students and help them to expand their knowledge. Every child should have a public education that meets their needs and learning level. This includes programs for children considered gifted. They deserve the same opportunities to meet their potential as any "special needs" child. Classroom teachers do not have the time to absorb the extra work required to adequately address the needs of gifted children. They are already stretched thin with budgets not even keeping up with inflation. We have some amazing teachers we can't afford to lose!

Please prioritize students and restore funding to HCPSS.

Thank you,

Renee Bulatowicz

13326 Folly Quarter Road

From:	Taylor Dietrich <tndietrich617@gmail.com></tndietrich617@gmail.com>
Sent:	Monday, May 12, 2025 6:26 PM
Subject:	HCPSS Budget
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

To whom it may concern,

As a tax paying citizen of Howard County and a parent who believes in public education, I'm writing this email to implore you to fund Howard County Public School programs fully.

My family chose to settle in Howard County because of his reputation for academic excellence and exceptional extracurricular programs. As the parent of a daughter drawn to the arts, it would be a shame for her to lose out on participating in such programs through HCPSS due to budget cuts.

Please, please, please fund HCPSS programs fully. We need our GT, music, theatre/arts, and paras in order to continue being one of the best school systems in the state and country.

Sincerely, Taylor Dietrich

From:	Terri Donaldson <terrineagledonaldson@gmail.com></terrineagledonaldson@gmail.com>
Sent:	Monday, May 12, 2025 8:44 AM
To:	CouncilMail; Ball, Calvin
Subject:	School funding
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear County Executive Ball and County Council Members

As you work together with the Board of Education to close the gap for the HCPSS FY26 Operating Budget, understand that students, parents, and all county residents rely upon maintaining the excellence of Howard County schools many people move here for.

We would like to respond County Executive Ball's memo sent on May 8th which suggested HCPSS use their budget in a different way so that more than 222 positions won't be cut from the FY26 school budget. We appreciate the need for transparency and dialogue in order to use County funds more efficiently and we emphasize the County's role in obtaining the necessary funding to avoid a second year of class size increase, program cuts, and extensive firings. We agree on the following steps for HCPSS:

- HCPSS should use the health fund surplus as long as county guarantees future support if required
- HCPSS General Fund Balance should be used if greater than 1% recommended balance specified by HCPSS policy
- HCPSS investment income may be available, although likely less than last year due to less funds available for investment

We urge the county to continue partnering with HCPSS by doing the following:

- Increase County conservative estimate of investment income and direct surplus to HCPSS.
- Review County salary growth (27% since 2018, compared to teachers 17%) and reduce if needed to allow HCPSS teachers to catch up to other county colleagues.
- Consider the recent history of record surplus revenue, and Pay Go funds being used repeatedly for some programs. Curren investment fund report notes that fund balance is approximately \$200M above expected level for FY25. Whether through additional revenue or additional sacrifice, we expect that support for HCPSS will allow for continuance of current programs and staffing levels.

We must balance fiscal responsibility for the future and our children's educational needs today. Drawing down the surplus health fund balances increases shortage risks in the future which the county will have to cover. HCPSS General fund balance dropping below 1% risks requiring additional appropriations like the county is voting on this month (5.5M to HCPSS to cover unexpected additional cost in CR88-2025).

No one can predict the future – but overly conservative estimates of investment income come at its own opportunity cost. Costs like increased class sizes for the second year in a row, 48% reduction in Elementary school gifted and talented program, and 3rd grade strings. Teachers can't withstand another increase in workload. Students can't withstand losing even more teachers from each school and some classrooms cannot physically fit one more desk in the room. We ask the County to prioritize residents' commitment to their own educational needs.

Thank you,

Terri Donaldson terrineagledonaldson@gmail.com

From:	Tim Corbin <timothycorbin@gmail.com></timothycorbin@gmail.com>
Sent:	Monday, May 12, 2025 2:01 PM
To:	Ball, Calvin
Cc:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Upcoming planned HCPSS budget cuts
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear Dr. Ball,

I have no expectation that you would remember meeting me years ago, in 2011, but it's a strangely strong memory I have. I was taking a journalism course at UMUC (now UMGC) as part of my bachelor's program and needed to interview a member of the County Council. You generously took time after the session to talk with me and answer my questions. I was struck by your positive demeanor during the meeting and have always appreciated you taking the time to talk afterward, but I was never able to properly thank you.

I write to you now as a resident of Howard County with daughters in 1st, 4th, and 5th grades at Manor Woods Elementary.

This is no doubt an incredibly difficult set of choices you are currently tasked with in the face of a massive budget shortfall that will directly affect Howard County Public Schools. Tens of millions of dollars needed just to sustain the already understaffed school system is a significant challenge.

But these are the times *we need you more than ever*. Howard County Public Schools are the envy of and model for so many other systems. Just three weeks ago, we had friends visiting from Northern Virginia — a nice area by all accounts. We were trying to convince them to move nearby. "Yeah, but how are the schools?" they asked. "What are the ratings?" We pulled up those ratings and watched their jaws drop. 8 out of 10, 9 out of 10, 10 out of 10. Their local public schools? 2 out of 10.

Howard County stands apart with its incredible programs. I think of GT and Music in particular — two programs that have had wonderfully positive impacts on our children. Cutting these programs cuts into the future of all students. It snatches away potential and eliminates opportunities from the future of our world, nation, state, county, neighborhoods, and families. It also takes jobs away from passionate, hard-working teachers that we entrust with our children every day.

Perhaps this is a time for the County and HCPSS to get creative with raising revenue, as it is indeed a time of desperation, but *cutting* nearly \$30 million from the budget will have *decades worth* of reallife consequences for our children, in schools that already have overfilled classrooms with not enough resources and budgets that have not sufficiently kept up with per-student spending.

I hope you can, together with the County Council and the Board of Education, find ways to *put our students first* when it comes to determining the County budget. Howard County is a tremendous place

to live, and many people, including our family, seek out Howard County as a place to raise their children *because of the schools*. We cannot let this fact escape us.

Howard County Public Schools are exceptional. They are a place where seeds are planted. A place where leaders are born. A place where children develop into the people they will become under the caring eye of teachers and administrators who strive for excellence each and every day.

We must properly fund our schools and ensure the future of our children is as bright as every parent hopes and dreams it can be.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Tim Corbin <u>timothycorbin@gmail.com</u>

From:	Yun Xing <yxingckk@gmail.com></yxingckk@gmail.com>
Sent:	Monday, May 12, 2025 7:40 PM
То:	Ball, Calvin
Cc:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Demand to fully restore HCPSS FY26 Funding
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up

Follow Up Flag:Follow UpFlag Status:Flagged

[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 and County Council Members

As you work together with the Board of Education to close the gap for the HCPSS FY26 Operating Budget, understand that students, parents, and all county residents rely upon maintaining the excellence of Howard County schools many people move here for.

We would like to respond County Executive Ball's memo sent on May 8th which suggested HCPSS use their budget in a different way so that more than 222 positions won't be cut from the FY26 school budget. We appreciate the need for transparency and dialogue in order to use County funds more efficiently and we emphasize the County's role in obtaining the necessary funding to avoid a second year of class size increase, program cuts, and extensive firings.

We agree on the following steps for HCPSS:

HCPSS should use the health fund surplus as long as county guarantees future support if required HCPSS General Fund Balance should be used if greater than 1% recommended balance specified by HCPSS policy

HCPSS investment income may be available, although likely less than last year due to less funds available for investment

We urge the county to continue partnering with HCPSS by doing the following:

Increase County conservative estimate of investment income and direct surplus to HCPSS.

Review County salary growth (27% since 2018, compared to teachers 17%) and reduce if needed to allow HCPSS teachers to catch up to other county colleagues.

Consider the recent history of record surplus revenue, and Pay Go funds being used repeatedly for some programs. Curren investment fund report notes that fund balance is approximately \$200M above expected level for FY25. Whether through additional revenue or additional sacrifice, we expect that support for HCPSS will allow for continuance of current programs and staffing levels.

We must balance fiscal responsibility for the future and our children's educational needs today. Drawing down the surplus health fund balances increases shortage risks in the future which the county will have to cover. HCPSS General fund balance dropping below 1% risks requiring additional appropriations like the county is voting on this month (5.5M to HCPSS to cover unexpected additional cost in CR88-2025). No one can predict the future – but overly conservative estimates of investment income come at its own opportunity cost. Costs like increased class sizes for the second year in a row, 48% reduction in Elementary school gifted and talented program, and 3rd grade strings. Teachers can't withstand another

increase in workload. Students can't withstand losing even more teachers from each school and some classrooms cannot physically fit one more desk in the room. We ask the County to prioritize residents' commitment to their own educational needs. Sincerely,

Yun Xing, parent of Bushy Park Elementary School students Cooksville, 21723

Praise loudly - correct softly.

From:	Chrissy Wolf <bradandchrissy@mac.com></bradandchrissy@mac.com>
Sent:	Tuesday, May 13, 2025 8:47 AM
То:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Restore Full Funding to HCPSS in FY26

Dear Howard County Council,

I'm writing as a concerned parent to urge you to fully fund the Howard County Public School System in the FY26 Operating Budget.

HCPSS has faced years of underfunding. This year, the system needs \$29.2 million just to maintain current services. Without it, we'll see larger class sizes, fewer programs, and staff layoffs — all of which hurt our students.

It's unacceptable that our schools are the first to face cuts when budgets tighten. Education is a core service and should be protected, not sacrificed. The percentage of Howard County Public Schools System share of the recurring General Fund Revenue has not kept up with historic norms and inflation.

Please prioritize students and restore funding to HCPSS.

Thank you,

Brad Wolf

From:	Brittany Jacobs <brittanyplaysviola@gmail.com></brittanyplaysviola@gmail.com>
Sent:	Tuesday, May 13, 2025 10:22 PM
To:	CouncilMail; Budget Testimony
Subject:	Fully Fund HCPSS Budget
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear County Council members,

Here in Howard County we are once again facing a budget crisis. As a parent of an elementary-aged child in our school system, I am deeply concerned about the shortfalls in funding for HCPSS. My husband and I chose to live and raise our child in Howard County because of its excellent school system, where our child can experience programs and opportunities we did not have during our PreK-12 educations. We cannot have the best education for the children of Howard County if we do not invest in it. The Board of Education is proposing numerous cuts that would disproportionately impact our youngest learners. I implore you to fully fund the HCPSS budget to prevent these cuts from occurring, and to allow the children of Howard County to have the best public education possible.

Respectfully,

Brittany Jacobs

Sent from my iPhone

From:	Danielle Dunn <teacherddunn@gmail.com></teacherddunn@gmail.com>
Sent:	Tuesday, May 13, 2025 8:17 AM
To:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Howard County Budget Issues
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear Council Members,

I was disheartened that the county was unable to fully fund the HCPSS requested budget. At first, I had some sympathy with concerns about future short falls in the budget due to the reduction of federal jobs, but when a slide was presented about the continual reduction in PERCENTAGE of funds allocated to HCPSS, I started to question my sympathy. So, I began to investigate how surrounding counties prioritize education and what I discovered was shocking!!!!

After doing some research, your explanations that there are not enough funds in the county budget or that Howard County Government jobs are being preserved ring false.

Howard County is making it clear that it is *not* investing in Howard County Public Schools by decreasing the percentage of its budget investment into HCPSS from 52.6% in 2021 with a steady decline to <u>40.8% in</u> 2026. That is over a 12% drop in prioritizing funding since 2019!!!! This clearly shows that the county is not investing in nor prioritizing education. Please understand that by decreasing the percentage of the budget, the county is CLEARLY stating that education is not a priority. I find this incredibly interesting when juxtaposed against concerns that there will be less revenues with federal jobs being lost. As Howard County appears to be racing to the bottom to fund education, I would imagine more families will be interested in Montgomery County where approximately <u>47% of their budget</u> goes to education OR Arundel County where approximately <u>49% of their budget</u> goes to education. Wouldn't losing families to other counties lead to a reduction in revenue?

Clearly, there *are* funds to support the HCPSS budget. Howard County is choosing not to invest in education; it is NOT prioritizing education. In fact, the continual decrease in percentage of budget that is allocated to HCPSS shows that the county doesn't value education.

As far as preserving county jobs? I believe that HCPSS employees can be considered county employees and with the decrease in funding, over 200 jobs will be lost.

Please stop making the excuse that the Maryland Blueprint is the cause of HCPSS budget shortfall; it is clearly the fault of Howard County's consistent devaluing of public education.

Stop misleading the county by saying that 64% of all new revenue is being allocated to HCPSS. The truth is that the county continues to drop its commitment to education by dropping the overall county budget's

commitment to education from 52.8% in 2019 to 40.8% in 2026. Instead of prioritizing education, Howard County is actively defunding education each fiscal year.

Respectfully, Danielle Dunn

From:	Eddie <eddie219@gmail.com></eddie219@gmail.com>
Sent:	Tuesday, May 13, 2025 11:46 AM
To:	Ball, Calvin
Cc:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Please, fully restore HCPSS FY26 Funding
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear County Executive Ball and County Council Members,

As you collaborate with the Board of Education to address the gap in the HCPSS FY26 Operating Budget, please recognize the critical importance of maintaining the excellence of Howard County schools—a key reason many families choose to reside here. I am writing in response to County Executive Ball's memo dated May 8th, which suggested alternative budget allocations to prevent the loss of over 222 positions in the FY26 school budget.

Our community and I appreciate the need for transparency and dialogue to optimize the use of County funds, and we emphasize the County's role in securing necessary funding to avert a second consecutive year of increased class sizes, program cuts, and extensive layoffs.

I propose the following actions for HCPSS:

- Utilize the health fund surplus, provided the County guarantees future support if needed.
- **Deploy the General Fund Balance** if it exceeds the 1% recommended balance specified by HCPSS policy.
- **Consider available investment income**, acknowledging it may be less than last year due to reduced funds for investment.

I urge the County to support HCPSS by:

- Increasing the conservative estimate of investment income and directing any surplus to HCPSS.
- **Reviewing County salary growth** (27% since 2018, compared to teachers' 17%) and adjusting if necessary to allow HCPSS teachers to catch up with other County colleagues.
- **Considering the history of surplus revenue and Pay Go funds** being repeatedly used for some programs. The current investment fund report indicates a fund balance approximately \$200M above the expected level for FY25. Whether through additional revenue or sacrifice, we expect support for HCPSS to maintain current programs and staffing levels.

We must balance fiscal responsibility with our children's educational needs. Drawing down surplus health fund balances increases future shortage risks, which the County will need to address. A General

Fund balance below 1% risks requiring additional appropriations, as seen with the current \$5.5M vote to cover unexpected costs (CR88-2025).

While the future is unpredictable, overly conservative estimates of investment income have opportunity costs, such as increased class sizes for the second year, a 48% reduction in the Elementary School Gifted and Talented program, and cuts to 3rd-grade strings. Teachers cannot endure another increase in workload, and students cannot afford to lose more educators, especially when some classrooms are already at capacity.

Our community and I urge the County to prioritize residents' commitment to their educational needs.

Sincerely,

Edward Lee Centennial Elementary School and Centennial High School Ellicott City, 21042

From: Sent:	Germarie Sanchez-Pomales <germarie@gmail.com> Tuesday, May 13, 2025 9:06 PM</germarie@gmail.com>
То:	Ball, Calvin B; CouncilMail; Walsh, Elizabeth; CouncilDistrict1@howardcountymd.gov; CouncilDistrict2 @howardcountymd.gov; CouncilDistrict4@howardcountymd.gov; CouncilDistrict5 @howardcountymd.gov; CouncilDistrict3@howardcountymd.gov
Cc:	jennifer_riccardi@hcpss.org; richard_jeffries@hcpss.org; Bill_Barnes@hcpss.org; Germarie Sanchez- Pomales
Subject:	Please do more for my son and all the HoCo children- increase funding for HCPSS
Attachments:	Letter to HoCo leaders.pdf
Follow Up Flag: Flag Status:	Follow up Flagged

Dear Howard County Leaders,

My name is Germarie Sanchez-Pomales, I live in Ellicott City, and I am a working mother who—like every parent—is trying to give my child the best possible chance at a good life. My 7-year-old son is an extraordinary boy. He is funny, loving, and endlessly curious. He also has autism and ADHD. Every morning, he wakes up ready to try again—to face a world that often doesn't understand or accommodate him—with a smile on his face and trust in his heart. But lately, I've watched that light begin to fade. And I cannot describe the kind of pain that causes a mother.

I want to begin by saying thank you. Thank you for recognizing that our schools are in crisis, and for filing emergency budget legislation to provide up to \$14.5 million in additional funding. That decision gave me a flicker of hope. I am truly grateful to see our elected leaders stepping in. But I also must be honest with you: It is not enough! Not nearly enough.

This letter is a plea... A desperate, aching plea from a mother who once believed she could give her little boy every opportunity to succeed, but now lives with the paralyzing guilt and grief of watching him fall through the cracks of a system that is failing him. You see, my son is falling behind—quickly. He is struggling in ways I never imagined he would. Not because he isn't smart. Not because he isn't trying. Not because he lacks the potential, but because he is not getting the one-on-one instruction and support he needs at school. Because of funding issues, this year, his school does not have the staff or the resources to meet his needs. The support he had last year—when he was thriving—is gone. And with it, the confidence and progress we fought so hard for.

I watch him come home confused and frustrated. He does not understand why things changed so drastically... why school feels so hard now. And I have no good answer for him—only heartbreak. The teachers and staff at his school care deeply. They are doing everything they can. But they are being asked to do the impossible. The system is failing them, too.

And I feel like I am failing my son. What makes this even harder to live with is knowing that the longer we wait to adequately fund our schools, the harder it will be for my son—and children like him—to ever catch up. Not funding our schools at the appropriate level will only make my little boy's struggles grow deeper, his gap wider, his frustration stronger, and his joy—his beautiful, innocent joy—slip away.

I never thought I'd feel this way. I worked so hard to get where I am. I come from a humble family that struggled deeply—my parents made less than \$2 an hour at times. They rented a modest home for years so that my sister and I

could attend a good public school. They skipped meals, made every sacrifice they could, and they never stopped believing in the value of education.

Because of them, I earned my college degrees, and I became the director of a team of 40 brilliant professionals who are public servants. When I bought a home in Howard County, I did so with pride, believing I was doing exactly what my parents had done for me and my sister—making sacrifices to give my child a real shot at success and happiness; to give him something priceless: the opportunity to flourish in one of the best school systems in the country. But this year has broken that belief.

I now lie awake at night crushed with guilt, my chest tight with anxiety, wondering if I made the wrong choices. I work full time—not because I want to be away from him, but because I have to. I need to pay for his therapies. I need to pay the mortgage on the home I bought specifically so he could attend a school in Howard County. I work every day to provide for him. I spend every night coordinating his therapy appointments, his tutoring sessions, his doctor visits, and his IEP meetings. I am doing everything I can, and still, it doesn't feel like enough. I cannot quit my job to homeschool him. I cannot afford private one-on-one education. I'm running out of time, energy, and hope. And still—I feel like I am failing him and I am not advocating for him the way he deserves, the way he needs me to. I truly believe I am out of options. And it breaks me.

And still, there is a voice in my head whispering: You should be doing more. But how can I? I have nothing left to give. I feel like I'm drowning in love and worry and powerlessness.

I never imagined resenting the success I worked so hard for, but I do now. I resent it because I believed it would protect my son, and it hasn't. I look back at my parents and their sacrifices and realize—with pain—that they were able to give me much more with far less. And it breaks me to admit this, that I now envy my parents. This is something I never imagined I would feel. I am exhausted. I am afraid. And most of all, I am heartbroken that my son, who deserves so much, is being let down.

I share all of this with you not out of anger—but out of desperate, pleading hope. Please understand: the emergency budget legislation is a vital start, but it is not enough to meet the needs of children like my son. He is not alone. There are so many students across our county who are falling through the cracks, who need one-on-one support, inclusion, and care. Our educators are exhausted. They are fighting for these children, too—but they are burning out.

You must do more. So I am asking you... I am begging you, please don't let this emergency funding be the end of your effort. Let it be the beginning. Let it be a turning point... Because the need is far greater than \$14.5 million. The need is urgent. The pain is real. We need bold, sustained investment, not just to stop the bleeding but to truly heal the system.

I know what it means to make hard decisions with limited budgets. I saw my parents do it when I was a child. I've done it as a leader. I've done it as a mother. I understand what it means to make sacrifices. And I know this: when you keep your priorities straight, the right decisions—even the hardest ones—become clear.

My son deserves a chance to succeed. A chance to be safe. A chance to learn. A chance to be included and be happy. He deserves a system that believes in him as much as I do. Please, don't let him down. Don't let other children with disabilities down. Don't let the educators carrying this crisis on their backs down. Don't let this be where hope ends.

As a mother who loves her child more than anything in the world, and who just wants him to have the chance he deserves, I am begging you—find the courage to do more.

Please make our children your top priority. Because if children like my son—bright, vulnerable, eager to learn—are not at the center of your decisions, then what kind of future are we building?

Respectfully,

Germarie Sanchez-Pomales, PhD 4615 Brentwood Ln Ellicott City, MD 787-413-4610 May 13, 2025

Subject: Please do more for my son and all the HoCo children- increase funding for HCPSS

Dear Howard County Leaders,

My name is Germarie Sanchez-Pomales, I live in Ellicott City, and I am a working mother who—like every parent is trying to give my child the best possible chance at a good life. My 7-year-old son is an extraordinary boy. He is funny, loving, and endlessly curious. He also has autism and ADHD. Every morning, he wakes up ready to try again—to face a world that often doesn't understand or accommodate him—with a smile on his face and trust in his heart. But lately, I've watched that light begin to fade. And I cannot describe the kind of pain that causes a mother.

I want to begin by saying thank you. Thank you for recognizing that our schools are in crisis, and for filing emergency budget legislation to provide up to \$14.5 million in additional funding. That decision gave me a flicker of hope. I am truly grateful to see our elected leaders stepping in. But I also must be honest with you: It is not enough! Not nearly enough.

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I watch him come home confused and frustrated. He does not understand why things changed so drastically... why school feels so hard now. And I have no good answer for him—only heartbreak. The teachers and staff at his school care deeply. They are doing everything they can. But they are being asked to do the impossible. The system is failing them, too.

And I feel like I am failing my son. What makes this even harder to live with is knowing that the longer we wait to adequately fund our schools, the harder it will be for my son—and children like him—to ever catch up. Not funding our schools at the appropriate level will only make my little boy's struggles grow deeper, his gap wider, his frustration stronger, and his joy—his beautiful, innocent joy—slip away.

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I now lie awake at night crushed with guilt, my chest tight with anxiety, wondering if I made the wrong choices. I work full time—not because I want to be away from him, but because I have to. I need to pay for his therapies. I

need to pay the mortgage on the home I bought specifically so he could attend a school in Howard County. I work every day to provide for him. I spend every night coordinating his therapy appointments, his tutoring sessions, his doctor visits, and his IEP meetings. I am doing everything I can, and still, it doesn't feel like enough. I cannot quit my job to homeschool him. I cannot afford private one-on-one education. I'm running out of time, energy, and hope. And still—I feel like I am failing him and I am not advocating for him the way he deserves, the way he needs me to. I truly believe I am out of options. And it breaks me.

And still, there is a voice in my head whispering: You should be doing more. But how can I? I have nothing left to give. I feel like I'm drowning in love and worry and powerlessness.

I never imagined resenting the success I worked so hard for, but I do now. I resent it because I believed it would protect my son, and it hasn't. I look back at my parents and their sacrifices and realize—with pain—that they were able to give me much more with far less. And it breaks me to admit this, that I now envy my parents. This is something I never imagined I would feel. I am exhausted. I am afraid. And most of all, I am heartbroken that my son, who deserves so much, is being let down.

I share all of this with you not out of anger—but out of desperate, pleading hope. Please understand: the emergency budget legislation is a vital start, but it is not enough to meet the needs of children like my son. He is not alone. There are so many students across our county who are falling through the cracks, who need one-on-one support, inclusion, and care. Our educators are exhausted. They are fighting for these children, too—but they are burning out.

You must do more. So I am asking you... I am begging you, please don't let this emergency funding be the end of your effort. Let it be the beginning. Let it be a turning point... Because the need is far greater than \$14.5 million. The need is urgent. The pain is real. We need bold, sustained investment, not just to stop the bleeding but to truly heal the system.

I know what it means to make hard decisions with limited budgets. I saw my parents do it when I was a child. I've done it as a leader. I've done it as a mother. I understand what it means to make sacrifices. And I know this: when you keep your priorities straight, the right decisions—even the hardest ones—become clear.

My son deserves a chance to succeed. A chance to be safe. A chance to learn. A chance to be included and be happy. He deserves a system that believes in him as much as I do. Please, don't let him down. Don't let other children with disabilities down. Don't let the educators carrying this crisis on their backs down. Don't let this be where hope ends.

As a mother who loves her child more than anything in the world, and who just wants him to have the chance he deserves, I am begging you—find the courage to do more.

Please make our children your top priority. Because if children like my son—bright, vulnerable, eager to learn—are not at the center of your decisions, then what kind of future are we building?

Respectfully,

Germarie Sanchez-Pomales, PhD 4615 Brentwood Ln Ellicott City, MD 787-413-4610

From:	H Qiu <qhj2004@gmail.com></qhj2004@gmail.com>
Sent:	Tuesday, May 13, 2025 9:55 AM
To:	CouncilMail; Ball, Calvin
Subject:	Demand to fully restore HCPSS FY26 Funding
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear County Executive Ball and County Council Members,

As you work together with the Board of Education to close the gap for the HCPSS FY26 Operating Budget, understand that students, parents, and all county residents rely upon maintaining the excellence of Howard County schools many people move here for.

We would like to respond County Executive Ball's memo sent on May 8th which suggested HCPSS use their budget in a different way so that more than 222 positions won't be cut from the FY26 school budget. We appreciate the need for transparency and dialogue in order to use County funds more efficiently and we emphasize the County's role in obtaining the necessary funding to avoid a second year of class size increase, program cuts, and extensive firings.

We agree on the following steps for HCPSS:

- HCPSS should use the health fund surplus as long as county guarantees future support if required
- HCPSS General Fund Balance should be used if greater than 1% recommended balance specified by HCPSS policy
- HCPSS investment income may be available, although likely less than last year due to less funds available for investment

We urge the county to continue partnering with HCPSS by doing the following:

- Increase County conservative estimate of investment income and direct surplus to HCPSS.
- Review County salary growth (27% since 2018, compared to teachers 17%) and reduce if needed to allow HCPSS teachers to catch up to other county colleagues.

- Consider the recent history of record surplus revenue, and Pay Go funds being used repeatedly for some programs. Curren investment fund report notes that fund balance is approximately \$200M above expected level for FY25. Whether through additional revenue or additional sacrifice, we expect that support for HCPSS will allow for continuance of current programs and staffing levels.

We must balance fiscal responsibility for the future and our children's educational needs today. Drawing down the surplus health fund balances increases shortage risks in the future which the county will have to cover. HCPSS General fund balance dropping below 1% risks requiring additional appropriations like the county is voting on this month (5.5M to HCPSS to cover unexpected additional cost in CR88-2025).

No one can predict the future – but overly conservative estimates of investment income come at its own opportunity cost. Costs like increased class sizes for the second year in a row, 48% reduction in Elementary school gifted and talented program, and 3rd grade strings. Teachers can't withstand another increase in workload. Students can't withstand losing even more teachers from each school and some classrooms cannot physically fit one more desk in the room.

We ask the County to prioritize residents' commitment to their own educational needs.

Henry Qiu

CHS, Ellicott City, MD

From:	Jill Lee <jill_lee@hcpss.org></jill_lee@hcpss.org>
Sent:	Tuesday, May 13, 2025 3:35 PM
To:	Ball, Calvin; CouncilMail
Subject:	Concern for Under-Funded HCPSS Budget
Attachments:	IMG_0545.JPG; IMG_0548.JPG
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Follow op Flag.	i ollow up

Flagged

Flag Status:

[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 and County Council Members,

I am writing to express my concern over the reduction in funds to the Howard County Public School system. As a high school library media specialist in my 15th year teaching, I will see first-hand the effects this shortfall will have on HCPSS students. Not only will all of our general education students suffer, but more specifically our students who require unique supports and assistance will be lost within the education system.

High School library media specialists are once again put on the list for a reduction in staff, which would be exceedingly detrimental to the foundation of the school. Librarians have the unique opportunity to work with the entire student body. As a result of this, we are on the front lines to see exactly what our students need, and where the county falls short. In a time where our nation's children already struggle with reading and information literacy skills, underfunding and removing the very employees that are specially trained and educated to improve these skills will only further us into an educational deficit.

Reducing staff will quite simply shut library doors, restrict access to materials, and prevent students from accessing a consistent safe and inclusive space. This reduction in funds will give the HCPSS board no choice but to make more staff cuts to the very individuals directly responsible for student learning and well-being. Classes will no longer be offered, clubs will not foster student inquiry and exploration, and special interest programs will be non-existent. Students from all walks of life and all interests will not be able to experience this in their high school career.

Speaking from experience, from 2012-2017, I personally scheduled, planned, and organized Dr. Calvin Ball's visit to speak with Long Reach High School students in the library media center. If my position is to be reduced, opportunities such as this will not be available for students. (have attached two pictures from one of these visits here)

I encourage you to view a snapshot of what librarians do for their school community, which is just one of several programs that will be diminished, if not non-existent if the HCPSS budget is not fully funded.

RHS 2021-2022 LM Annual Report

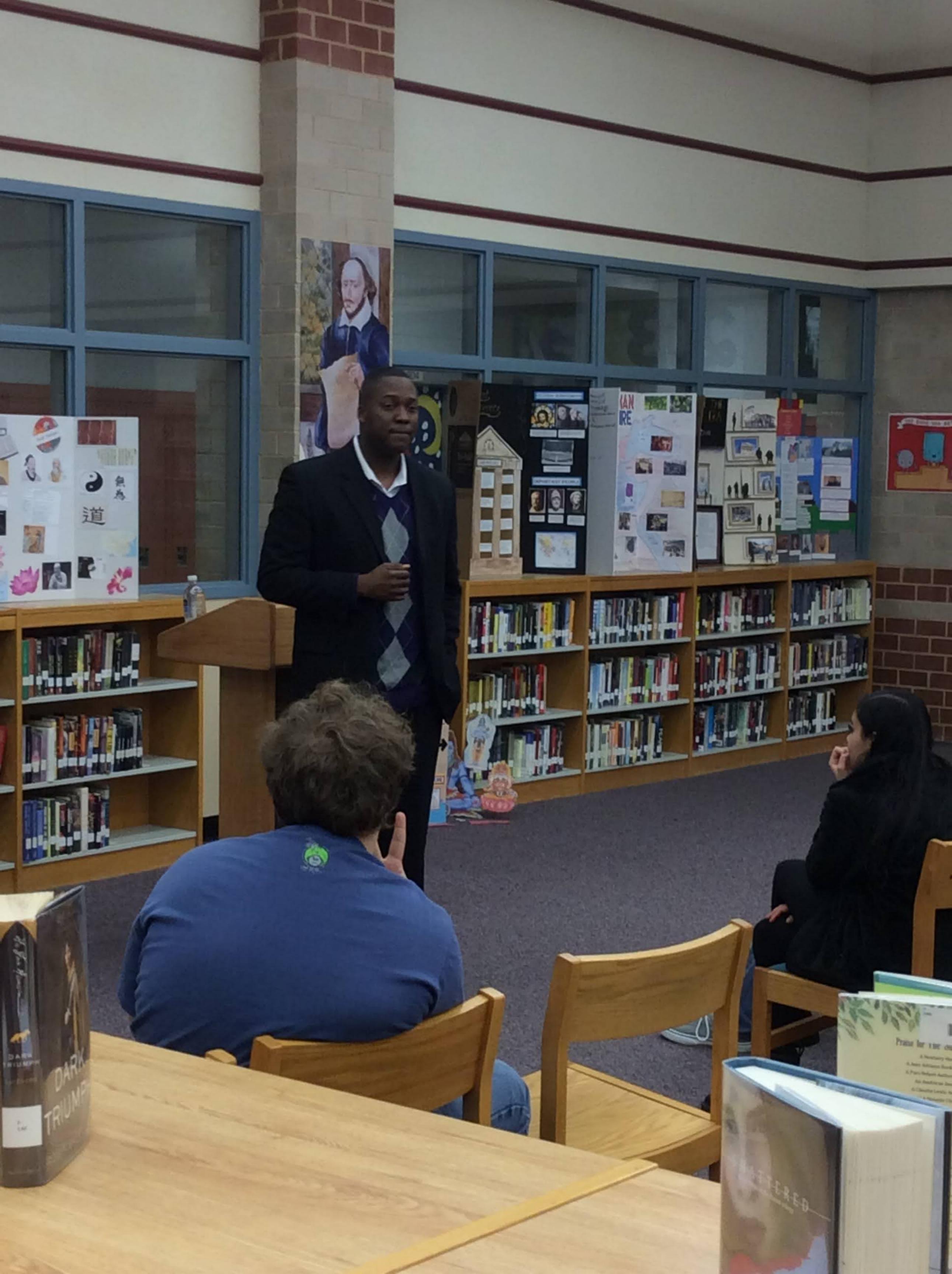
RHS 2022-2023 LM Annual Report

RHS 2023-2024 LM Annual Report

Thank you for your time,

Jill Lee Librarian, Reservoir High School Video Production Teacher On Instagram: <u>@rhsgatorslibrary</u>

This email, including any attachments, is CONFIDENTIAL and may be legally privileged. If you are not an intended recipient or an authorized representative of an intended recipient, you are prohibited from using, copying, or distributing the information in this email or its attachments. If you have received this email in error, please notify the sender immediately by return e-mail and delete all copies of this message and any attachments. Thank you.





From:	Jinsha Wang <jinshawang1@gmail.com></jinshawang1@gmail.com>
Sent:	Tuesday, May 13, 2025 4:09 PM
To:	Ball, Calvin; CouncilMail
Subject:	Dear County Executive Ball and County Council Members
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear County Executive Ball and County Council Members

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We would like to respond County Executive Ball's memo sent on May 8th which suggested HCPSS use their budget in a different way so that more than 222 positions won't be cut from the FY26 school budget. We appreciate the need for transparency and dialogue in order to use County funds more efficiently and we emphasize the County's role in obtaining the necessary funding to avoid a second year of class size increase, program cuts, and extensive firings.

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- Review County salary growth (27% since 2018, compared to teachers 17%) and reduce if needed to allow HCPSS teachers to catch up to other county colleagues.
- Consider the recent history of record surplus revenue, and Pay Go funds being used repeatedly for some programs. Curren investment fund report notes that fund balance is approximately \$200M above expected level for FY25. Whether through additional revenue or additional sacrifice, we expect that support for HCPSS will allow for continuance of current programs and staffing levels.

We must balance fiscal responsibility for the future and our children's educational needs today. Drawing down the surplus health fund balances increases shortage risks in the future which the county will have to cover. HCPSS General fund balance dropping below 1% risks requiring additional appropriations like the county is voting on this month (5.5M to HCPSS to cover unexpected additional cost in CR88-2025).

No one can predict the future – but overly conservative estimates of investment income come at its own opportunity cost. Costs like increased class sizes for the second year in a row, 48% reduction in Elementary school gifted and talented program, and 3^{ed} grade strings. Teachers can't withstand another increase in workload. Students can't withstand losing even more teachers from each school and some classrooms cannot physically fit one more desk in the room.

We ask the County to prioritize residents' commitment to their own educational needs.

Thank you,

Jinsha

From:	MJ Bulatowicz <mj.bulatowicz@gmail.com></mj.bulatowicz@gmail.com>
Sent:	Tuesday, May 13, 2025 5:01 PM
To:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Restoration of HCPSS Funding for 2026
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear Howard County Council,

I'm writing as a concerned parent of two elemtary aged children at Triadelphia Ridge ES, to urge you to fully fund the Howard County Public School System in the fiscal year 2026 Operating Budget.

Last year, we moved from WI to MD because my husband accepted a job offer at IonQ in MD. Part of the decision to accept this position was based on the fact that Maryland has excellent public schools. Maryland touts the fact that they have nationally ranked public schools of which many of those are located in Howard county. Defunding or underfunding these schools will erode the groundwork that has traditionally made them excellent schools.

In order to prevent deterioration of our outstanding schools, we need to recruit and maintain top talent teachers which requires HCPSS to pay them for their experience and skills, we need to stop making the class sizes larger which makes them unmanageable, we need to keep our special educators and paraeducators, and we need to keep our GT programs all the way down to the elementary school level. We can't expect that our teachers will be able to or willing to have larger class sizes, with less staff (i.e. less help) and less compensation. With larger class sizes and fewer special educators (if those jobs get cut), then classroom teachers will be expected to meet the needs of the SpEd students while also managing a larger class size, which is unrealistic. We need GT teachers - all the way down to the elementary school level- to develop our best and brightest for all of the jobs in MD that require advanced degrees. For example, Wes Moore wants to make Maryland a leader in the quantum computing industry. In order to work in that industry, you need extremely advanced math skills. The future of Maryland's businesses would benefit from having the best and the brightest come from right here in our own state. This is so much bigger than one child or one fiscal year. Not funding HCPSS not only erodes our local educational system, its eventual effects will be felt statewide in industries that need highly trained employees and it reduces the likelihood of potential employees with children who might consider moving here but the schools no longer meet their expectations so they chose a job elsewhere.

Looking at the historical data, the percentage of Howard County Public Schools System share of the recurring General Fund Revenue has not kept up with historic norms and inflation. Our schools are getting less and less each year, yet we expect more and more of the teachers, students, and staff to perform. This is not sustainable as is. I implore you to fully fund HCPSS for FY 2026 in order to make for a brighter future for our children, for Howard county, and for the industries in Maryland.

Thank you,

Julia Bulatowicz

13326 Folly Quarter Road

Ellicott City, MD 21042

From:	Karen Breeden <karenbreeden@hotmail.com></karenbreeden@hotmail.com>
Sent:	Tuesday, May 13, 2025 10:35 PM
To:	CouncilMail
Subject:	PLEASE FULLY FUND THE HOWARD COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM!!!!!
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear Members of the Howard County Council,

I'm pleading with you to fully fund the Howard County School budget. Prior to COVID, the Council funded the schools at least 52% of the budget. Since COVID, the percentage has consistently gone down to now around 46-47% of the budget. Every year since COVID, Calvin Ball's budget has been shorting the school budget less and less of a percentage each year, even though the dollar amount is higher than the year before. If we had continued to fund the school budget at 52% during COVID, our schools would NOT have had any real issues with providing for the students, especially our Special Needs kids. Our kids and schools are suffering due to the reduction in the PERCENTAGE given to the schools the past few years.

A great school district brings in taxes. People want to live there. BUT when you have a school district that is continually being overcrowded and underfunded, it greatly discourages families from moving. In turn, it becomes a domino effect where the property values go down due to the lack of desirability of the area because of the schools. This causes less tax income to the county.

I'm a product of the Howard County School system. My children have spent time in the Howard County school system, and I have my grandchildren that are currently in the Howard County School system. So you might say that I have "skin in the game" and I'm very concerned about the lack of funding and what it will do to my grandchildren and my property values.

Please do the right thing and fully fund the Howard County schools!

Sincerely, Karen Breeden Ellicott City, MD

From:	Kasia Modzel O'Donnell <katarzynamodzel@gmail.com></katarzynamodzel@gmail.com>
Sent:	Tuesday, May 13, 2025 6:12 PM
To:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Fwd: Keep our teachers teaching!
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear County Executive Ball and County Council Members

As you work together with the Board of Education to close the gap for the HCPSS FY26 Operating Budget, understand that students, parents, and all county residents rely upon maintaining the excellence of Howard County schools many people move here for.

We would like to respond County Executive Ball's memo sent on May 8th which suggested HCPSS use their budget in a different way so that more than 222 positions won't be cut from the FY26 school budget. We appreciate the need for transparency and dialogue in order to use County funds more efficiently and we emphasize the County's role in obtaining the necessary funding to avoid a second year of class size increase, program cuts, and extensive firings.

We agree on the following steps for HCPSS:

HCPSS should use the health fund surplus as long as county guarantees future support if required HCPSS General Fund Balance should be used if greater than 1% recommended balance specified by HCPSS policy

HCPSS investment income may be available, although likely less than last year due to less funds available for investment

We urge the county to continue partnering with HCPSS by doing the following:

Increase County conservative estimate of investment income and direct surplus to HCPSS. Review County salary growth (27% since 2018, compared to teachers 17%) and reduce if needed to allow HCPSS teachers to catch up to other county colleagues.

Consider the recent history of record surplus revenue, and Pay Go funds being used repeatedly for some programs. Curren investment fund report notes that fund balance is approximately \$200M above expected level for FY25. Whether through additional revenue or additional sacrifice, we expect that support for HCPSS will allow for continuance of current programs and staffing levels.

We must balance fiscal responsibility for the future and our children's educational needs today. Drawing down the surplus health fund balances increases shortage risks in the future which the county will have to cover. HCPSS General fund balance dropping below 1% risks requiring additional appropriations like the county is voting on this month (5.5M to HCPSS to cover unexpected additional cost in CR88-2025).

No one can predict the future – but overly conservative estimates of investment income come at its own opportunity cost. Costs like increased class sizes for the second year in a row, 48% reduction in Elementary school gifted and talented program, and 3rd grade strings. Teachers can't withstand another increase in workload. Students can't withstand losing even more teachers from each school and some classrooms cannot physically fit one more desk in the room.

We ask the County to prioritize residents' commitment to their own educational needs.

Thank you,

Kasia O'Donnell

From:	Paulette M. Samuels-Lewis <pamosamuels@gmail.com></pamosamuels@gmail.com>
Sent:	Tuesday, May 13, 2025 9:12 PM
To:	Ball, Calvin; CouncilMail
Subject:	Please Restore Funding to HCPSS
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear County Executive Ball and County Council Members,

As you work together with the Board of Education to close the gap for the HCPSS FY26 Operating Budget, understand that students, parents, and all county residents rely upon maintaining the excellence of Howard County schools many people move here for.

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- if required
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- •
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- •

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- •
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- •

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We ask the County to prioritize residents' commitment to their own educational needs.

Sincerely, Paulette Lewis 9121 Helaine Hamlet Way Mom to Joshua, Jaiden, & Joi HCPSS Students

Paulette Samuels-Lewis

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From:	Weiyu Luo <prettyarielsmile@gmail.com></prettyarielsmile@gmail.com>
Sent:	Tuesday, May 13, 2025 4:12 PM
To:	Ball, Calvin; CouncilMail
Subject:	Dear County Executive Ball and County Council Members
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear County Executive Ball and County Council Members

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We ask the County to prioritize residents' commitment to their own educational needs.

Thank you,

Sasha Wang

District 1

From:	Vanessa & Kyle Hong-Burkhalter <hongburkhalter@gmail.com></hongburkhalter@gmail.com>
Sent:	Tuesday, May 13, 2025 7:44 PM
To:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Restore Full Funding to HCPSS in FY26
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear Howard County Council,

I'm writing as a concerned parent, resident, and local child psychologist to urge you to fully fund the Howard County Public School System in the FY26 Operating Budget. HCPSS has faced years of underfunding. This year, the system needs \$29.2 million just to maintain current services. Without it, we'll see larger class sizes, fewer programs, and staff layoffs — all of which hurt our students.

It's unacceptable that our schools are the first to face cuts when budgets tighten. Education is a core service and should be protected, not sacrificed. The percentage of Howard County Public Schools System share of the recurring General Fund Revenue has not kept up with historic norms and inflation.

As a former school psychologist in the public schools, I have seen what happens when staffing is cut, particularly for the underserved and vulnerable special education, mental health, and disability supports. Us Howard County residents pride ourselves on being part of a close-knit, supportive, and educationally-minded community. However, when programming is cut for the vulnerable, there is no possible way for students to have their basic needs met during the day, nevermind thrive. For the exceptional and gifted students, they are not able to soar to their greatest potential in a way that communities laud and cheer for. This hurts the children and it hurts the community. For those who are business-oriented, this will ultimately hurt their bottom line when the community is not as desirable as they had hoped or when parents who work in the community cannot be as productive due to the challenges that their children face. For those of us who serve students and families, we see how it affects them not only in the school, but in their homes, extending to their siblings and parents.

Please prioritize students and restore funding to HCPSS. This is at the core of Howard County, and will have a reach far beyond the school walls.

Thank you,

Vanessa Hong, Ph.D., NCSP, ABSNP District 5

From:	Vrushali <vrushali.patil@gmail.com></vrushali.patil@gmail.com>
Sent:	Tuesday, May 13, 2025 5:33 PM
To:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Howard County School Budget
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Hello,

I am a parent of a student in Howard County Public Schools. I am deeply concerned about the steep budget cuts this year. It is imperative that we not balance the budget on the backs of students and educators. I urge you to fund the county public schools at the full requested level of 29 million. Thank you, Vrushali Patil

From:	Weiyu Luo <universallyterrific@gmail.com></universallyterrific@gmail.com>
Sent:	Tuesday, May 13, 2025 3:46 PM
To:	CouncilMail; Ball, Calvin
Subject:	Balancing Fiscal Responsibility and Educational Excellence in Howard County
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear County Executive Ball and County Council Members

As you work together with the Board of Education to close the gap for the HCPSS FY26 Operating Budget, understand that students, parents, and all county residents rely upon maintaining the excellence of Howard County schools many people move here for.

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We ask the County to prioritize residents' commitment to their own educational needs.

Thank you,

Weiyu Luo

9714 Gwynn Park Dr, Ellicott City, MD 21042

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Wednesday, May 14, 2025 3:06 PM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068268 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

	Case
Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget	
Case Number: CS0068268	
Case Opened: 05-14-2025	
Constituent:	
VIEW CASE	
Details:	
05-14-2025 03:05:28 PM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional comments	;
From: ABIOLA ADINLEWA <abiolaadin24@yahoo.com> Sent: Wednesday, May 14, 2025 1:05 PM To: CouncilMail <councilmail@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: Restore Full Funding to HCPSS in FY26</councilmail@howardcountymd.gov></abiolaadin24@yahoo.com>	
[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Ple click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]	ase only

Dear Howard County Council,

I'm writing as a concerned [parent/teacher/resident] to urge you to fully fund the Howard County Public School System in the FY26 Operating Budget. HCPSS has faced years of underfunding. This year, the system needs \$29.2 million just to maintain current services. Without it, we'll see larger class sizes, fewer programs, and staff layoffs - all of which hurt our students.

It's unacceptable that our schools are the first to face cuts when budgets tighten. Education is a core service and should be protected, not sacrificed. The percentage of Howard County Public Schools System share of the recurring General Fund Revenue has not kept up with historic norms and inflation.

The GT has been excellent for my daughter and her education. Cutting the GT budget would be detrimental to the kids who need the advance learning opportunity. The school is already stretched super thin and we just can't afford more cuts.

f

Please prioritize students and restore funding to HCPSS.

Thank you, Abiola Adele Manor Woods Elementary School

howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6145351

From:	Angela McMellen Brannigan <mcmellen@fastmail.com></mcmellen@fastmail.com>
Sent:	Wednesday, May 14, 2025 11:25 AM
To:	Ball, Calvin
Cc:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Fully Fund HCPSS Operating Budget
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear County Executive Ball,

I am writing regarding the HCPSS Operating Budget for FY26.

I first want to thank you for proposing emergency legislation yesterday to increase the HCPSS Operating Budget by \$14.5M. This measure is the step in the right direction, but it does not go far enough. Last year the school system took a huge budget cut that resulted in the loss of 192 positions in the school system. The quality of education in this county cannot afford another \$15M cut.

Per your own letter to the Board of Education dated May 8, you proposed that the school system cut 64.6 class room teachers, media specialists, Gifted and Talented teachers, 3rd grade strings, additional non-school positions, and other cuts to get to a \$19M cut. With the money you have proposed be added, the school would stll have to cut \$15M which means many of these cuts are still on the table.

The county is fueled by the school system. It drives people from the surrounding counties to move here and increase the tax base. These cuts would seriously undermine the school system and I frankly cannot believe that we are having this conversation again.

I thought that after last year that the council and school system would work together to come up with a durable solution to school funding in the county, but that has not happened. I understand the difficulties brought about by changes at the federal level, but something has got to change.

The schools cannot continue to be the last priority in this county. I urge you and council to work together to fund our school system to a level to maintain current services.

Sincerely, Angela McMellen Brannigan Resident of District 4

From:	Anthony DeBella <jhu1996@gmail.com></jhu1996@gmail.com>
Sent:	Wednesday, May 14, 2025 9:04 AM
То:	CouncilMail
Cc:	boe@hcpss.org; Bill Barnes; Darin Conforti; Brian Hull; Ball, Calvin
Subject:	Council Action for HCPSS FY26 Operating Budget Still Required
Attachments:	HoCoEdCoalition-2025-05-13.pdf
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 Council Members,

A number of us thought through the county executive's letter and came up with the attached recommendation.

Respectfully submitted, Anthony DeBella Laurel, MD 20723 May 13, 2025

To the Howard County Council:

The Howard County Education Coalition is a group of engaged parents and community members who have come together to advocate for a fully funded public school system that provides Howard County children with the high quality education they deserve.

We are grateful to the county executive for proposing emergency legislation that would allow use of \$14,500,000 in excess surplus funds above his original proposal for HCPSS in FY26. We ask that you honor this unprecedented gesture by passing CB 45-2025.

In addition, we urge the county council to close the remaining gap of \$14,700,000 so that HCPSS can continue to offer the same educational services, maintain class sizes, and retain current staffing levels. We realize that this would potentially require reallocation of funds away from other areas of the county budget but believe this is necessary to meet the current needs of our students. We are not in favor of a solution that involves spending the HCPSS general fund balance or using any of the other HCPSS funds identified in the county executive's May 8, 2025 letter, as those may or may not be available. Thank you for prioritizing HCPSS in the county's FY26 operating budget.

Sincerely,

Catherine Carter Jade Chang Anthony DeBella Sara Fry Lizz Hammon Corinne Happel, MD Ryan Powers Jean Xu

From:	Ashley Hopper <ashley.jolissaint.hopper@gmail.com></ashley.jolissaint.hopper@gmail.com>
Sent:	Wednesday, May 14, 2025 7:56 AM
To:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Restore Full Funding to HCPSS in FY26
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear Howard County Council,

I'm writing as a concerned parent to urge you to fully fund the Howard County Public School System in the FY26 Operating Budget.

HCPSS has faced years of underfunding. This year, the system needs \$29.2 million just to maintain current services. Without it, we'll see larger class sizes, fewer programs, and staff layoffs — all of which hurt our students.

It's unacceptable that our schools are the first to face cuts when budgets tighten. Education is a core service and should be protected, not sacrificed. The percentage of Howard County Public Schools System share of the recurring General Fund Revenue has not kept up with historic norms and inflation.

My children's school is already stretched thin. We can't afford more cuts. We have lost paraeducators and other staff, and the classroom sizes are already bursting at the seams.

Howard County's children must not pay the price for failure to thoughtfully and intentionally plan, budget, and spend. Please prioritize our county's children (students), and restore funding to HCPSS.

Thank you, Ashley Jolissaint Hopper District 5

Sent from my iPhone

From:	Brittany Jacobs <brittanyplaysviola@gmail.com></brittanyplaysviola@gmail.com>
Sent:	Wednesday, May 14, 2025 10:36 PM
To:	CouncilMail; Budget Testimony
Subject:	Fully Fund HCPSS Budget
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear County Council members,

Here in Howard County we are once again facing a budget crisis. As a parent of an elementary-aged child in our school system, I am deeply concerned about the shortfalls in funding for HCPSS. My husband and I chose to live and raise our child in Howard County because of its excellent school system, where our child can experience programs and opportunities we did not have during our PreK-12 educations. We cannot have the best education for the children of Howard County if we do not invest in it. The Board of Education is proposing numerous cuts that would disproportionately impact our youngest learners. I implore you to fully fund the HCPSS budget to prevent these cuts from occurring, and to allow the children of Howard County to have the best public education possible.

Respectfully,

Brittany Jacobs

Sent from my iPhone

From:Kristan Fish <kristan.fish@gmail.com>Sent:Wednesday, May 14, 2025 4:40 PMTo:CouncilMailCc:Bryan FishSubject:HCPSS FY26 Operating Budget

[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,

We are writing as concerned parents to urge you to fully fund the Howard County Public School System in the FY26 Operating Budget.

HCPSS has faced years of underfunding. This year, the system needs at least \$29.2 million just to maintain current services. Without it, we'll see larger classs sizes, fewer program, and staff layoffs - all of which hurt our students.

It is unacceptable that our schools are the first to face cuts when budgets tighten. Education is a core service and should be protected, not sacrificed. The percentage of the Howard County Public School System's share of the recurring General Fund Revenue has not kept up with historic norms and inflations.

Please prioritize students and restore funding to HCPSS.

Thank you-Bryan & Kristan Fish 4050 Candle Light Drive Dayton, MD 21036

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 9:37 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068340 – opened and unassigned

	Case
Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget	
Case Number: CS0068340	
Case Opened: 05-16-2025	
Constituent:	
VIEW CASE	
Details:	
05-16-2025 09:36:21 AM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional comments	5
From: Chen Li <lichen98@gmail.com> Sent: Wednesday, May 14, 2025 9:29 AM To: CouncilMail <councilmail@howardcountymd.gov>; Ball, Calv <cball@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: Demand to fully restore HCPSS FY26 Funding</cball@howardcountymd.gov></councilmail@howardcountymd.gov></lichen98@gmail.com>	vin
[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 and County Council Members, As you work together with the Board of Education to close the ga HCPSS FY26 Operating Budget, understand that students, parer county residents rely upon maintaining the excellence of Howard schools many people move here for. We would like to respond County Executive Ball's memo sent on which suggested HCPSS use their budget in a different way so the than 222 positions won't be cut from the FY26 school budget. We	nts, and all County May 8th hat more

appreciate the need for transparency and dialogue in order to use County funds more efficiently and we emphasize the County's role in obtaining the necessary funding to avoid a second year of class size increase, program cuts, and extensive firings.

We agree on the following steps for HCPSS:

- HCPSS should use the health fund surplus as long as county guarantees future support if required

- HCPSS General Fund Balance should be used if greater than 1% recommended balance specified by HCPSS policy

- HCPSS investment income may be available, although likely less than last year due to less funds available for investment We urge the county to continue partnering with HCPSS by doing the following:

- Increase County conservative estimate of investment income and direct surplus to HCPSS.

- Review County salary growth (27% since 2018, compared to teachers 17%) and reduce if needed to allow HCPSS teachers to catch up to other county colleagues.

- Consider the recent history of record surplus revenue and Pay Go funds being used repeatedly for some programs. Curren investment fund report notes that fund balance is approximately \$200M above expected level for FY25. Whether through additional revenue or additional sacrifice, we expect that support for HCPSS will allow for continuance of current programs and staffing levels.

We must balance fiscal responsibility for the future and our children's educational needs today. Drawing down the surplus health fund balances increases shortage risks in the future which the county will have to cover. HCPSS General fund balance dropping below 1% risks requiring additional appropriations like the county is voting on this month (5.5M to HCPSS to cover unexpected additional cost in CR88-2025).

No one can predict the future – but overly conservative estimates of investment income come at its own opportunity cost. Costs like increased class sizes for the second year in a row, 48% reduction in Elementary school gifted and talented program, and 3rd grade strings. Teachers can't withstand another increase in workload. Students can't withstand losing even more teachers from each school and some classrooms cannot physically fit one more desk in the room.

We ask the County to prioritize residents' commitment to their own educational needs.

Chen Li

Parent of student at Clarksville Elementary School Clarksville, MD 21029-1686 howardcountymd.gov



Ref:MSG6153209

From:	Chen Li <lichen98@gmail.com></lichen98@gmail.com>
Sent:	Wednesday, May 14, 2025 9:29 AM
To:	CouncilMail; Ball, Calvin
Subject:	Demand to fully restore HCPSS FY26 Funding
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear County Executive Ball and County Council Members,

As you work together with the Board of Education to close the gap for the HCPSS FY26 Operating Budget, understand that students, parents, and all county residents rely upon maintaining the excellence of Howard County schools many people move here for.

We would like to respond County Executive Ball's memo sent on May 8th which suggested HCPSS use their budget in a different way so that more than 222 positions won't be cut from the FY26 school budget. We appreciate the need for transparency and dialogue in order to use County funds more efficiently and we emphasize the County's role in obtaining the necessary funding to avoid a second year of class size increase, program cuts, and extensive firings.

We agree on the following steps for HCPSS:

- HCPSS should use the health fund surplus as long as county guarantees future support if required
- HCPSS General Fund Balance should be used if greater than 1% recommended balance specified by HCPSS policy
- HCPSS investment income may be available, although likely less than last year due to less funds available for investment

We urge the county to continue partnering with HCPSS by doing the following:

- Increase County conservative estimate of investment income and direct surplus to HCPSS.
- Review County salary growth (27% since 2018, compared to teachers 17%) and reduce if needed to allow HCPSS teachers to catch up to other county colleagues.

- Consider the recent history of record surplus revenue and Pay Go funds being used repeatedly for some programs. Curren investment fund report notes that fund balance is approximately \$200M above expected level for FY25. Whether through additional revenue or additional sacrifice, we expect that support for HCPSS will allow for continuance of current programs and staffing levels.

We must balance fiscal responsibility for the future and our children's educational needs today. Drawing down the surplus health fund balances increases shortage risks in the future which the county will have to cover. HCPSS General fund balance dropping below 1% risks requiring additional appropriations like the county is voting on this month (5.5M to HCPSS to cover unexpected additional cost in CR88-2025).

No one can predict the future – but overly conservative estimates of investment income come at its own opportunity cost. Costs like increased class sizes for the second year in a row, 48% reduction in Elementary school gifted and talented program, and 3rd grade strings. Teachers can't withstand another increase in workload. Students can't withstand losing even more teachers from each school and some classrooms cannot physically fit one more desk in the room.

We ask the County to prioritize residents' commitment to their own educational needs.

Chen Li

Parent of student at Clarksville Elementary School Clarksville, MD 21029-1686

From:	Erin Skoda <skoda.erin@gmail.com></skoda.erin@gmail.com>
Sent:	Wednesday, May 14, 2025 9:05 PM
To:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Please fully fund our schools
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear Howard County Council,

I'm writing as a concerned parent to urge you to fully fund the Howard County Public School System in the FY26 Operating Budget.

HCPSS has faced years of underfunding. I appreciate the proposal for \$14.5 million emergency funding bill that was announced this week, but that amount falls short of the \$29.2 million just to maintain current services. Without it, we'll see larger class sizes, fewer programs, and staff layoffs - all of which hurt our students.

It's unacceptable that our schools are the first to face cuts when budgets tighten. Education is a core service and should be protected, not sacrificed. The percentage of Howard County Public Schools System share of the recurring General Fund Revenue has not kept up with historic norms and inflation.

Class sizes are already high, and each student you add to an elementary school classroom adds additional challenges to teachers who are already working incredibly hard and to students who are trying their best to focus and learn. Paraeducators are helping to keep things running smoothly; without them, all students and teachers suffer. Howard County is known for its school system, which includes a strong GT program in elementary school and 3rd grade strings. The GT teachers not only teach the 4th and 5th grade GT math, they also teach enrichment classes to students, organize events for all students, and provide a very valuable education to help prepare our children for middle school and high school. These programs that could be cut are imperative for giving our children the experiences they need to succeed in school. Please fund the schools so that our children can have an education that prepares them for the future.

Please prioritize our students and restore funding to HCPSS.

Thank you,

Erin Skoda Howard County Resident

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 9:38 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068341 – opened and unassigned

Howard County Cas	se
Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget	
Case Number: CS0068341	
Case Opened: 05-16-2025	
Constituent:	
VIEW CASE	
Details:	
05-16-2025 09:37:42 AM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional comments	
From: Harsha <dharshareddy@gmail.com> Sent: Wednesday, May 14, 2025 11:06 AM To: CouncilMail <councilmail@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: Restore Full Funding to HCPSS in FY26</councilmail@howardcountymd.gov></dharshareddy@gmail.com>	
[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 deep concern regarding the proposed budget cuts for the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) for the upcoming year, particularly the potential significant reduction or elimination of the Gifted and Talented (G/T) programming as it currently exists.	
HCPSS has faced years of underfunding. This year, the system needs \$29.2 million just to maintain current services. Without it, we'll see large class sizes, fewer programs, and staff layoffs — all of which hurt our	r

students.

It's unacceptable that our schools are the first to face cuts when budgets tighten. Education is a core service and should be protected, not sacrificed. The percentage of Howard County Public Schools System share of the recurring General Fund Revenue has not kept up with historic norms and inflation.

As a parent, the G/T program has been instrumental in providing him with the opportunity to delve deeper into subjects that truly interest him, fostering a genuine love for learning beyond the standard curriculum. The thought that these valuable opportunities could be diminished or eliminated due to budget cuts is a significant concern for our family and for the future academic growth of my son.

Beyond the G/T program, I urge you to thoroughly investigate ALL proposed budget changes and consider the far-reaching consequences they could have on the quality of education for all students in Howard County. Fully funding the HCPSS budget is an investment in our children's future and the well-being of our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this critical matter. I urge you to prioritize the needs of our students and ensure that vital programs like G/T are preserved. I hope you will vote to fully fund the HCPSS budget. Sincerely, Harshavardhan Damalacheruvu District 5, Howard County School District

howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6153218

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From:	Jacquelyn DeBella <jacquelyndebella@yahoo.com></jacquelyndebella@yahoo.com>
Sent:	Wednesday, May 14, 2025 9:19 AM
To:	CouncilMail
Subject:	the reality of an underfunded HCPSS budget for many years
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear Members of the Howard County Council.

My son has been with HCPSS since he was 3 and our family put our trust in a broken system. When my son was in RECC, Dr. Foose put the pressure on IEP teams to take away IEP's to save money. My son went to kindergartenl without an IEP and got a brand new teacher. Then he was labeled a behavior problem in kindergarten instead of a student with multiple disabilities. We had to fight for 6 months to get his IEP back in place. That's 6 months of learning loss.

My son is now 14 and I can link also every trauma and misstep in his public education to cuts due to underfunding the HCPSS budget. During Covid , my husband I provided every service the school system did not . His "Wellness Wednesdays" (when every other student had no school) were spent at therapy , vision therapy ,OT, and academic support with D and S karate that my husband drove him to . Some of these were services in his IEP that were supposed to be provided virtually but were not .

The last misstep occurred with the decision to remove temporary employees from the budget (in 2024). At that point, the regional middle school immediately met with us and said we can not support his IEP and we had no idea where our son would attend school this Fall. In addition, they provided no support or resources for the core classes he failed due to being out of the classroom due to disregulation or suspension. Luckily, we were able to pay a tutor for the summer and I am happy to report my son is passing Algebra (a one grade level above course and receiving high school credit) this year due to our intervention. Now he is at Homewood Center.

With the recent WBAL reports on Special Education , we really want to be mindful of the impact of underfunding the budget again and how it directly impacted families like mine for years . We were lucky enough to have the resources to fill in the gaps for our son with tutoring , therapy , and specialized services . But I can not undo the trauma like being placed in a locked isolation room in elementary school , being told he could not attend Hammond MS on June 8th of his 5th grade year after he was on the honor roll , a morning announcer , a safety patrol , above grade level , and no IDR's , and not be invited or included in a promotion ceremony for 8th grade this Spring because the home school has made no attempt to provide communication regarding this (even they are supposed to) due to being at Homewood Center . Homewood Center does not have a promotion ceremony. Every time the budget was underfunded, my son ended up in a more restrictive environment. Now he will be a student at Homewood until he can prove he has two successful marking periods in a row. Even at that point it is a conversation if any of the comprehensive school are willing to meet his needs. This is by no fault of his own. This is what underfunding looks like and the direct impact it has on student learning. The special education program was forced to do more with less and this is the reality.

Every time the county council underfunds the budget, whatever is not funded seems to directly impact special education. I provided our story in this email. Now all the years of training that could not happen, cutting personnel from the Special Ed team, reducing IEP's, not providing summer school have caught up to my son who will be entering high school. This school system has failed him for 10 years and is unapologetic about it. There are many cases in our county worse than what I have described. In addition, there are students without a placement who have not been in a school for months or who are in a comprehensive school and the IEP, 504, and BIP is not being meet.

Please continue to fight for the **full** budget. Our students and educators need every resource, training, and person we have and more. Again, many families with disabled children or neurodiverse children can not provide tutoring, social / emotional supports, or other essential therapies and they are trusting you as the County Council, the school, the

teachers , the BOE, and central office to provide that . Please end this cycle of trauma and give students what they need to successful learn and ready for life beyond high school.

Thank you , Jacquelyn DeBella Parent

From:	Jaime W. Luse <jluse@tydings.com></jluse@tydings.com>
Sent:	Wednesday, May 14, 2025 3:08 PM
To:	CouncilMail
Subject:	HCPSS Budget Concerns
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear Howard County Council,

I'm writing as a concerned parent of an 8th and 10th grade student. I urge you to fully fund the Howard County Public School System in the FY26 Operating Budget.

HCPSS has faced years of underfunding. This year, the system needs at least \$29.2 million just to maintain current services. The class sizes are already too large in many instances and, without the fully funded budget, we'll see even larger class sizes, fewer programs, and staff layoffs – to the detriment of our students.

Education is a core service and should be protected, not sacrificed. The percentage of the Howard County Public School System's share of the recurring General Fund Revenue has not kept up with historic norms and inflations.

Howard County has always prided itself on its strong educational offerings and that is one of the primary reasons we chose to reside in Howard County. We have had a wonderful experience overall, but over the years I have noticed staff are being stretched thin, resources are being cut back, and the quality of the education is slipping ever so slightly. Please prioritize students and restore funding to HCPSS.

Thank you, Jaime W. Luse Glenelg, MD



Jaime W. Luse

jluse@tydings.com Office: 410.752.9741

THE MERITAS LAW FIRMS WORLDWIDE

One East Pratt Street Suite 901 Baltimore, MD 21202 Main: 410.752.9700 Fax: 410.727.5460

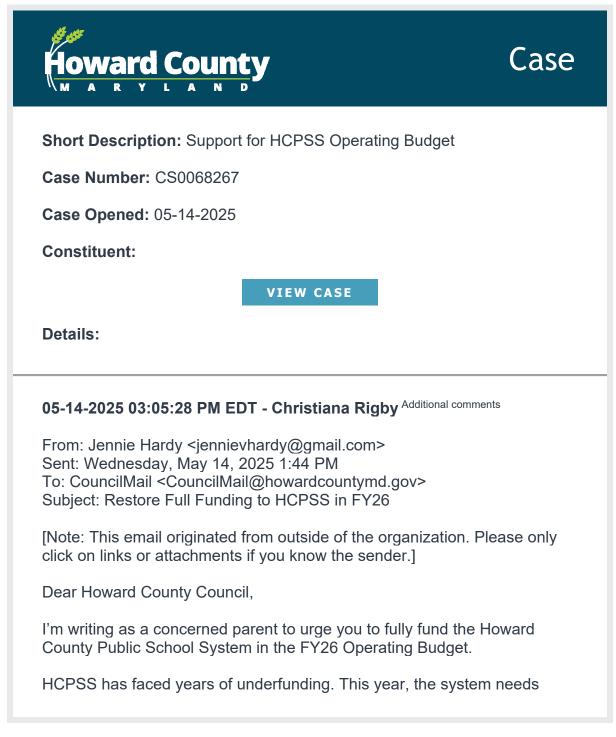
www.tydings.com

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From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Wednesday, May 14, 2025 3:06 PM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068267 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow
Flag Status:	Flagge

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\$29.2 million just to maintain current services. Without it, we'll see larger class sizes, fewer programs, and staff layoffs — all of which hurt our students.

It's unacceptable that our schools are the first to face cuts when budgets tighten. Education is a core service and should be protected, not sacrificed. The percentage of Howard County Public Schools System share of the recurring General Fund Revenue has not kept up with historic norms and inflation.

My child's school is already stretched thin. We can't afford more cuts. I have two students at Manor Woods Elementary.

My highly intellectual son has benefitted from the GT program for 3rd grade science, social studies, as well as the enrichment recess programs. My son's brain needs to be stretched. Both the science and social studies enhanced activities have allowed him to grow and keep him engaged. The recess program has been wonderful for him as he has a more difficult time finding things in common with his peers which can make down times anxiety producing. Being able to do the recess enrichment gives him something to look forward to every week where he knows he will be having fun while also learning something exciting.

My younger son is in kindergarten where they currently only have 2 paraprofessionals for 6 classes. The 5 and 6 year old kindergarten students need more attention since they are learning how to be a student in a classroom with 23 other students. The kindergarten teachers are doing their absolute best to pay attention to each child's needs but they are only one adult. They need the support from their paraprofessionals so that all students in the class are able to learn and have a positive school experience.

My children have also been affected by the cuts to the special education budget. The cuts last year DRASTICALLY affected MWES as we lost 6 temporary staff members. These were the aides that worked as Close Adult Supervision for those students needing more support for safety and to be able to complete work in the classroom. Losing these temporary employees was a HUGE loss. My son's life has been threatened numerous times by a peer who does not receive the support he needs to be safe at school. It's ridiculous to think that the homeroom teacher can be providing support as it is needed as well as teach the class. This loss of TEs that worked as CAS affects ALL students and makes for a very distracting, very unsafe learning environment in the school.

Please prioritize students and restore funding to HCPSS.

Thank you,

Jennie Hardy Manor Woods Elementary School Parent				
howardcountymd.gov	f	y	٠	

Ref:MSG6145352

From:	Lauren Robbins <laurenrobbins@gmail.com></laurenrobbins@gmail.com>
Sent:	Wednesday, May 14, 2025 9:43 PM
To:	Ball, Calvin; CouncilMail
Subject:	Funding HCPSS operating budget for 2026
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear County Executive Ball and Members of the County Council,

I write as a Howard county parent who is deeply concerned about the proposed cuts to the school budget. I do understand that making a budget, especially in these times, is a challenging task and that you are bound to make some folks unhappy. But looking at the proposed cuts to HCPSS, I have to think that there is a better approach and a different way to distribute funds so that our kids aren't the ones who will pay the price. I know that with some additional creative thinking, you can find a way to fully fund the Fiscal Year 2026 operating budget.

I do acknowledge Mr. Ball's proposal for emergency legislation to increase the HCPSS Operating Budget by \$14.5M and encourage the County Council to pass that legislation. However, that funding alone will not be sufficient to support our kids.

Mr. Ball's May 8th letter to the Board of Ed indicates that HCPSS would still need to cut 64.6 classroom teachers, 83 paraeducators at the elementary and HS levels, 14 school media specialists, 40 elementary G&T teachers (Is that ALL of them? Essentially cutting the entire program?), 3rd grade strings *completely*, and more. Our students will feel this impact immediately. The County Council must allocate an additional \$15M to support Howard County students.

Here is just one example of the impact that these dollars have: On Monday night, I had the pleasure of attending Swansfield Elementary's spring concert. If any of you were also there, you will have seen the joy the students found in coming together to play instruments, sing, and even dance (choreography by them, with amazing support from Summer Pearson, who is a music teacher *treasure*). These kids get so much out of the music program and it showcases the very best of Howard County. Strings for 3rd grade is such a highlight and I see the younger siblings watching the 3rd graders, eager for the day when they too can start to learn an instrument. It is a special and unique opportunity that we offer students here, and cutting it will take away a program that encourages kids to love school and conquer a new challenge.

Thank you for your service and for doing everything you can to support Howard county kids.

Sincerely,

Lauren Robbins

From:	Matt Jones <mjones@harborg.com></mjones@harborg.com>
Sent:	Wednesday, May 14, 2025 3:03 PM
To:	CouncilMail
Subject:	School Budget
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear Howard County Councilmembers,

Please consider restoring the HCPSS requested budget funding. While I recognize the importance of the Elkridge civic center, park upgrades and infrastructure spending, many families move to Howard County for the public school system. Cutting school services, increasing classroom sizes and eliminating incremental learning opportunities, such as music and GT programs is a major step in the wrong direction for Howard County and its residents.

The \$5M ear-marked for designing a central library can be eliminated or delayed and many other budgeted programs, such as park restoration & repairs can be implemented in a slower cadence.

Thank you

Matt Jones Ellicott City, MD District 5 757 -708-6978

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From:	Michelle Brown <michelle_brown@hcpss.org></michelle_brown@hcpss.org>
Sent:	Wednesday, May 14, 2025 1:56 PM
To:	Ball, Calvin; CouncilMail
Subject:	Fully funding HCPSS
Attachments:	Blueprint & HS Librarians.docx
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear Dr. Ball and County Council Members,

I am writing to express my concern over the reduction in funds to the Howard County Public School system. As a high school library media specialist in my 17th year teaching, I will see first-hand the effects this shortfall will have on HCPSS students. Not only will all of our general education students suffer, but more specifically our students who require unique supports and assistance will be lost within the education system.

High School library media specialists are once again put on the list for a reduction in staff, which would be exceedingly detrimental to the foundation of the school. Librarians have the unique opportunity to work with the entire student body. As a result of this, we are on the front lines to see exactly what our students need, and where the county falls short. In a time where our nation's children already struggle with reading and information literacy skills, underfunding and removing the very employees that are specially trained and educated to improve these skills will only further us into an educational deficit. Furthermore, all the roles and responsibilities of a High School Library Media Specialist (LMS) cannot be fulfilled by one staff member. We are constantly multitasking and if one of us is reduced, chromebook troubleshooting/questions/replacement will be curtailed, staff technology issues delayed, and class research projects limited by 50%. At Mt. Hebron, we often utilize both of our classroom areas simultaneously, and during lunch, we can have 2 classes and students with lunch passes—nearly 100 students. I know how impossible it is for one person to staff a school library media center as I left Baltimore County in 2018; I was burned out, exhausted, and stressed because I simply could not fulfill all the responsibilities of a LMS despite being rated Highly Effective.

High School library media specialists are integral to fulfilling the actions required by Maryland's Blueprint for Education. We support pillars One, Two, and Five, and we are vital to pillars Two: College and Career Readiness (CCR) and Three: More Resources for All Students. At Mt. Hebron, we work closely with the CCR Advisor to provide space for Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASFAB) test as well as follow-up sessions to help students build their plan to serve their country. Additionally, we participate in the monthly career spotlight by book-talking and displaying resources for the various careers. We also collaborate with the CCR Advisor to provide career and apprentice program speakers, college admissions counselors, HCC dual enrollment procedures, to mention a few. Information literacy and research skills are imperative to our students' success in their lives after high school graduation; to be a good citizen and informed voter, they need to know how to determine if news sources and online information is credible and current, relevant, accurate, has authority, and fits their purpose. All college students, and many careers will require proficient research skills; currently, many employers lament that their young employees lack research, writing, and critical thinking skills. These skills lead to Pillar Five, which calls for more resources for all students. Connecting ALL of our students with resources is the centerpiece of every library media center. We simply cannot provide more access to

resources if there are less of us to make the connections. To reiterate, at Mt. Hebron, we are often teaching information skills to 2 classes simultaneously. More resources also means knowing as many students as possible and it takes both of us to know 1400 students and build relationships with them, which in turn, helps us build a collection of books and other resources that not only reflect our students, but meet their academic and personal needs.

Reducing staff will quite simply shut library doors, restrict access to materials, and prevent students from accessing a consistent safe and inclusive space. This reduction in funds will give the HCPSS board no choice but to make more staff cuts to the very individuals directly responsible for student learning and well-being. Classes will no longer be offered, clubs will not foster student inquiry and exploration, and special interest programs will be non-existent. Students from all walks of life and all interests will not be able to experience this in their high school career.

I have attached a document that outlines exactly how high school library media specialists are integral and strategically necessary to the successful implementation of the Maryland Blueprint for Success. Thank you in advance for your consideration as you consider your allocation of funds to the children, teachers, and staff of Howard County Schools.

Sincerely,

Michelle Pahl Brown

michelle_brown@hcpss.org Library Media Specialist * DEI Liaison Mt. Hebron High School 410.313.2880 We are EXCELLENCE. We are **COMMUNITY**. We are HEBRON. *Learner * Input * Deliberative * Intellection * Adaptability*

Currently Reading



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High School Library Media Specialists & the Maryland Blueprint: A Strategic Connection

1. Early Childhood Education

Blueprint Goal: Strengthen literacy from the earliest years.

High School Relevance:

- While direct early childhood work is not a focus for high school library media specialists (HSLMS), the LMS plays a key **support role in vertical alignment** of literacy instruction.
- The HLMS reinforces skills begun in early grades by supporting independent reading and advanced literacy.

HSLMS Vital Role:

- Promote a reading culture across content areas, reinforcing the continuum of literacy.
- Collaborate with feeder schools to ensure high school students are building on prior literacy foundations.

2. High-Quality and Diverse Teachers and Leaders

Blueprint Goal: Elevate the teaching profession and strengthen instructional quality.

How HSLMS Support This:

- Serve as instructional leaders, co-teachers, and tech integrators.
- Provide **professional development** in research instruction, media literacy, and educational technologies.
- Offer curated content aligned with diverse learning styles and inclusive curricula.

HSLMS Vital Role:

- Support colleagues with curricular resources and innovative instructional strategies.
- Foster digital citizenship, research fluency, and critical thinking through co-planning and co-teaching.
- Mentor new educators and model best practices for inquiry-based learning.

3. College and Career Readiness (CCR)

Blueprint Goal: Ensure all students are CCR-ready by grade 10 and expand career pathways.

How HSLMS Drive CCR:

- Teach students **research**, **source evaluation**, **and citation** skills essential for college coursework.
- Curate materials that reflect career pathways, CTE tracks, and dual enrollment programs.
- Support development of **digital portfolios**, resumes, and project-based learning initiatives.

HSLMS Vital Role:

- Prepare students for the demands of higher education and the workforce through 21st-century information literacy.
- Help students access and use specialized databases, technical documents, and CCR-aligned materials.
- Promote academic integrity and ethical technology use.

4. More Resources for All Students

Blueprint Goal: Address needs of English learners, students with disabilities, and low-income students.

How HSLMS Ensure Equity:

- Provide **inclusive collections** representing diverse voices, cultures, and abilities.
- Ensure equitable access to technology, Wi-Fi hotspots, devices, and assistive tech.
- Support individualized instruction by collaborating with special educators and EL teachers.

HSLMS Vital Role:

- Break down barriers to access, helping close opportunity gaps.
- Create a **safe**, **supportive space** for underserved students both physically and intellectually.
- Facilitate student advocacy, identity development, and community engagement.

5. Governance and Accountability

Blueprint Goal: Provide strong oversight, data use, and continuous improvement.

WHSLMS Strategic Support:

- Use data to assess student research competencies and resource utilization.
- Participate in school improvement teams and decision-making.
- Evaluate and align library programs with school and district goals.

HSLMS Vital Role:

- Support transparency and accountability through evidence-based practice.
- Contribute to CCR tracking and instructional audits by documenting library impact.
- Align library goals with Blueprint metrics, like college readiness benchmarks.

Summary Table: Blueprint & High School Librarians

Blueprint Pillar	HSLMS Role
Early Childhood Education	Reinforce literacy continuum; support reading culture
High-Quality Teachers & Leaders	Instructional coach; tech integrator; PD provider; co-teacher
College & Career Readiness	Research and digital literacy instruction; support CCR pathways; project-based learning
Resources for All Students	Provide equitable access; inclusive collections; tech access; individual learning support
Governance & Accountability	Use data; support CCR tracking; participate in school improvement efforts



High School Library Media Specialists are not just resource managers — they are **instructional leaders**, **literacy experts**, **equity advocates**, **and CCR facilitators**. HSLMS contribute directly in support of the Maryland Blueprint's vision for an equitable, high-performing education system.

From:	Ramani Nemani <ramani.nemani@gmail.com></ramani.nemani@gmail.com>
Sent:	Wednesday, May 14, 2025 2:57 PM
To:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Please Help
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear Howard County Council,

I'm writing as a concerned [parent/teacher/resident] to urge you to fully fund the Howard County Public School System in the FY26 Operating Budget.

HCPSS has faced years of underfunding. This year, the system needs at least \$29.2 million just to maintain current services. Without it, we'll see larger classs sizes, fewer program, and staff layoffs - all of which hurt our students.

It is unacceptable that our schools are the first to face cuts when budgets tighten. Education is a core service and should be protected, not sacrificed. The percentage of the Howard County Public School System's share of the recurring General Fund Revenue has not kept of with historic norms.

"My child's folly quarter middle school is already stretched thin. We cannot afford more cuts."

Please prioritize students and restore funding to HCPSS.

Thanks, Ramani

From:	Robert Parker <robertparker44@yahoo.com></robertparker44@yahoo.com>
Sent:	Wednesday, May 14, 2025 7:32 PM
To:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Restore Full Funding to HCPSS in FY26
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear Howard County Council,

I'm writing as a concerned parent to urge you to fully fund the Howard County Public School System in the

FY26 Operating Budget.

HCPSS has faced years of underfunding. This year, the system needs \$29.2 million just to maintain current services (now reduced by \$14.5 Million). Without it, we'll see larger class sizes, fewer programs, and staff layoffs – all of which hurt our students.

It's unacceptable that our schools are the first to face cuts when budgets tighten. Education is a core service and should be protected, not sacrificed - especially in the current environment. The percentage of Howard County Public Schools System share of the recurring General Fund Revenue has not kept up with historic norms and inflation.

My child's school staff is fantastic and Gorman Crossing has been wonderful, but it is clearly already stretched thin. We can not afford more cuts.

Please prioritize students and restore funding to HCPSS.

Thank you, Robert F. Parker Laurel, MD Councilman District 003

From:	Veronica Jackson <veronicadjackson@gmail.com></veronicadjackson@gmail.com>
Sent:	Wednesday, May 14, 2025 7:58 AM
To:	CouncilMail; Ball, Calvin
Subject:	Voter Concern Re HCPSS' Funding
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear County Executive Ball and County Council Members

I am writing to you as a concerned citizen of Howard County and parent of 2 Blacks students in HCPSS (Jeffers Hill ES and Lake Elkhorn MS). I am deeply concerned with the downward trend of the HCPSS experience, which is heightened by the threat of cuts your budgeting shortfall May cause.

As you work together with the Board of Education to close the gap for the HCPSS FY26 Operating Budget, understand that students, parents, and all county residents rely upon maintaining the excellence of Howard County schools many people move here for.

We would like to respond to County Executive Ball's memo sent on May 8th which suggested HCPSS use their budget in a different way so that more than 222 positions won't be cut from the FY26 school budget. We appreciate the need for transparency and dialogue in order to use County funds more efficiently and we emphasize the County's role in obtaining the necessary funding to avoid a second year of class size increase, program cuts, and extensive firings.

We agree on the following steps for HCPSS:

HCPSS should use the health fund surplus as long as county guarantees future support if required HCPSS General Fund Balance should be used if greater than 1% recommended balance specified by HCPSS policy HCPSS investment income may be available, although likely less than last year due to less funds available for investment We urge the county to continue partnering with HCPSS by doing the following: Increase County conservative estimate of investment income and direct surplus to HCPSS.

Review County salary growth (27% since 2018, compared to teachers 17%) and reduce if needed to allow HCPSS teachers to catch up to other county colleagues.

Consider the recent history of record surplus revenue, and Pay Go funds being used repeatedly for some programs. Current investment fund report notes that the fund balance is approximately \$200M above expected level for FY25. Whether through additional revenue or additional sacrifice, we expect that support for HCPSS will allow for continuance of current programs and staffing levels.

We must balance fiscal responsibility for the future and our children's educational needs today. Drawing down the surplus health fund balances increases shortage risks in the future which the county will have to cover. HCPSS General fund balance dropping below 1% risks requiring additional appropriations like the county is voting on this month (5.5M to HCPSS to cover unexpected additional cost in CR88-2025).

No one can predict the future – but overly conservative estimates of investment income come at its own opportunity cost. Costs like increased class sizes for the second year in a row, 48% reduction in the Elementary school gifted and talented program, and 3rd grade strings. The threat of cuts to these programs is particularly troubling because they are important pillars of what make HCPSS an exceptional public school experience. Cuts weaken the fabric of our county and it's promise to be a great place to raise a family. Keep your word!!

Furthermore, teachers can't withstand another increase in workload. Students can't withstand losing even more teachers from each school and some classrooms cannot physically fit one more desk in the room.

We ask the County to prioritize residents' commitment to their own educational needs.

Thank you,

Veronica D. Jackson

From:	Yeadarm Hwang <ydkim519@gmail.com></ydkim519@gmail.com>
Sent:	Wednesday, May 14, 2025 4:08 PM
To:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Restore Full Funding to HCPSS in FY26
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear Howard County Council,

I'm writing as a concerned parent to urge you to fully fund the Howard County Public School System in the FY26 Operating Budget.

HCPSS has faced years of underfunding. This year, the system needs \$29.2 million just to maintain current services. Without it, we'll see larger class sizes, fewer programs, and staff layoffs — all of which hurt our students.

It's unacceptable that our schools are the first to face cuts when budgets tighten. Education is a core service and should be protected, not sacrificed. The percentage of Howard County Public Schools System share of the recurring General Fund Revenue has not kept up with historic norms and inflation.

My child's school is already stretched thin. We can't afford more cuts.

Please prioritize students and restore funding to HCPSS.

Thank you,

Yeadarm Hwang

Parent of Student at Waverly Elementary School

Yeadarm Hwang | Realtor®

c. 443-223-7006 | o. 301-445-1395 | Smart Realty LLC

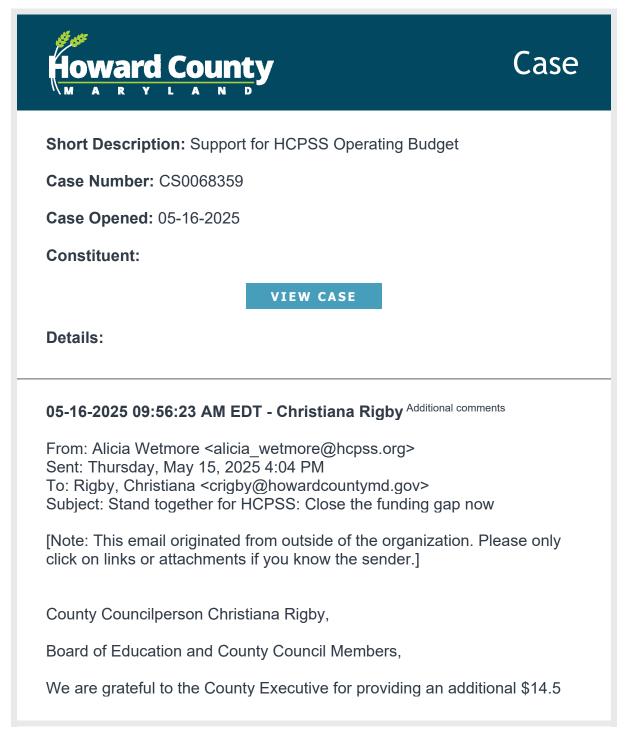
700 ELTON RD STE 201 SILVER SPRING MD 20903 www.MySmartRealtors.com



From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 9:57 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068359 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow
Flag Status:	Flagge

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million to help fund HCPSS, but we're still short of the funding we need. That's why we're asking the Board of Education and the County Council to use available funds to close the budget gap, prevent increases to class size, honor educator contracts, and deliver a "same services" budget to the residents of Howard County.

Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely, Alicia Wetmore

Alicia Wetmore alicia_wetmore@hcpss.org<mailto:alicia_wetmore@hcpss.org> 2776 Greenleaf Ct Westminster, Maryland 21157

howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6153421

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From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 10:04 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068374 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow
Flag Status:	Flagge

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million to help fund HCPSS, but we're still short of the funding we need. That's why we're asking the Board of Education and the County Council to use available funds to close the budget gap, prevent increases to class size, honor educator contracts, and deliver a "same services" budget to the residents of Howard County.

Specifically, we need:

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Sincerely,

Amy Zuilkowski

Amy Zyiy amy.quach88@gmail.com<mailto:amy.quach88@gmail.com> 4622 Roundhill Rd Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6153613

f

From:	andre gao <andregao@yahoo.com></andregao@yahoo.com>
Sent:	Thursday, May 15, 2025 10:23 PM
To:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Demand to fully restore HCPSS FY26 Funding
Follow Up Flag:	Flag for follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear County Council Members,

Please help close the gap in the HCPSS FY26 Operating Budget. Without full funding, essential school programs—such as elementary music and Gifted and Talented (GT) programs—may be cut. Class sizes could increase, and teachers and support staff may face layoffs. These outcomes would significantly diminish the quality of public education in Howard County.

Many residents, including myself, chose to live in Howard County so our children could receive a better education and have a brighter future. We work hard to afford the high cost of housing and pay substantial property taxes. Personally, I endure an average three-hour daily commute to provide for my family.

If the county does not fully fund the school budget to maintain current service levels and address high-priority needs—such as school safety—our hard work will be in vain. Over time, Howard County could lose its appeal to families who deeply value public education.

I strongly urge you to fully fund the HCPSS FY2026 budget so our children can continue to thrive and build a better future.

Sincerely,

Andre Gao Ellicott City, MD 21042

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 9:57 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068363 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Case ard County Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget Case Number: CS0068363 Case Opened: 05-16-2025 **Constituent:** VIEW CASE **Details:** 05-16-2025 09:57:22 AM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional comments From: Angela Johnson <angela d johnson@hcpss.org> Sent: Thursday, May 15, 2025 4:19 PM To: Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: Stand together for HCPSS: Close the funding gap now [Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

County Councilperson Christiana Rigby,

Board of Education and County Council Members,

We are grateful to the County Executive for providing an additional \$14.5

million to help fund HCPSS, but we're still short of the funding we need. That's why we're asking the Board of Education and the County Council to use available funds to close the budget gap, prevent increases to class size, honor educator contracts, and deliver a "same services" budget to the residents of Howard County.

Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely,

Angela Johnson angela_d_johnson@hcpss.org<mailto:angela_d_johnson@hcpss.org> 132 Langdon Farm Circle Odenton, Maryland 21113

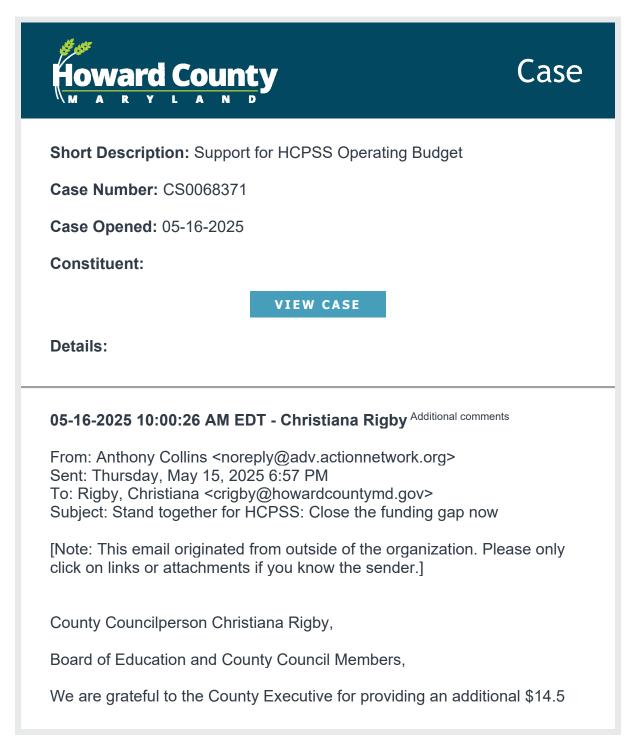
howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6153446

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From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 10:01 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068371 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged



million to help fund HCPSS, but we're still short of the funding we need. That's why we're asking the Board of Education and the County Council to use available funds to close the budget gap, prevent increases to class size, honor educator contracts, and deliver a "same services" budget to the residents of Howard County.

Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely,

Anthony Collins anthonyjcollins78@gmail.com<mailto:anthonyjcollins78@gmail.com> 10545 Pudding Ln Ellicott Coty, Maryland 21042

howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6153563

f

From:	Ari Ashe <arijashe@gmail.com></arijashe@gmail.com>
Sent:	Thursday, May 15, 2025 9:28 PM
To:	CouncilMail; CouncilDistrict3@howardcountymd.gov; Rigby, Christiana; Gelwicks, Colette; Goldscher,
Cc: Subject:	Paige Thompson, Paul; Jolene Mosley; Richard Jeffries Re: Emergency Funding
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear Councilmembers,

I'm writing as the parent of a kindergartener with moderate autism in HCPSS to ask you, as a Council, to go one step further before you vote on the FY26 budget.

I <u>appreciate</u> the \$14.5 million amendment proposed by County Executive Ball and the thoughtful May 8 letter to the Board of Education. I understand the County is under fiscal pressure, and I acknowledge that some of the identified cost-saving strategies, such as right-sizing Health Fund assumptions, revisiting investment income projections, or using available fund balance, make good sense and would not harm students.

However, some of the other internal options listed in that letter are deeply troubling for families like mine and cannot be the way we close the gap between the \$29.2 million identified need and the \$14.5 million already committed:

- Increasing class sizes by eliminating 64.6 teacher FTEs (\$6.0M)
- Cutting 78 elementary paraeducators (\$4.0M)
- Eliminating third grade strings and reducing gifted and talented teachers (\$1.1M and \$3.6M)
- Reducing school-based support staff like media specialists and secretaries (\$1.4M)

These aren't abstract numbers. They are the very people who supervise my son Weston, who has a welldocumented history of elopement when overstimulated. Without paraeducators and manageable class sizes, the risk to his safety, and the safety of others, grows dramatically. What happens when there's one fewer adult in the room and a child like Weston bolts? What if the outcome is tragic? What if a car hits him? What parent wants that phone call?

How can I ever trust my elected officials if the result of this budget is that my child is injured or harmed? Many children with autism experience elopement. Decisions that make it easier for them to escape onto busy streets can lead to irreversible consequences. As a parent, I don't want that. Do you? At the same time, the proposed FY26 Capital Budget includes:

- \$13.7 million in Recreation and Parks upgrades
- \$9.1 million for HVAC and roof renovations

These are long-term investments that can be spread out over two years.

Keeping a child with autism safe at school cannot.

I've made several recommendations that I hope the County Council and County Executive will take seriously, rather than dismiss heading into an election year.

I respectfully urge you to consider the following amendments and priorities:

- Postpone half of the Recreation and Parks upgrades saves \$6.85 million. Half will be done in FY26, the other half in FY27.
- Delay some of the \$9.1 million in non-urgent HVAC and roofing: spread over two years.
- Use modest revenue tools, such as a hotel tax increase (HB1523) and/or a \$0.15 tobacco fee. Frankly, people should not be smoking or vaping anyway. Why not fund education by taxing unhealthy behavior?

Meanwhile, I agree there are reasonable internal cost savings identified in the May 8 letter that should be explored. The Board of Education should consider internal savings on non-instructional areas, such as:

- 1. Health Fund contribution adjustments based on past claims trends (up to \$8M): Instead of increasing the Health Fund by 10.6%, scale it back to 5%, closer to recent actual growth.
- 2. Revising overly conservative investment income assumptions: HCPSS budgeted only \$2M in investment income for FY26, despite averaging over \$7M in recent years.
- 3. Using the General Fund Balance: HCPSS used \$15M in fund balance last year to balance its budget, but this year's request includes \$0. There appears to be at least \$5–8 million in available fund balance from FY24 and likely additional end-of-year savings from FY25 that could be used again without harming students. (apologies if I'm misreading the documents)
- 4. Reducing High School Teacher Secretaries (\$351K): This would slow operations but does not directly affect student learning or safety.
- 5. Reducing Non-School-Based Positions (\$2.0M): This could include administrative or central office roles. While we need more clarity, this is a far more appropriate place to look than classrooms.

These changes, combined with the Executive's amendment and smart Health Fund adjustments, could eliminate the need for harmful program cuts without impacting the daily lives of most residents or putting students at risk.

Finally, I encourage the Council to request more detail from HCPSS and the Board about what exactly is meant by "non-school-based" cuts. That phrase is far too vague. Families deserve transparency about what may be lost <u>before</u> this budget is finalized.

Let's not balance the budget on the backs of children with autism, ADHD, and other disabilities. They already carry enough.

I'll be watching—as a father and a voter—who reads every budget and ballot closely.

Thank you for your time, your service, and your willingness to stand with families in this final stretch.

Sincerely, Ari Ashe Kings Contrivance, Columbia 202-630-4601

From:	Atousa Fouladi <afouladichami@gmail.com></afouladichami@gmail.com>	
Sent:	Thursday, May 15, 2025 2:52 PM	
То:	CouncilMail	
Subject:	Restore Full Funding to HCPSS in FY26	

Dear Howard County Council,

I'm writing as a concerned parent to urge you to fully fund the Howard County Public School System in the FY26 Operating Budget.

HCPSS has faced years of underfunding. This year, the system needs \$29.2 million just to maintain current services. Without it, we'll see larger class sizes, fewer programs, and staff layoffs — all of which hurt our students.

It's unacceptable that our schools are the first to face cuts when budgets tighten. Education is a core service and should be protected, not sacrificed. The percentage of Howard County Public Schools System share of the recurring General Fund Revenue has not kept up with historic norms and inflation.

My children's school is already stretched thin. We can't afford more cuts.

Please prioritize students and restore funding to HCPSS.

Thank you,

Atousa Fouladichami

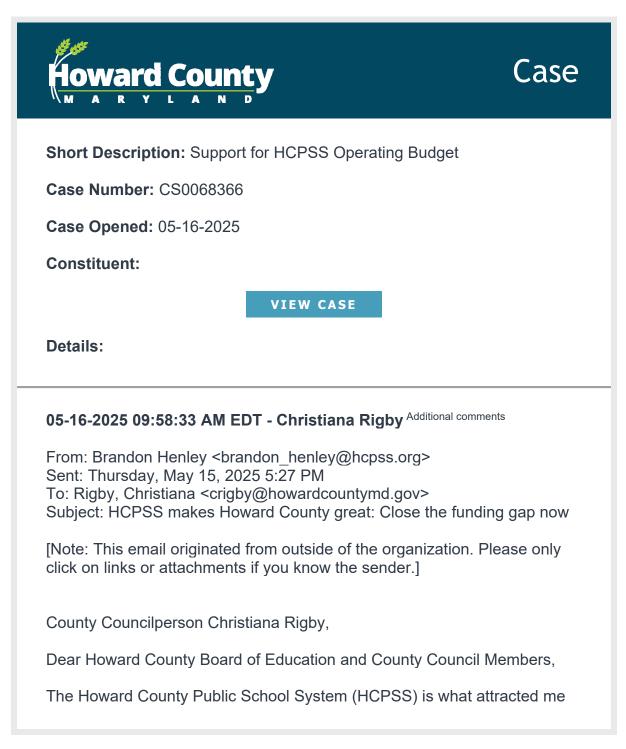
Bracken Dr, Ellicott City, MD 21042

From:	Bonnie Zeitler <bonniezeitler@gmail.com></bonniezeitler@gmail.com>
Sent:	Thursday, May 15, 2025 9:32 PM
To:	CouncilMail; Budget Testimony
Subject:	Please Fully Fund HCPSS
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Good evening, I am writing to ask you to fully fund the amount of money requested by the Howard Count Board of Education. Public schools are the biggest reason people move and stay in Howard County. Without your funding, really important programs like strings and GT will be taken away from students. We want the children to have this much more than we want a fancy library or performing arts venue. Please reallocate funds to what matters to families. Respectfully yours, Bonnie Zeitler

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 9:59 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068366 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged



to live and work in Howard County. Its reputation for excellence and support has drawn countless families and educators to this community. In particular, the music programs and teaching positions have been highly sought after for many years, offering students enriching opportunities that set our county apart. However, with continued uncertainties and annual funding challenges, I am concerned that the quality and breadth of these programs could be at risk. While I understand the importance of funding various aspects of government, it's crucial to remember that the exceptional public school system is a significant reason why so many choose to make Howard County their home. Let's keep that in mind as we make decisions that will shape our community's future.

We are grateful to the County Executive for providing an additional \$14.5 million to help fund HCPSS, but we are still short of the funding we need. That is why we are asking the Board of Education and the County Council to use available funds to close the budget gap, prevent increases to class size, honor educator contracts, and deliver a "same services" budget to the residents of Howard County.

Specifically, we need:

The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.

The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We recognize that Howard County is navigating significant uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need dedicated educators and strong schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do their part, our entire community benefits.

Thank you for your continued support of Howard County's students, families, and educators.

Sincerely, Brandon Henley Band Director Centennial Lane ES

Brandon Henley brandon_henley@hcpss.org<mailto:brandon_henley@hcpss.org> 1200 Steuart Street Unit 625 Baltimore, Maryland 21230

howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6153478

From:	Brittany Jacobs <brittanyplaysviola@gmail.com></brittanyplaysviola@gmail.com>
Sent:	Thursday, May 15, 2025 10:00 PM
То:	Ball, Calvin; boe@hcpss.org; CouncilMail; Budget Testimony
Subject:	Fully Fund HCPSS Budget

Follow Up Flag:Follow upFlag Status:Flagged

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

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

As a Howard County resident with an elementary-aged child, I urge you to work together to close the gap and fully fund the HCPSS budget. Please do not make any program and/or staffing cuts. Our school system is our greatest asset and must be fully funded to support all children.

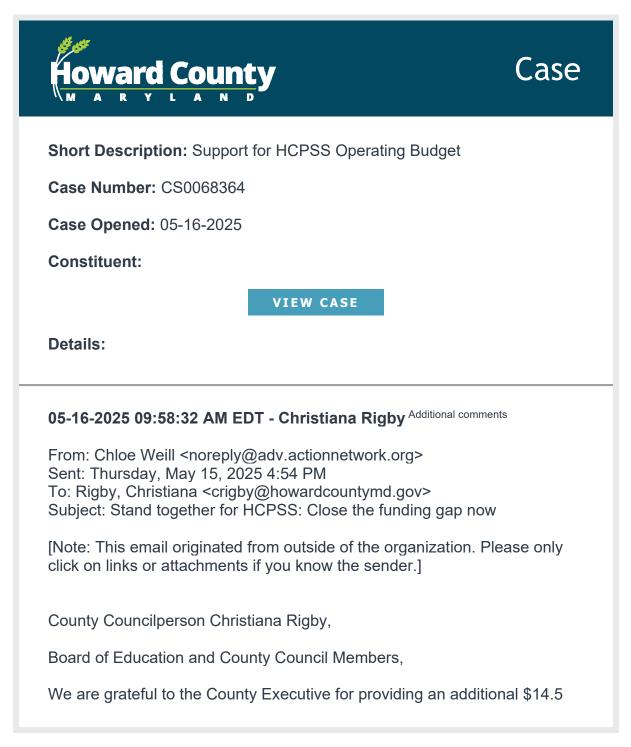
Respectfully,

Brittany Jacobs

Sent from my iPhone

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 9:59 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068364 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
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million to help fund HCPSS, but we're still short of the funding we need. That's why we're asking the Board of Education and the County Council to use available funds to close the budget gap, prevent increases to class size, honor educator contracts, and deliver a "same services" budget to the residents of Howard County.

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We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely,

Chloe Weill c_weill@hotmail.com<mailto:c_weill@hotmail.com> 9840 Snow Bird Lane Laurel, Maryland 20723

howardcountymd.gov

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Ref:MSG6153476

From:	Tracy du <tracydu0818@gmail.com></tracydu0818@gmail.com>
Sent:	Thursday, May 15, 2025 7:01 AM
To:	Ball, Calvin
Cc:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Demand to fully restore HCPSS FY26 Funding
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear County Executive Ball and County Council Members

As you work together with the Board of Education to close the gap for the HCPSS FY26 Operating Budget, understand that students, parents, and all county residents rely upon maintaining the excellence of Howard County schools many people move here for.

We would like to respond County Executive Ball's memo sent on May 8th which suggested HCPSS use their budget in a different way so that more than 222 positions won't be cut from the FY26 school budget. We appreciate the need for transparency and dialogue in order to use County funds more efficiently and we emphasize the County's role in obtaining the necessary funding to avoid a second year of class size increase, program cuts, and extensive firings.

We agree on the following steps for HCPSS:

- HCPSS should use the health fund surplus as long as county guarantees future support if required

- HCPSS General Fund Balance should be used if greater than 1% recommended balance specified by HCPSS policy

- HCPSS investment income may be available, although likely less than last year due to less funds available for investment

We urge the county to continue partnering with HCPSS by doing the following:

- Increase County conservative estimate of investment income and direct surplus to HCPSS.

- Review County salary growth (27% since 2018, compared to teachers 17%) and reduce if needed to allow HCPSS teachers to catch up to other county colleagues.

- Consider the recent history of record surplus revenue, and Pay Go funds being used repeatedly for some programs. Curren investment fund report notes that fund balance is approximately \$200M above expected level for FY25. Whether through additional revenue or additional sacrifice, we expect that support for HCPSS will allow for continuance of current programs and staffing levels.

We must balance fiscal responsibility for the future and our children's educational needs today. Drawing down the surplus health fund balances increases shortage risks in the

future which the county will have to cover. HCPSS General fund balance dropping below 1% risks requiring additional appropriations like the county is voting on this month (5.5M to HCPSS to cover unexpected additional cost in CR88-2025).

No one can predict the future – but overly conservative estimates of investment income come at its own opportunity cost. Costs like increased class sizes for the second year in a row, 48% reduction in Elementary school gifted and talented program, and 3. grade strings. Teachers can't withstand another increase in workload. Students can't withstand losing even moreteachers from each school and some classrooms cannot physically fit one more desk in the room.

We ask the County to prioritize residents' commitment to their own educational needs.

Cuiqiong Du Ellicott city IES parent , 21043

From: Sent:	Tracy du <tracydu0818@gmail.com> Thursday, May 15, 2025 9:16 AM</tracydu0818@gmail.com>
То:	Ball, Calvin
Cc:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Re: Demand to fully restore HCPSS FY26 Funding
Follow Up Flag: Flag Status:	Follow up Flagged

Dear County Executive Ball and Members of the County Council,

As you work collaboratively with the Board of Education to close the gap in the HCPSS FY26 Operating Budget, we urge you to consider how deeply students, parents, and residents depend on the excellence of Howard County Public Schools—a key reason many families choose to live here.

We are writing in response to your memo dated May 8, which suggests that HCPSS reallocate existing funds to avoid eliminating over 222 positions. While we appreciate your focus on fiscal responsibility and transparency, we emphasize the essential role of County leadership in providing adequate funding to avoid a second consecutive year of increased class sizes, program cuts, and widespread staff reductions.

We support the following actions by HCPSS:

- Use of the health fund surplus, with a guarantee of future County support should the need arise.
- Use of the General Fund Balance when it exceeds the 1% minimum recommended by HCPSS policy.
- Responsible use of investment income, recognizing that lower returns are expected this year due to reduced principal.

At the same time, we ask you and the County Council to partner with HCPSS by:

- Reassessing conservative investment income estimates and redirecting surplus to HCPSS.
- Reviewing County government salary growth (27% since 2018), in contrast with teacher salary growth (17%), and considering equity-based adjustments.
- Utilizing part of the County's \$200 million fund balance, currently well above the FY25 projection, to preserve school programs and staff.

While financial stability is important, **being overly conservative comes at a real human cost**— especially for our most vulnerable students.

Cuts to education disproportionately impact students with special needs, including those with autism, ADHD, learning disabilities, and emotional or behavioral conditions.

In the **short term**, special education students often require smaller class sizes, individualized instruction, paraprofessional support, and consistent routines. Losing staff and support programs disrupts their learning, increases anxiety, and can result in emotional and academic regression. When case managers and special educators are stretched too thin, these students can't receive legally required services—creating both ethical and legal challenges.

In the **long term**, under-resourced special education services lead to widening achievement gaps, missed developmental milestones, and increased reliance on intensive support systems later in life. Early investment is not just equitable—it is cost-effective. By providing strong services now, we help these students gain skills that reduce future dependence on county and state resources.

This concern aligns with broader mental health challenges facing all students:

- Nearly **1 in 4 U.S. adults** (58.7 million) live with a mental health condition.
- Nearly **1 in 20** (14.6 million) live with a serious condition such as major depression or bipolar disorder.
- **1 in 7 children** (8 million, ages 3–17) have a current, diagnosed mental or behavioral health condition.

The pressure of growing class sizes, disappearing programs, and overworked staff intensifies mental health struggles—especially among students already managing disabilities, trauma, or learning differences. These issues are not abstract—they show up as lost learning, behavioral challenges, school avoidance, and family stress.

We urge you to protect the promise of a strong, inclusive public education system. Howard County residents have shown their commitment to high-quality schools. Now we ask our elected leaders to do the same—by preserving the staffing and services that our students, especially those with special needs, depend on for a meaningful and successful education.

Sincerely, Cuiqiong Du

Ilchester Elementary School Parent

Ellicott city, MD 21043

On Thu, May 15, 2025 at 7:01 AM Tracy du <<u>tracydu0818@gmail.com</u>> wrote: Dear County Executive Ball and County Council Members As you work together with the Board of Education to close the gap for the HCPSS FY26 Operating Budget, understand that students, parents, and all county residents rely upon maintaining the excellence of Howard County schools many people move here for.

We would like to respond County Executive Ball's memo sent on May 8th which suggested HCPSS use their budget in a different way so that more than 222

positions won't be cut from the FY26 school budget. We appreciate the need for transparency and dialogue in order to use County funds more efficiently and we emphasize the County's role in obtaining the necessary funding to avoid a second year of class size increase, program cuts, and extensive firings.

We agree on the following steps for HCPSS:

- HCPSS should use the health fund surplus as long as county guarantees future support if required
- HCPSS General Fund Balance should be used if greater than 1% recommended balance specified by HCPSS policy
- HCPSS investment income may be available, although likely less than last year due to less funds available for investment
- We urge the county to continue partnering with HCPSS by doing the following:
 - Increase County conservative estimate of investment income and direct surplus to HCPSS.
 - Review County salary growth (27% since 2018, compared to teachers 17%) and reduce if needed to allow HCPSS teachers to catch up to other county colleagues.

- Consider the recent history of record surplus revenue, and Pay Go funds being used repeatedly for some programs. Curren investment fund report notes that fund balance is approximately \$200M above expected level for FY25. Whether through additional revenue or additional sacrifice, we expect that support for HCPSS will allow for continuance of current programs and staffing levels.

We must balance fiscal responsibility for the future and our children's educational needs today. Drawing down the surplus health fund balances increases shortage risks in the future which the county will have to cover. HCPSS General fund balance dropping below 1% risks requiring additional appropriations like the county is voting on this month (5.5M to HCPSS to cover unexpected additional cost in CR88-2025).

No one can predict the future – but overly conservative estimates of investment income come at its own opportunity cost. Costs like increased class sizes for the second year in a row, 48% reduction in Elementary school gifted and talented program, and 3^a grade strings. Teachers can't withstand another increase in workload. Students can't withstand losing even moreteachers from each school and some classrooms cannot physically fit one more desk in the room.

We ask the County to prioritize residents' commitment to their own educational needs.

Cuiqiong Du Ellicott city IES parent , 21043

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 9:53 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068355 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

ward County Case Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget Case Number: CS0068355 Case Opened: 05-16-2025 Constituent: VIEW CASE **Details:** 05-16-2025 09:52:42 AM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional comments From: Elizabeth Gomez <elizabeth gomez@hcpss.org> Sent: Thursday, May 15, 2025 3:46 PM To: Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: Stand together for HCPSS: Close the funding gap now [Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.] County Councilperson Christiana Rigby, Board of Education and County Council Members,

We need your support! Our students need your support! Our community

needs your support!

We are grateful to the County Executive for providing an additional \$14.5 million to help fund HCPSS, but we're still short of the funding we need. That's why we're asking the Board of Education and the County Council to use available funds to close the budget gap, prevent increases to class size, honor educator contracts, and deliver a "same services" budget to the residents of Howard County.

Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Please do the right thing as we teachers believe in the future and potential of our students, but we need the funding to make their dreams happen!

Sincerely, Elizabeth Gomez

Elizabeth Gomez elizabeth_gomez@hcpss.org<mailto:elizabeth_gomez@hcpss.org> 5440 Wolf River Lane Columbia, Maryland 21045

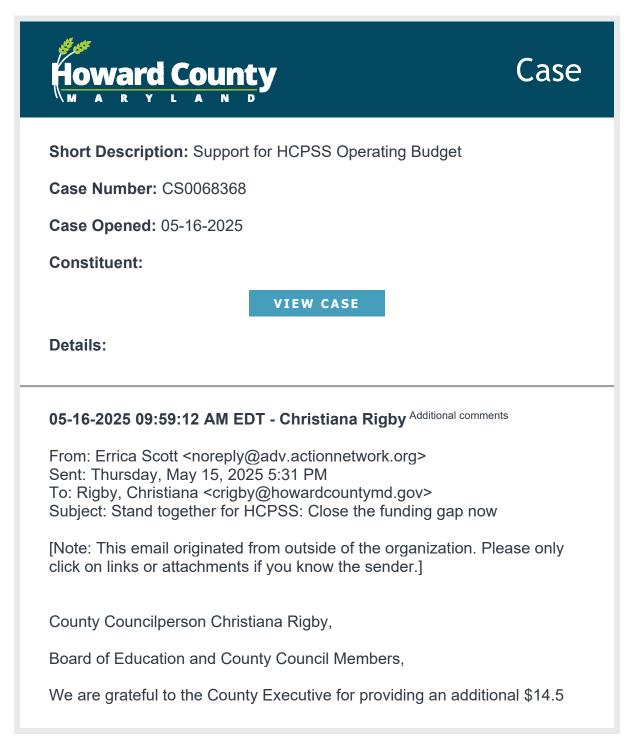
howardcountymd.gov

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Ref:MSG6153332

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 10:01 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068368 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged



Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely,

Errica Scott errica.scott89@gmail.com<mailto:errica.scott89@gmail.com> 332 Legato Terrace Silver Spring , Maryland 20901

howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6153491

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From:	Garvin and Ruth <gcandrc@gmail.com< th=""></gcandrc@gmail.com<>	
Sent:	Thursday, May 15, 2025 6:26 PM	
To:	CouncilMail	
Subject:	Restore Full Funding to HCPSS in FY26	
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up	
Flag Status:	Flagged	

Dear Howard County Council,

I'm writing as a concerned parent to urge you to fully fund the Howard County Public School System in the FY26 Operating Budget.

HCPSS has faced years of underfunding. This year, the systems requires a minimum of \$29.2 million just to maintain current services. Without it, we'll see larger class sizes, fewer programs, and staff layoffs – all of which hurt our students.

It is unacceptable that our schools are the first to face cuts when budgets tighten. Education is a core service and should be protected, not sacrificed. The percentage of Howard County Public School System share of the recurring General Fund Revenue has not kept up with historic norms and inflation.

Our school let go of teachers after last school year, and we are now hearing about paraeducators being removed from our school. We need paraeducators to take care of students that need the additional support. It is too much of a burden on staff to manage without them, and the quality of education will suffer.

Please prioritize students and restore funding to HCPSS.

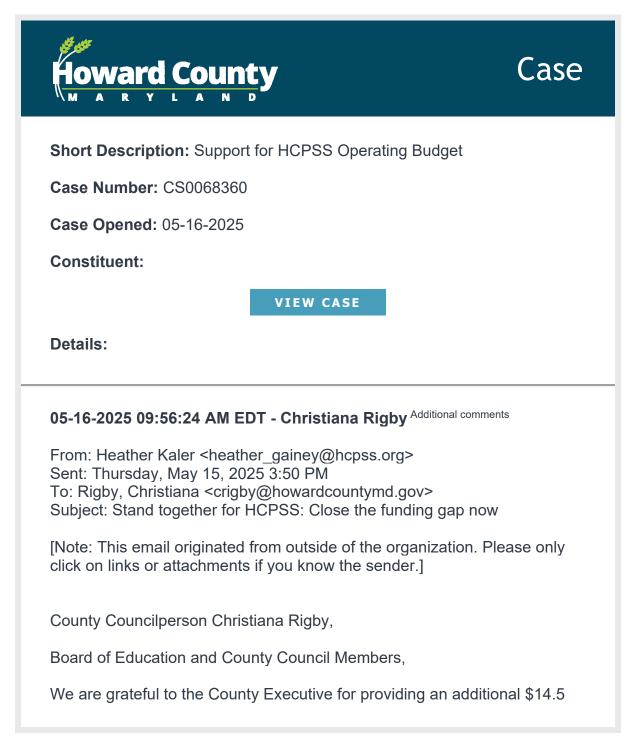
Thank you,

Garvin and Ruth Cung

District 1

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 9:57 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068360 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged



Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely, Heather Kaler

Heather Kaler heather_gainey@hcpss.org<mailto:heather_gainey@hcpss.org> 296 Creek Blvd Pasadena, Maryland 21122

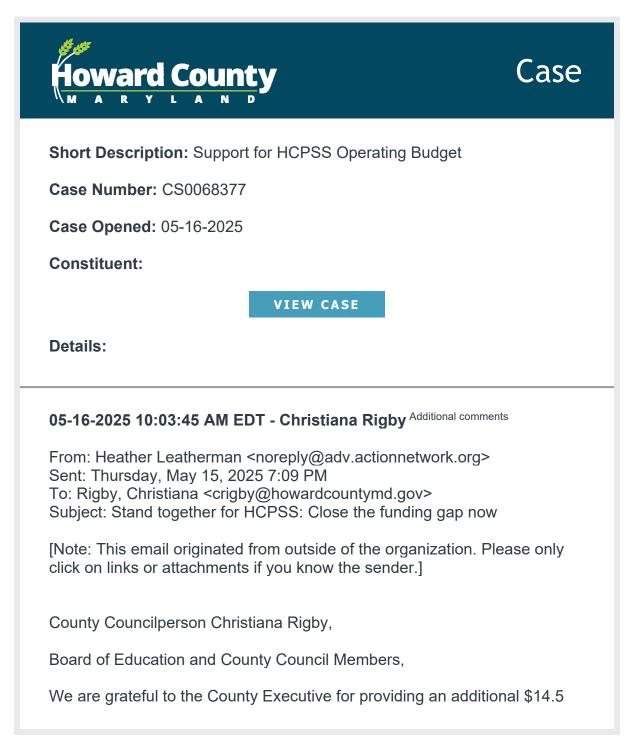
howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6153422

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From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 10:04 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068377 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged



Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely, Heather Leatherman, Teacher at LRHS for 23 years

Heather Leatherman yourartteacher@gmail.com<mailto:yourartteacher@gmail.com> 8 Edmondson Ridge Road Catonsville, Maryland 21228

howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6153610

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From:	Jamie Barrios <jamiebarrios@gmail.com></jamiebarrios@gmail.com>
Sent:	Thursday, May 15, 2025 9:52 AM
To:	Ball, Calvin; CouncilMail
Subject:	HCPSS budget
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear County Executive Ball and County Council Members

As you work together with the Board of Education to close the gap for the HCPSS FY26 Operating Budget, understand that students, parents, and all county residents rely upon maintaining the excellence of Howard County schools many people move here for.

We would like to respond to County Executive Ball's memo sent on May 8th which suggested HCPSS use their budget in a different way so that more than 222 positions won't be cut from the FY26 school budget. We appreciate the need for transparency and dialogue in order to use County funds more efficiently and we emphasize the County's role in obtaining the necessary funding to avoid a second year of class size increase, program cuts, and extensive firings. We agree on the following steps for HCPSS:

- HCPSS should use the health fund surplus as long as county guarantees future support if required
- HCPSS General Fund Balance should be used if greater than 1% recommended balance specified by HCPSS policy
- HCPSS investment income may be available, although likely less than last year due to less funds available for investment

We urge the county to continue partnering with HCPSS by doing the following:

- Increase County conservative estimate of investment income and direct surplus to HCPSS.
- Review County salary growth (27% since 2018, compared to teachers 17%) and reduce if needed to allow HCPSS teachers to catch up to other county colleagues.
- Consider the recent history of record surplus revenue, and Pay Go funds being used repeatedly for some programs. Curren investment fund report notes that fund balance is approximately \$200M above expected level for FY25. Whether through additional revenue or additional sacrifice, we expect that support for HCPSS will allow for continuance of current programs and staffing levels.

We must balance fiscal responsibility for the future and our children's educational needs today. Drawing down the surplus health fund balances increases shortage risks in the future which the county will have to cover. HCPSS General fund balance dropping below 1% risks requiring additional appropriations like the county is voting on this month (5.5M to HCPSS to cover unexpected additional cost in CR88-2025).

No one can predict the future – but overly conservative estimates of investment income come at its own opportunity cost. Costs like increased class sizes for the second year in a row, 48% reduction in Elementary school gifted and talented program, and 3rd grade strings. Teachers can't withstand another increase in workload. Students can't withstand losing even more teachers from each school and some classrooms cannot physically fit one more desk in the room. We ask the County to prioritize residents' commitment to their own educational needs.

Thank you,

Jamie Barrios

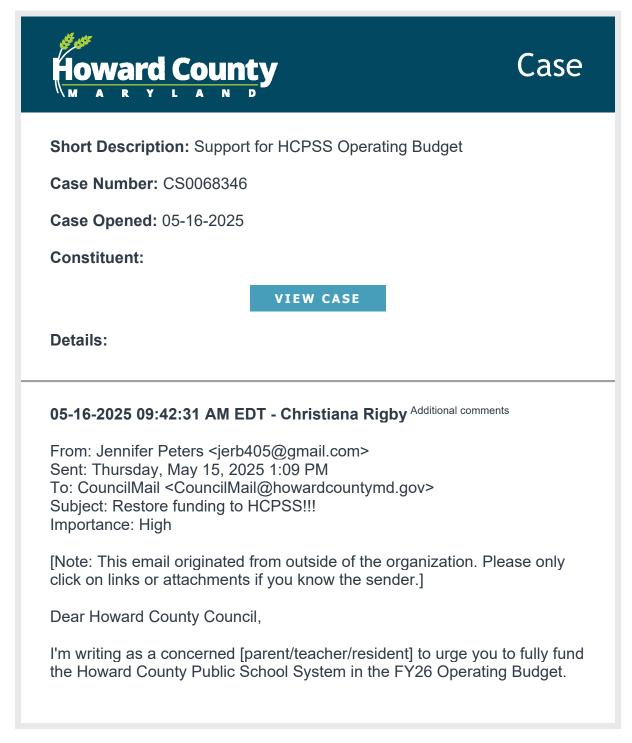
I am the parent of kids at Hammond Elementary, Hammond Middle, and Hammond High School and of a 4 year old who will enter Kindergarten in 2026. I am appalled that HCPSS is not being fully funded easily! Funding our schools is one of the most basic responsibilities the county government has. While I love the libraries so much, there is no question

that funding schools is way more important. Well funded schools guarantee a basic adequate education to every child who lives here, the library is nice but doesn't have such a universal impact on vulnerable children in the same way. It's horrible to ask school employees to do more with less resources. We can do better! Well-staffed schools and adequate facilities should be of the highest priority; equal with public safety.

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 9:43 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068346 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow
Flag Status:	Flagge

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HCPSS has faced years of underfunding. This year, the system needs at least \$29.2 million just to maintain current services. Without it, we'll see larger classs sizes, fewer program, and staff layoffs - all of which hurt our students.

It is unacceptable that our schools are the first to face cuts when budgets tighten. Education is a core service and should be protected, not sacrificed. The percentage of the Howard County Public School System's share of the recurring General Fund Revenue has not kept of with historic norms and inflations.

My child receives special education services to enable her to reach her full potential. These cuts will put that at risk, which will lead us to consider moving to a different County the values their school system. We cannot afford more cuts.

Please prioritize students and restore funding to HCPSS.

Thank you-Jennifer Peters 15008 High Forest Court, Dayton MD 21036

howardcountymd.gov



Ref:MSG6153259

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 9:57 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068362 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

ward County Case Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget Case Number: CS0068362 Case Opened: 05-16-2025 Constituent: VIEW CASE **Details:** 05-16-2025 09:57:22 AM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional comments From: Jill Hack <jill hack@hcpss.org> Sent: Thursday, May 15, 2025 4:28 PM To: Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: Stand together for HCPSS: Close the funding gap now [Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.] County Councilperson Christiana Rigby, Board of Education and County Council Members, We are grateful to the County Executive for providing an additional \$14.5

Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely,

Jill Hack jill_hack@hcpss.org<mailto:jill_hack@hcpss.org> 1727 Cattail Meadows Dr Woodbine, Maryland 21797

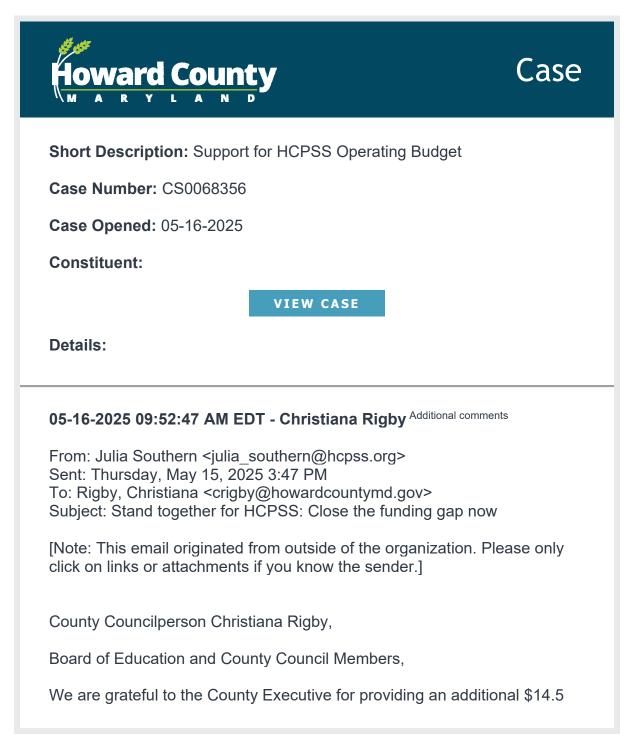
howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6153445

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From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 9:53 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068356 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged



Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely, Julia Southern

Julia Southern julia_southern@hcpss.org<mailto:julia_southern@hcpss.org> 313 Concert Way Catonsville, Maryland 21228

howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6153334

£

From:	Kerry Darragh <kdarragh@thehorizonfoundation.org></kdarragh@thehorizonfoundation.org>
Sent:	Thursday, May 15, 2025 1:50 PM
То:	CouncilMail
Subject:	FY26 Budget Testimony
Attachments:	FY26 Budget Testimony for County Council - Horizon Foundation.pdf

Good afternoon,

Attached please find FY26 budget testimony on behalf of the Horizon Foundation. Thank you!

Kerry Darragh Senior Communications Officer Office: 443-766-1228 | Mobile: 484-767-3718 kdarragh@thehorizonfoundation.org www.thehorizonfoundation.org Follow us on social media: <u>Facebook</u> | <u>LinkedIn</u> | <u>Instagram</u> | <u>Twitter</u> <u>Subscribe to our newsletter!</u>



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May 15, 2025

FY 2026 Budget: Funding school-based mental health, food and nutrition security and complete streets **POSITION**: Support

To the Howard County Council:

The Horizon Foundation is the largest independent health philanthropy in Maryland. We are committed to a Howard County free from systemic inequities, where all people can live abundant and healthy lives.

We thank each of you for your continued commitment to public health in our community. We must protect the progress we have made in recent years and prioritize funding in this year's budget to help reduce long-standing health inequities that have prevented many residents – particularly those from communities of color – from achieving good health. With the threat of budget cuts to many programs at the federal and state levels, we urge you to continue critical investments that align with our shared values of creating a healthy, robust and thriving Howard County community.

Protect school-based mental health services

We thank you for your support in recent years to expand school-based, enhanced mental health supports, including 1:1 student counseling services, to all schools. Though tremendous progress has been made, work remains to ensure this program is fully and effectively implemented throughout all Howard County public schools. In addition, the recent budget crisis at the state level and looming cuts to many health programs at the federal level, including Medicaid, are putting community-based mental health initiatives like this at risk at a time when youth mental health needs are greater than ever.

In Howard County, 30% of middle schoolers report feeling sad or hopeless.ⁱ Our Black and Latina girls and our LGBTQIA + children and youth experience the highest rates of mental health challenges, including depression and suicidal ideation. Cutting mental health providers or services for students would be devastating for our efforts. These problems will only get worse, and kids and families will suffer.

Thousands of Howard County students have been served through the school-based mental health program since it began, including over 800 students just in the first quarter of this current school year. However, more students remain on waiting lists and nationwide staffing

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Lanlan Xu, Ph.D

The Horizon Foundation of Howard County, Inc.

10221 Wincopin Circle, Suite 200, Columbia, MD 21044 P 410.715.0311 F 410.715.2973 • info@thehorizonfoundation.org

shortages have resulted in very high staff-student ratios – currently, over 2000 students per one school social worker.

We urge the County Council and the Board of Education to protect funding for mental health providers in the HCPSS budget to reduce barriers to care and ensure that all students who need help can get it. Everyone in our community should be able to access the mental health services they need – without time or financial barriers or any kind of stigma to prevent them from receiving the support they deserve.

Protect and increase food and nutrition security through Roving Radish and healthy school meals

Chronic diseases like diabetes and prediabetes continue to rise in our community and are disproportionately harming residents of color. We also know that rising costs have increased food insecurity for many of our families. We thank you for your support over the last year for Howard County's new mobile farmers market in partnership with the Roving Radish to help combat these challenges. Debuting last summer, this mobile market has been a great success so far in visiting underserved neighborhoods of the county and offering fresh, local produce at affordable prices, particularly for residents enrolled in federal food programs. Continuing to invest in this mobile market will enable many low-income residents and community members who are not able to easily access farmers markets or grocery stores to purchase healthy, affordable produce in their neighborhoods. We urge you to continue to provide the necessary funding for this mobile market and the associated outreach costs so this program can reach the residents who need it most.

In addition, we know that a growing number of Howard County students are increasingly reliant on free and reduced meals at school as their primary sources of nutrition during the day. We thank you and the Howard County Public School System for your support in working with the Foundation and the Healthier Choices Coalition to improve school meals and better incorporate student and parent feedback. We also applaud the new partnership between Howard County government, HCPSS and the Roving Radish to provide fresh, locally sourced produce and meal kits to students at the county's eight designated "community schools." Initiatives like these will help us fight food insecurity, improve access to healthy produce, support local farms and better enable our students to succeed in the classroom. And with the threat of cuts to programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) at the federal level, our county's commitment to improving food security and good health for all residents is more important than ever. We urge you to continue to invest in these programs to ensure that every Howard County resident can access healthy, affordable food and drink options to help them make healthy choices and improve the health of their families.

Continue funding for complete streets

We thank you for your outstanding work over the last several years to fund bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure projects at historic, record-breaking levels and for helping to make

The Horizon Foundation of Howard County, Inc.

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Howard County a nationally recognized model for how to bring the vision of complete streets to life. These projects are having a direct effect on the lives of residents across our community, making it easier and safer for people to walk, bike, use their wheelchair and use public transportation. We urge you to continue this progress by fully funding the County Executive's \$13+ million request for complete streets in Howard County. Continue to prioritize these investments in underinvested, Equity Emphasis Areas, especially along Route 1 in Elkridge, Laurel, Jessup and parts of Columbia. Everyone in Howard County – no matter who they are or where they live – should be able to safely, easily and comfortably bike, walk or take public transportation anywhere they need to go.

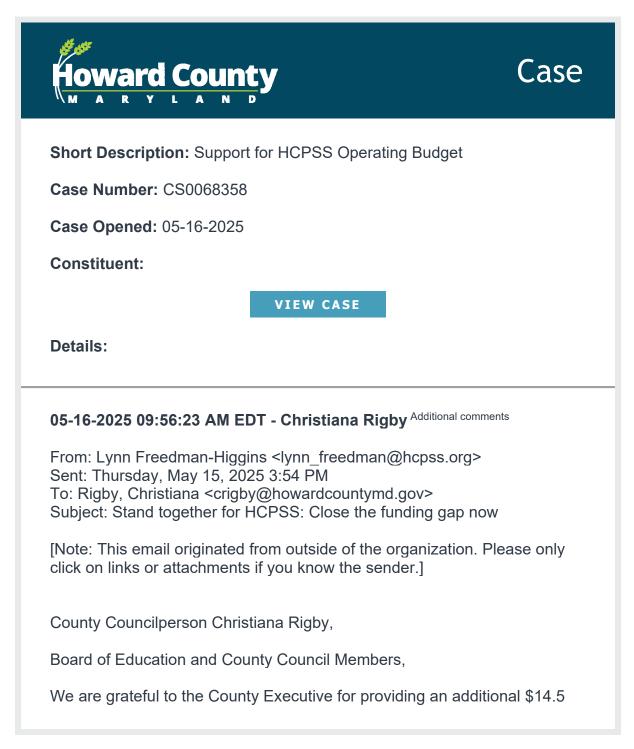
We applaud the County Council's commitment to working to ensure that all of our residents can live healthy and abundant lives. We look forward to our continued work together to build a healthier, safer, more connected and more equitable community. Thank you for your consideration.

ⁱ Maryland Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2022-2023.

¹⁰²²¹ Wincopin Circle, Suite 200, Columbia, MD 21044 P 410.715.0311 F 410.715.2973 · info@thehorizonfoundation.org

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 9:57 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068358 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged



Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Just do it!

Sincerely,

Lynn Freedman-Higgins lynn_freedman@hcpss.org<mailto:lynn_freedman@hcpss.org> 6417 Woodland Forest Drive Elkridge, Maryland 21075

howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6153420

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From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 9:45 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068354 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Case ward County Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget Case Number: CS0068354 Case Opened: 05-16-2025 Constituent: VIEW CASE **Details:** 05-16-2025 09:44:57 AM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional comments From: Mia Chiarella <mia chiarella@hcpss.org> Sent: Thursday, May 15, 2025 3:33 PM To: Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: Stand together for HCPSS: Close the funding gap now [Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.] County Councilperson Christiana Rigby, Board of Education and County Council Members,

We are grateful to the County Executive for providing an additional \$14.5

Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely,

Mia Chiarella

Mia Chiarella mia_chiarella@hcpss.org<mailto:mia_chiarella@hcpss.org> 6355 Hanover Crossing Way HANOVER, Maryland 21076

howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6153283

f

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 9:56 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068357 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Case ward County Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget Case Number: CS0068357 Case Opened: 05-16-2025 Constituent: VIEW CASE **Details:** 05-16-2025 09:55:07 AM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional comments From: Mohamed Alhedai <noreply@adv.actionnetwork.org> Sent: Thursday, May 15, 2025 4:00 PM To: Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: Stand together for HCPSS: Close the funding gap now [Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

County Councilperson Christiana Rigby,

Board of Education and County Council Members,

We are grateful to the County Executive for providing an additional \$14.5

Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely,

Mohamed Alhedai mohamed.aalhedai@gmail.com<mailto:mohamed.aalhedai@gmail.com> 332 Legato Terrace Silver Spring, Maryland 20901

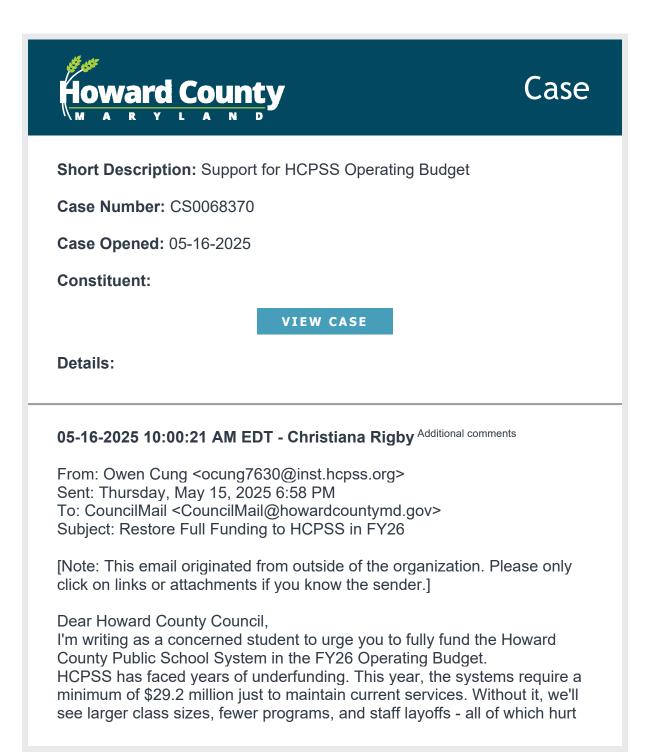
f

howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6153408

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 10:01 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068370 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged



our students.

It is unacceptable that our schools are the first to face cuts when budgets tighten. Education is a core service and should be protected, not sacrificed. The percentage of Howard County Public School System share of the recurring General Fund Revenue has not kept up with historic norms and inflation.

I am currently an 8th grader of Ellicott Mills Middle School and am soon going to be in Howard High School. I am very excited to be part of such a great community in a wonderful county, and I want my high school experience to be amazing. I am very hopeful that my 4 years in high school will be the best of my 18 years in school and these budget cuts will hurt my dreams. With the budget cuts, my school experience will deteriorate and some of the opportunities I wish to take part in may not be available. This would crush me, and I don't know how I will pursue my dreams in college. Not only will this affect me, but also the admirable students who will have their opportunities they want to strive in ripped away from their grasps. Kids who need special education also need the extra support, and with the budget cuts, this necessary help won't be as accessible. Those kids deserve help to be successful students. The cuts will also be hurtful to the teachers. If the cuts go through, class sizes will increase as teachers begin to be laid off and the stress of teachers will greatly increase with more students to teach and more assignments to grade. I can't imagine how impacted teachers' personal lives would be with such larger class sizes. In fact, I've already experienced teachers who have trouble keeping up with grading without the cuts and larger classes. The extra cuts will only hurt the people of this wonderful community, and we all deserve the money and a successful and inspiring school career.

Please prioritize students and restore funding to HCPSS. Thank you, Owen Cung District 1

howardcountymd.gov

f 🎽

Ref:MSG6153560

From:	Parvane Paiesarvi <ppaiesarvi@gmail.com></ppaiesarvi@gmail.com>
Sent:	Thursday, May 15, 2025 2:56 PM
То:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Restore Full Funding to HCPSS in FY26

I'm writing as a concerned grand parent to urge you to fully fund the Howard County Public School System in the FY26 Operating Budget.

HCPSS has faced years of underfunding. This year, the system needs \$29.2 million just to maintain current services. Without it, we'll see larger class sizes, fewer programs, and staff layoffs — all of which hurt our students.

It's unacceptable that our schools are the first to face cuts when budgets tighten. Education is a core service and should be protected, not sacrificed. The percentage of Howard County Public Schools System share of the recurring General Fund Revenue has not kept up with historic norms and inflation.

My grandkids school is already stretched thin. We can't afford more cuts.

Please prioritize students and restore funding to HCPSS.

Thank you,

Parvaneh Paysarvi Hosseini

Bracken Dr, Ellicott City, MD 21042

From:	Pedram Nozari <pn.nozari@gmail.com></pn.nozari@gmail.com>
Sent:	Thursday, May 15, 2025 2:59 PM
То:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Restore Full Funding to HCPSS in FY26

Dear Howard County Council,

I'm writing as a concerned parent to urge you to fully fund the Howard County Public School System in the FY26 Operating Budget.

HCPSS has faced years of underfunding. This year, the system needs \$29.2 million just to maintain current services. Without it, we'll see larger class sizes, fewer programs, and staff layoffs — all of which hurt our students.

It's unacceptable that our schools are the first to face cuts when budgets tighten. Education is a core service and should be protected, not sacrificed. The percentage of Howard County Public Schools System share of the recurring General Fund Revenue has not kept up with historic norms and inflation.

My children's school is already stretched thin. We can't afford more cuts.

Please prioritize students and restore funding to HCPSS.

Thank you,

Pedram Nozari

Bracken Dr, Ellicott City, MD 21042

From:	Sarah Legros <slegros99@gmail.com></slegros99@gmail.com>
Sent:	Thursday, May 15, 2025 7:45 PM
To:	Ball, Calvin; CouncilMail; boe@hcpss.org; jennifer_mallo@hcpss.org
Subject:	Urgent Concerns Regarding Education Budget Cuts
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear Executive Ball and Council Members,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed budget cuts to our education system. As a parent with two boys at Swansfield Elementary (one in 1st Grade and one in 4th Grade), I have seen firsthand the critical impact that adequate funding has on the quality of education in our district.

Reducing financial support for our schools will inevitably lead to larger class sizes, fewer educational resources, and diminished extracurricular opportunities—elements that are essential for fostering student success. By February 2025, my eldest son's MAP score went up by 11 points, and the CommonLit Assessment went up 41%! I believe he was able to achieve this with the support of his teacher, Mrs. Haas, and his limited sized ELA class.

Investing in education is an investment in our future. Our students deserve the best possible learning environment, and it is imperative that we prioritize funding to ensure they receive a well-rounded and competitive education. I urge you to reconsider these budget cuts and explore alternative solutions that do not compromise the integrity of our schools.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your response and to working together in support of a stronger educational system for our students.

Sincerely, Sarah Legros

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 10:04 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068375 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Case ward County Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget Case Number: CS0068375 Case Opened: 05-16-2025 Constituent: VIEW CASE **Details:** 05-16-2025 10:03:43 AM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional comments From: Toniann Maniscalco <toniann maniscalco@hcpss.org> Sent: Thursday, May 15, 2025 7:59 PM To: Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: Stand together for HCPSS: Close the funding gap now [Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.] County Councilperson Christiana Rigby, Board of Education and County Council Members,

We are grateful to the County Executive for providing an additional \$14.5

Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins. Thank you.

Sincerely, Toniann Maniscalco

Toniann Maniscalco toniann_maniscalco@hcpss.org<mailto:toniann_maniscalco@hcpss.org> 6502 Dogwood Road Gwynn Oak, Maryland 21207

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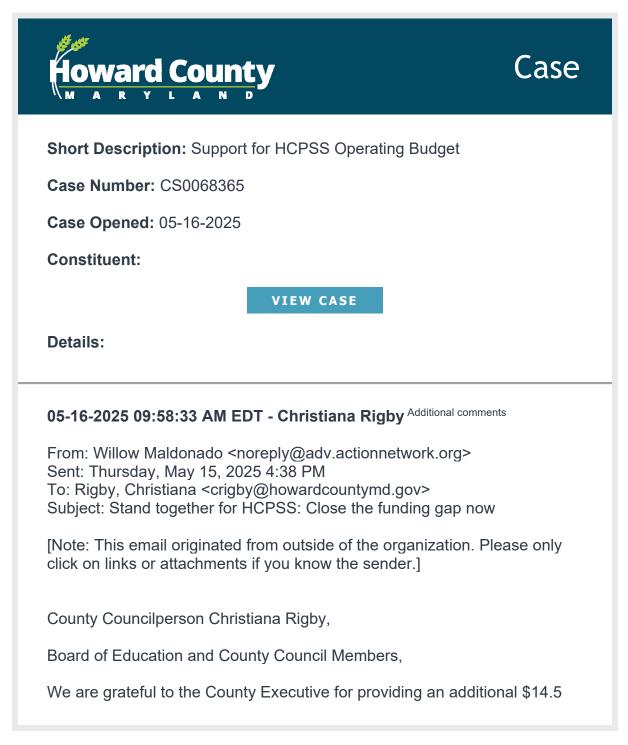
howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6153612

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 9:59 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068365 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow
Flag Status:	Flagged

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Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely,

Willow Maldonado wmaldonado0309@gmail.com<mailto:wmaldonado0309@gmail.com> 6041 Claire Drive Elkridge, Maryland 21075

howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6153474

f

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Monday, May 19, 2025 10:07 AM
To:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068494 – opened and unassigned

Howard County	Case
Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget	
Case Number: CS0068494	
Case Opened: 05-19-2025	
Constituent:	
VIEW CASE	
Details:	
05-19-2025 10:05:46 AM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional comme	ents
From: Aida Klement <aidaklement@gmail.com> Sent: Friday, May 16, 2025 2:24 PM To: CouncilMail <councilmail@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: FY26 Operating Budget</councilmail@howardcountymd.gov></aidaklement@gmail.com>	
[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. P click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]	lease only
Dear Howard County Council,	
I'm writing as a concerned parent to urge you to fully fund the H County Public School System in the FY26 Operating Budget.	Howard
HCPSS has faced years of underfunding. This year, the system least \$29.2 million just to maintain current services. Without it, larger class sizes, fewer program, and staff layoffs - all of which	we'll see

students.

It is unacceptable that our schools are the first to face cuts when budgets tighten. Education is a core service and should be protected, not sacrificed. The percentage of the Howard County Public School System's share of the recurring General Fund Revenue has not kept up with historic norms and inflations.

Last year my son did not have a special education teacher due to high turnover and instead the school filled the gaps with student teachers and paras. This had a significant impact to his IEP goals and they had to be delayed, and pushed out another year.

Please prioritize students and restore funding to HCPSS.

Thank you-Aida Klement D5 District

howardcountymd.gov

f y O

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Monday, May 19, 2025 10:07 AM
	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity Case: CS0068495 – opened and unassigned

	Case
Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget	
Case Number: CS0068495	
Case Opened: 05-19-2025	
Constituent:	
VIEW CASE	
Details:	
05-19-2025 10:05:47 AM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional comm	ents
From: Alexa Andersen-Proetorius <alexa_andersen- proetorius@hcpss.org> Sent: Friday, May 16, 2025 3:37 PM To: Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: Stand together for HCPSS: Close the funding gap nov [Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. F click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]</crigby@howardcountymd.gov></alexa_andersen- 	
County Councilperson Christiana Rigby, Dear Board of Education and County Council Members, We are grateful to the County Executive for providing an additi million to help fund HCPSS, but we're still short of the funding That's why we're asking the Board of Education and the Count	we need.

use available funds to close the budget gap, prevent increases to class size, honor educator contracts, and deliver a "same services" budget to the residents of Howard County.

Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely, Alexa Andersen-Proetorius

Alexa Andersen-Proetorius alexa_andersen-proetorius@hcpss.org<mailto:alexa_andersenproetorius@hcpss.org> 10474 Fair Oaks Columbia, Maryland 21044

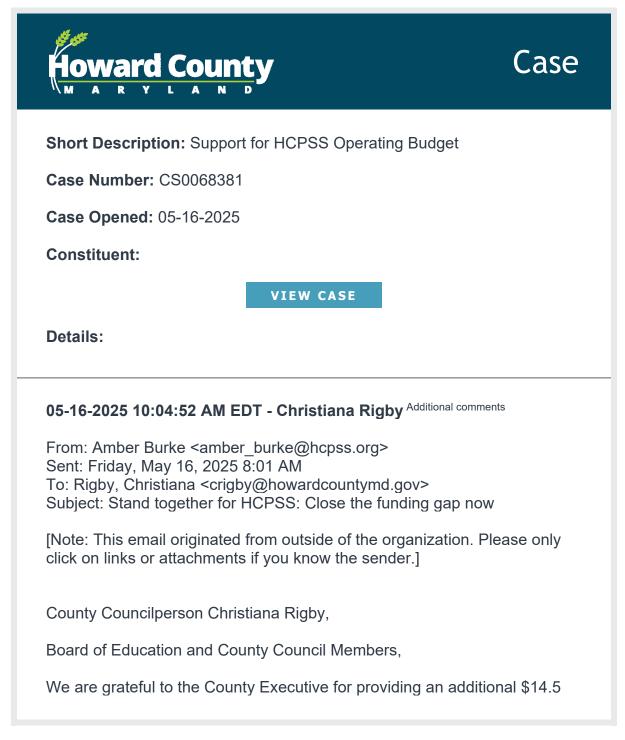
howardcountymd.gov



From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 10:06 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068381 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow
Flag Status:	Flagge

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Specifically, we need:

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Sincerely,

Amber Burke amber_burke@hcpss.org<mailto:amber_burke@hcpss.org> 7206 Rutherford Green Circle Windsor Mill, Maryland 21244

howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6153634

f

o@howardcountymd.gov nday, May 19, 2025 10:05 AM
th, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity e: CS0068490 – opened and unassigned

	Case
Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget	
Case Number: CS0068490	
Case Opened: 05-19-2025	
Constituent:	
VIEW CASE	
Details:	
05-19-2025 10:04:41 AM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional comments	
From: Dianez Pilon <noreply@adv.actionnetwork.org> Sent: Friday, May 16, 2025 8:16 PM To: Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: Stand together for HCPSS: Close the funding gap now</crigby@howardcountymd.gov></noreply@adv.actionnetwork.org>	
[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Plea click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]	ase only
County Councilperson Christiana Rigby,	
Board of Education and County Council Members,	
We are grateful to the County Executive for providing an addition million to help fund HCPSS, but we're still short of the funding we That's why we're asking the Board of Education and the County C use available funds to close the budget gap, prevent increases to	e need. Council to

size, honor educator contracts, and deliver a "same services" budget to the residents of Howard County.

Specifically, we need:

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We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely,

Dianez Pilon deiopei@gmail.com<mailto:deiopei@gmail.com> 8712 Fox Run Potomac, Maryland 20854

howardcountymd.gov



From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Monday, May 19, 2025 10:04 AM
To:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068488 – opened and unassigned

Howard County Case	
Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget	
Case Number: CS0068488	
Case Opened: 05-19-2025	
Constituent:	
VIEW CASE	
Details:	
05-19-2025 10:02:16 AM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional comments	
From: Eileen Zerhusen <zertejc@msn.com> Sent: Friday, May 16, 2025 10:42 PM To: Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: One quick question about our School budget</crigby@howardcountymd.gov></zertejc@msn.com>	
[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]	
County Councilperson Christiana Rigby,	
Dear County Executive Ball and County Council members,	
Right now HCPSS is staring down a \$29 million hole in its budget that it cannot fill. County Executive Ball sent educators a list of reasons why he can't fully fund schools, but I still have one question for him and for the County Council:	

What would you cut from HCPSS?

It's easy to cut school funding and leave the hard choices to the Board of Education. But if you think HCPSS should have no additional funding this year, then how much would you raise class size? Which programs would you eliminate? How many staff should be laid off? Should you freeze pay increases for educators during a teacher shortage?

If you can't, or won't answer those questions, then do the right thing and restore the funding that HCPSS students and educators deserve.

My daughter is a MS teacher at Thomas Viaduct MS. Don't eliminate MS para educators!!! They are vital to the functioning classroom. Those teachers deserve all the support they can get....

Thank you,

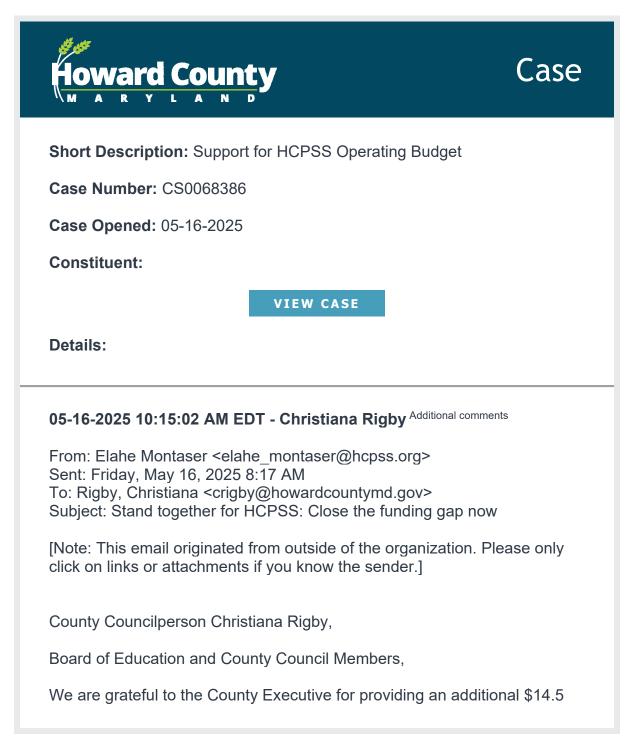
Eileen Zerhusen zertejc@msn.com<mailto:zertejc@msn.com> 4151 Lotus Circle Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

howardcountymd.gov



From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 10:15 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068386 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged



Specifically, we need:

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We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely,

Elahe Montaser elahe_montaser@hcpss.org<mailto:elahe_montaser@hcpss.org> 908 Park Hill Rd Laurel, Maryland 20707

howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6153719

f

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Monday, May 19, 2025 10:05 AM
To:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068492 – opened and unassigned

Howard County Cas	е
Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget	
Case Number: CS0068492	
Case Opened: 05-19-2025	
Constituent:	
VIEW CASE	
Details:	
05-19-2025 10:04:47 AM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional comments	
From: Elena Evans <noreply@adv.actionnetwork.org> Sent: Friday, May 16, 2025 7:25 PM To: Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: Stand together for HCPSS: Close the funding gap now</crigby@howardcountymd.gov></noreply@adv.actionnetwork.org>	
[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]	
County Councilperson Christiana Rigby,	
Board of Education and County Council Members,	
We are grateful to the County Executive for providing an additional \$14.5 million to help fund HCPSS, but we're still short of the funding we need. That's why we're asking the Board of Education and the County Council t use available funds to close the budget gap, prevent increases to class	

size, honor educator contracts, and deliver a "same services" budget to the residents of Howard County.

Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

I am a HCPS employee and parent, and I'm very concerned. We are already running thin on resources and if we want to remain in good reputation, we have to do better in prioritizing the future's education.

Thank you for your attention,

Elena Evans

Elena Evans elena.irizarry@gmail.com<mailto:elena.irizarry@gmail.com> 4828 Ellicott Woods Ln Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

howardcountymd.gov

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 10:24 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068388 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

 Case

 Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget

 Case Number: CS0068388

 Case Opened: 05-16-2025

 Constituent:

 VIEW CASE

 Details:

 Constituents

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 Constituent

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

County Councilperson Christiana Rigby,

Board of Education and County Council Members,

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Specifically, we need:

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We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely, Elena Provornikova (mom of a 3rd grader at CLES)

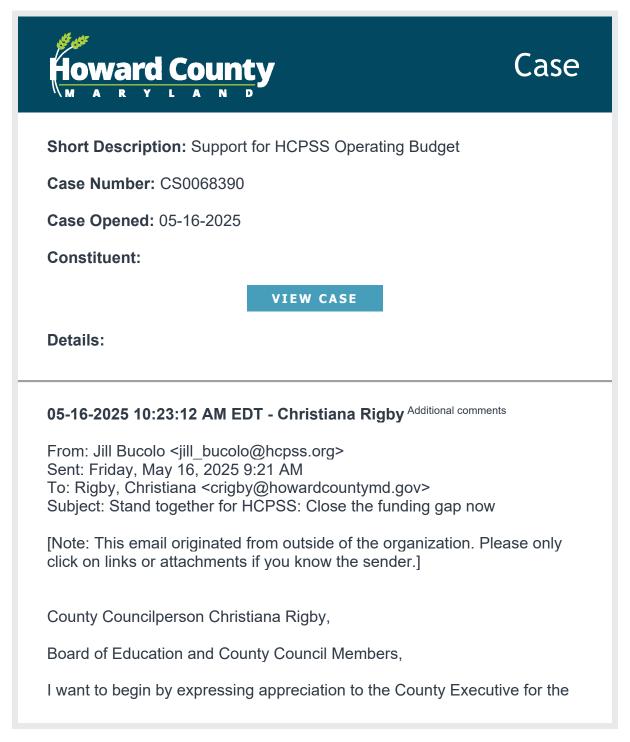
Elena Provornikova provelenaa@gmail.com<mailto:provelenaa@gmail.com> 10261 Bristol Channel Ellicott City, Maryland 21042

howardcountymd.gov

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 10:24 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068390 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow
Flag Status:	Flagge

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additional \$14.5 million allocated to support HCPSS. This contribution is significant, but it still falls short of what is needed to fully fund our schools.

That is why I respectfully urge both the Board of Education and the County Council to take further action to close the remaining budget gap. This will help prevent increases in class sizes, honor educator contracts, and maintain a "same services" budget that preserves the quality of education our community expects and deserves.

Specifically, I ask:

-That the Board of Education utilize any available fund balances—no matter how limited—to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.

-That the County Council exercise its authority to amend the County budget in order to allocate additional funding to HCPSS.

I understand that Howard County is facing financial uncertainty. However, no matter the challenges ahead, one thing remains constant: the critical role of our educators and schools. When our elected leaders, educators, and community advocates work together, we not only strengthen our schools, we support the success and well-being of every student.

Thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to public education.

Sincerely, Jill Bucolo

Jill Bucolo jill_bucolo@hcpss.org<mailto:jill_bucolo@hcpss.org> 5813 Hanna Road Sykesville, Maryland 21784

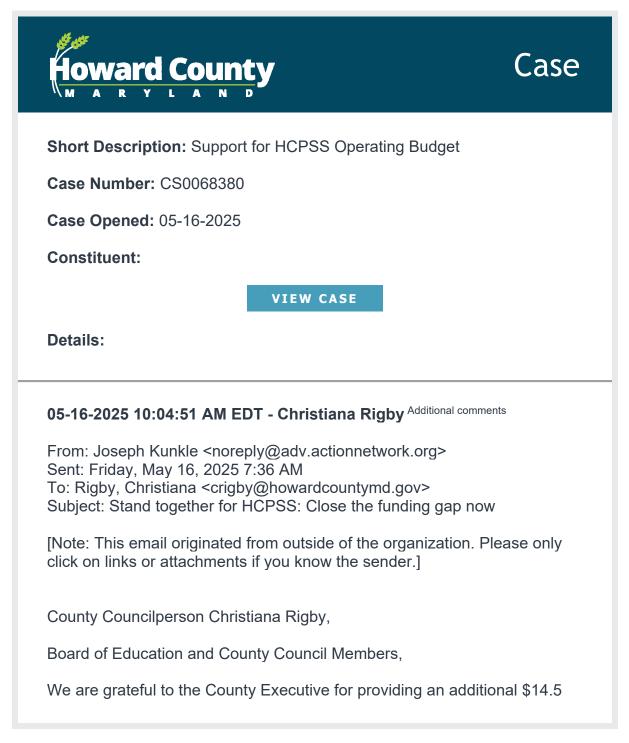
howardcountymd.gov

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From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 10:06 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068380 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow
Flag Status:	Flagge

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Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely,

Joseph Kunkle shane.kunkle@gmail.com<mailto:shane.kunkle@gmail.com> 10236 New Forest Ct Ellicott City, Maryland 21042

howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6153635

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I I	o@howardcountymd.gov nday, May 19, 2025 10:08 AM
	th, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity e: CS0068501 – opened and unassigned

Howard County	Case
Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget	
Case Number: CS0068501	
Case Opened: 05-19-2025	
Constituent:	
VIEW CASE	
Details:	
05-19-2025 10:07:43 AM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional comm	ents
From: Karen Spangler <karen_spangler@hcpss.org> Sent: Friday, May 16, 2025 11:09 AM To: Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: Stand together for HCPSS: Close the funding gap nov</crigby@howardcountymd.gov></karen_spangler@hcpss.org>	N
[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. F click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]	Please only
County Councilperson Christiana Rigby,	
Board of Education and County Council Members,	
We are grateful to the County Executive for providing an additi million to help fund HCPSS, but we're still short of the funding That's why we're asking the Board of Education and the Count use available funds to close the budget gap, prevent increases	we need. ty Council to

size, honor educator contracts, and deliver a "same services" budget to the residents of Howard County.

Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely,

Karen Spangler Elementary Library Media Specialist

Karen Spangler karen_spangler@hcpss.org<mailto:karen_spangler@hcpss.org> 10933 Hammond Dr Laurel, Maryland 20723

howardcountymd.gov

f y D

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Monday, May 19, 2025 10:08 AM
To:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068499 – opened and unassigned

Howard County	Case
Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget	
Case Number: CS0068499	
Case Opened: 05-19-2025	
Constituent:	
VIEW CASE	
Details:	
05-19-2025 10:07:42 AM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional comments	
From: Kelly Rende <kelly_rende@hcpss.org> Sent: Friday, May 16, 2025 12:21 PM To: Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: Stand together for HCPSS: Close the funding gap now</crigby@howardcountymd.gov></kelly_rende@hcpss.org>	
[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Pleas click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]	se only
County Councilperson Christiana Rigby,	
Board of Education and County Council Members,	
We are grateful to the County Executive for providing an additional million to help fund HCPSS, but we're still short of the funding we r That's why we're asking the Board of Education and the County Co use available funds to close the budget gap, prevent increases to c	need. ouncil to

size, honor educator contracts, and deliver a "same services" budget to the residents of Howard County. We can not serve our students if we continue to cut staff and increase class sizes.

Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely, Kelly Rende HCPSS Educator HCPSS Parent

Kelly Rende kelly_rende@hcpss.org<mailto:kelly_rende@hcpss.org> 9775 Early Spring Way Columbia, Maryland 21046

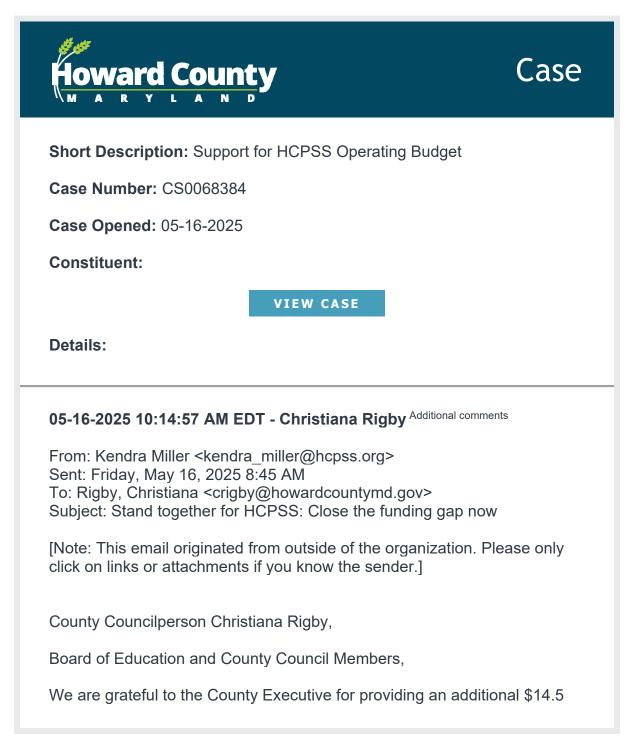
howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6164586

£

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 10:15 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068384 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged



Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely,

Kendra Miller kendra_miller@hcpss.org<mailto:kendra_miller@hcpss.org> 1011 Smoke Tree Road Pikesville, Maryland 21208

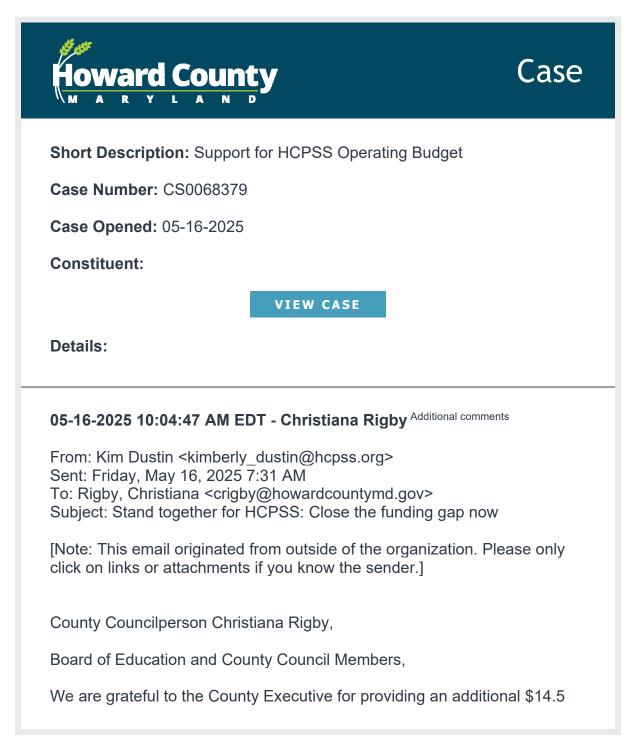
howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6153715

f

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 10:06 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068379 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged



Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely,

Kim Dustin kimberly_dustin@hcpss.org<mailto:kimberly_dustin@hcpss.org> 3813 Ivory Road Glenelg, Maryland 21737

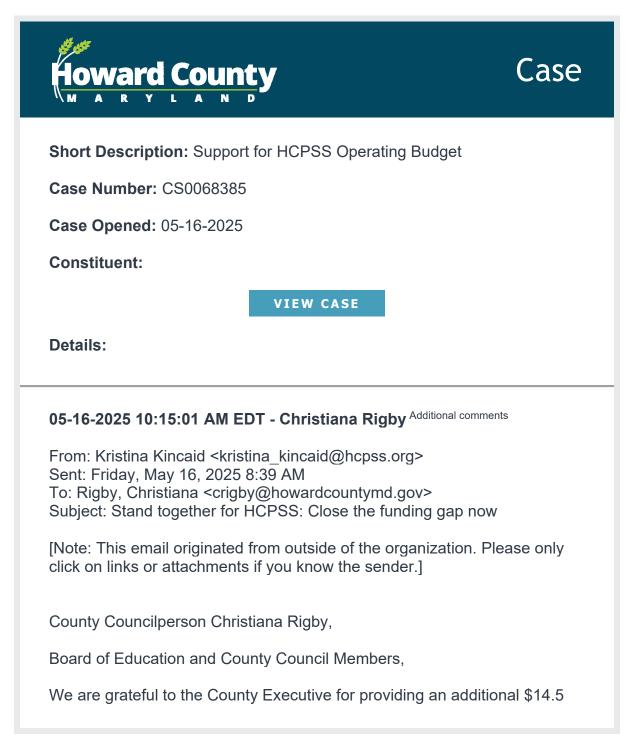
howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6153630

f

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 10:15 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068385 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged



Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely,

Kristina Kincaid kristina_kincaid@hcpss.org<mailto:kristina_kincaid@hcpss.org> 306 Kingston Circle Sykesville, Maryland 21784

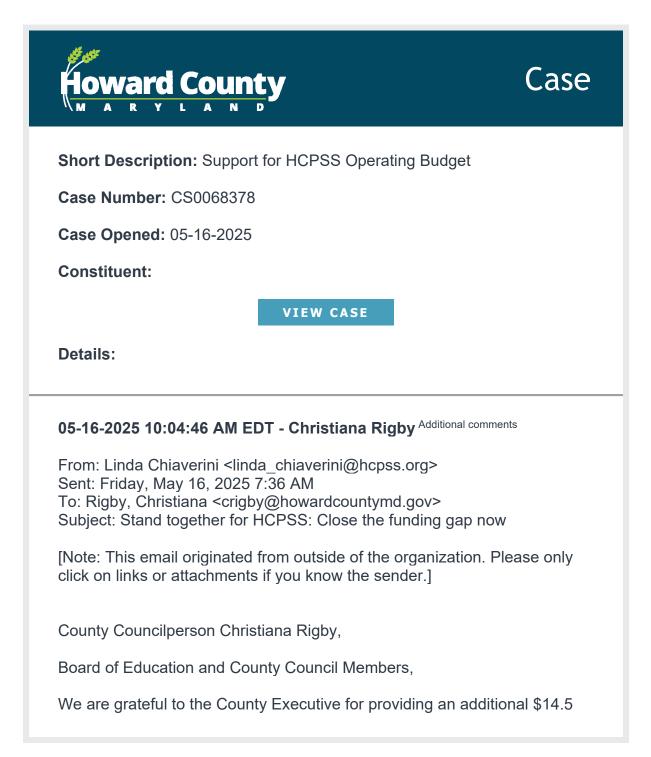
howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6153718

f

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 10:06 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068378 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged



Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely,

Linda Chiaverini linda_chiaverini@hcpss.org<mailto:linda_chiaverini@hcpss.org> 190 Sara Lane Hanover, Pennsylvania 17331

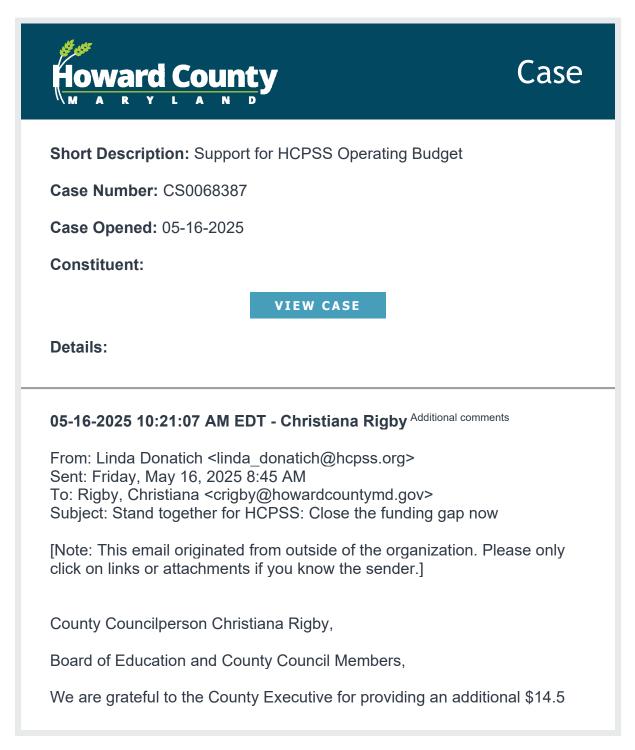
howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6153629

f

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 10:21 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068387 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged



Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely, Linda Donatich ARL SpEd High School Teacher

Linda Donatich linda_donatich@hcpss.org<mailto:linda_donatich@hcpss.org> 9215 Marydell Rd Ellicott City, Maryland 21042

howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6153811

f

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 10:24 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068389 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

ward County Case Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget Case Number: CS0068389 Case Opened: 05-16-2025 Constituent: VIEW CASE **Details:** 05-16-2025 10:23:11 AM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional comments From: Lori Shaffrey <lori shaffrey@hcpss.org> Sent: Friday, May 16, 2025 8:56 AM To: Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: Stand together for HCPSS: Close the funding gap now [Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.] County Councilperson Christiana Rigby,

Board of Education and County Council Members,

We are grateful to the County Executive for providing an additional \$14.5

million to help fund HCPSS, but we're still short of the funding we need. That's why we're asking the Board of Education and the County Council to use available funds to close the budget gap, prevent increases to class size, honor educator contracts, and deliver a "same services" budget to the residents of Howard County.

Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely,

Lori Shaffrey

Lori Shaffrey lori_shaffrey@hcpss.org<mailto:lori_shaffrey@hcpss.org> Gorman Crossing Elementary School Laurel, Maryland 20723

howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6153848

f

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Monday, May 19, 2025 10:07 AM
	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity Case: CS0068497 – opened and unassigned

Howard County	Case
Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget	
Case Number: CS0068497	
Case Opened: 05-19-2025	
Constituent:	
VIEW CASE	
Details:	
05-19-2025 10:05:53 AM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional commo	ents
From: Matthew Henry <matt_henry@hcpss.org> Sent: Friday, May 16, 2025 1:38 PM To: Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: Stand together for HCPSS: Close the funding gap nov</crigby@howardcountymd.gov></matt_henry@hcpss.org>	N
[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. F click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]	Please only
County Councilperson Christiana Rigby,	
Dear Board of Education and County Council Members, I would like to express my gratitude to the County Executive fo an additional \$14.5 million to HCPSS. However, despite this in are still facing a substantial funding gap that jeopardizes vital p class sizes, and staff positions. Therefore, I urge: The Board of Education to consider utilizing any available fund	crease, we programs,

help close the budget gap. The County Council to make adjustments to the budget to allocate additional revenue to HCPSS. As a Gifted and Talented teacher in a Title I school, I deeply understand the importance of providing support to students who require advanced learning opportunities. Many students have shared with me their struggles with staying engaged in class due to a lack of challenge. Reducing support for these students would have a profound and lasting impact on those who rely on it most. Let's be honest, cutting elementary GT resource teachers, particularly in Title I schools, reintroduces the very barriers we've worked tirelessly to eliminate. I strongly urge you to preserve funding for our schools and ensure that every student, regardless of background, has access to the education they deserve. Sincerely, Matt Henry Matthew Henry matt henry@hcpss.org<mailto:matt henry@hcpss.org> 9910 ELDEE DR ELLICOTT CITY, Maryland 21042-5614

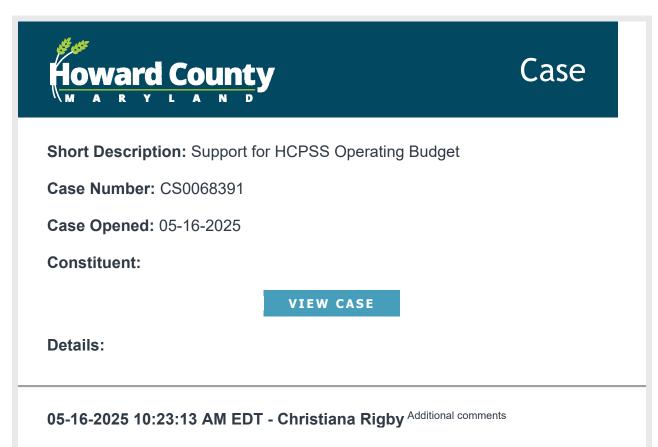
howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6164554

f

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 10:24 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068391 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged



From: Meghan Lovett Capone <meghan_lovett_capone@hcpss.org> Sent: Friday, May 16, 2025 9:13 AM To: Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: Stand together for HCPSS: Close the funding gap now

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

County Councilperson Christiana Rigby,

Board of Education and County Council Members,

I am a HCPSS teacher, parent, and Howard County tax payer. My family could

have chosen to live in any number of counties, but we decided to move to Howard County because of their staunch support of public schools. However, since we moved here in 2021, it has felt like the people who we elect to support our students and teachers are waffling on that support. As middle school teacher, my largest class size this year in 34 students and it is glarly obvious the disadvantage this class has over my class that is less than 30 students. Please fund our school system properly so students education is not watered down by these measures.

We are grateful to the County Executive for providing an additional \$14.5 million to help fund HCPSS, but we're still short of the funding we need. That's why we're asking the Board of Education and the County Council to use available funds to close the budget gap, prevent increases to class size, honor educator contracts, and deliver a "same services" budget to the residents of Howard County.

Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.

* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins. Please support our students and teachers,

Sincerely, Meghan Lovett Capone

Meghan Lovett Capone meghan_lovett_capone@hcpss.org<mailto:meghan_lovett_capone@hcpss.org> 3134 Greenway Dr Ellicott City, Maryland 21042

howardcountymd.gov

f y D

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Monday, May 19, 2025 10:08 AM
	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity Case: CS0068498 – opened and unassigned

	Case
Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget	
Case Number: CS0068498	
Case Opened: 05-19-2025	
Constituent:	
VIEW CASE	
Details:	
05-19-2025 10:07:38 AM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional comm	ients
From: Melissa Kohler <melissa_kohler@hcpss.org> Sent: Friday, May 16, 2025 10:39 AM</melissa_kohler@hcpss.org>	
To: Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: Stand together for HCPSS: Close the funding gap no</crigby@howardcountymd.gov>	W
[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. F click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]	
County Councilperson Christiana Rigby,	
As a lifelong resident of Howard County, a proud graduate of or school system, a parent of a student with an IEP, and an educ worked for HCPSS for 20 years, I want to express my sincere to the County Executive for allocating an additional \$14.5 millio our schools. This emergency funding is a meaningful step—bu leaves a significant gap in the resources needed to maintain the	ator who has appreciation on to support ut it still

standards our students deserve.

I am urging both the Board of Education and the County Council to take further action to fully fund a "same services" budget. Having seen our school system from every angle—student, parent, and longtime employee—I know how essential it is to preserve the quality of education and support services that make HCPSS strong.

Specifically, I respectfully ask:

That the Board of Education utilize any available fund balances to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.

That the County Council use its authority to amend the County budget and direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

As the parent of a child with an IEP, I know how critical it is for students to receive consistent, individualized support. These services aren't luxuries—they're vital. When budgets are cut or stretched too thin, our most vulnerable students often feel the effects first.

I've dedicated two decades of my life to supporting students in this county because I believe in our schools, our educators, and our community. I also believe that with the right leadership and commitment, we can rise to meet this challenge together.

Thank you for your time, your leadership, and for standing with the families and educators of Howard County.

Sincerely, Melissa Kohler

Melissa Kohler melissa_kohler@hcpss.org<mailto:melissa_kohler@hcpss.org> 7854 Grassy Garth Elkridge, Maryland 21075

howardcountymd.gov

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From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Monday, May 19, 2025 10:05 AM
To:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068493 – opened and unassigned

	Case
Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget	
Case Number: CS0068493	
Case Opened: 05-19-2025	
Constituent:	
VIEW CASE	
Details:	
05-19-2025 10:04:48 AM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional comme	nts
From: Nicholas Kourpias <noreply@adv.actionnetwork.org> Sent: Friday, May 16, 2025 9:39 PM To: Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: Stand together for HCPSS: Close the funding gap now</crigby@howardcountymd.gov></noreply@adv.actionnetwork.org>	I
[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Pl click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]	ease only
County Councilperson Christiana Rigby,	
Board of Education and County Council Members,	
We are grateful to the County Executive for providing an addition million to help fund HCPSS, but we're still short of the funding we That's why we're asking the Board of Education and the County use available funds to close the budget gap, prevent increases	ve need. / Council to

Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Kourpias nickkourpias@gmail.com<mailto:nickkourpias@gmail.com> 8031 Green Tree Ct Elkridge, Maryland 21075

howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6164520

f

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 10:04 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068372 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

ward County Case Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget Case Number: CS0068372 Case Opened: 05-16-2025 **Constituent:** VIEW CASE **Details:** 05-16-2025 10:03:27 AM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional comments From: Peter Murdza <noreply@adv.actionnetwork.org> Sent: Friday, May 16, 2025 6:34 AM To: Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: Stand together for HCPSS: Close the funding gap now [Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.] County Councilperson Christiana Rigby,

Board of Education and County Council Members,

We are grateful to the County Executive for providing an additional \$14.5

million to help fund HCPSS, but we're still short of the funding we need. That's why we're asking the Board of Education and the County Council to use available funds to close the budget gap, prevent increases to class size, honor educator contracts, and deliver a "same services" budget to the residents of Howard County.

Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely, Peter Murdza

Peter Murdza petermurdza@gmail.com<mailto:petermurdza@gmail.com> 3165 Edgewood Road Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

howardcountymd.gov

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Friday, May 16, 2025 10:13 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068382 – opened and unassigned

	Case
Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget	
Case Number: CS0068382	
Case Opened: 05-16-2025	
Constituent:	
VIEW CASE	
Details:	
05-16-2025 10:13:12 AM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional comments	5
From: Stacie Tversky <noreply@adv.actionnetwork.org> Sent: Friday, May 16, 2025 8:06 AM To: Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: Stand together for HCPSS: Close the funding gap now</crigby@howardcountymd.gov></noreply@adv.actionnetwork.org>	
[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Ple click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]	ase only
County Councilperson Christiana Rigby,	
Board of Education and County Council Members,	
We are grateful to the County Executive for providing an addition million to help fund HCPSS, but we're still short of the funding we That's why we're asking the Board of Education and the County use available funds to close the budget gap, prevent increases to	e need. Council to

Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely,

Stacie Tversky staciefeldman41@gmail.com<mailto:staciefeldman41@gmail.com> 8067 High Castle Road Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6153691

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 ∮howardcountymd.gov ay, May 19, 2025 10:05 AM
, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity CS0068491 – opened and unassigned

Howard County Ca	ase
Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget	
Case Number: CS0068491	
Case Opened: 05-19-2025	
Constituent:	
VIEW CASE	
Details:	
05-19-2025 10:04:46 AM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional comments	
From: Surabhi Agrawal <surabhi_agrawal@hcpss.org> Sent: Friday, May 16, 2025 6:38 PM To: Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: Stand together for HCPSS: Close the funding gap now</crigby@howardcountymd.gov></surabhi_agrawal@hcpss.org>	
[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please of click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]	only
County Councilperson Christiana Rigby,	
Board of Education and County Council Members,	
We are grateful to the County Executive for providing an additional \$1 million to help fund HCPSS, but we're still short of the funding we nee That's why we're asking the Board of Education and the County Coun use available funds to close the budget gap, prevent increases to class	d. icil to

Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely,

Surabhi Agrawal surabhi_agrawal@hcpss.org<mailto:surabhi_agrawal@hcpss.org> 8108 Kyne Millers Way Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6164519

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From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Monday, May 19, 2025 10:04 AM
	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity Case: CS0068489 – opened and unassigned

Howard County	Case
Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget	
Case Number: CS0068489	
Case Opened: 05-19-2025	
Constituent:	
VIEW CASE	
Details:	
05-19-2025 10:02:42 AM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional commen	ts
From: Vanessa Hecht <noreply@adv.actionnetwork.org> Sent: Friday, May 16, 2025 9:40 PM To: Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: Stand together for HCPSS: Close the funding gap now</crigby@howardcountymd.gov></noreply@adv.actionnetwork.org>	
[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Ple click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]	ease only
County Councilperson Christiana Rigby,	
Board of Education and County Council Members,	
We are grateful to the County Executive for providing an additio million to help fund HCPSS, but we're still short of the funding w That's why we're asking the Board of Education and the County use available funds to close the budget gap, prevent increases t	e need. Council to

Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Hecht vanessahecht246@gmail.com<mailto:vanessahecht246@gmail.com> 4694 Shelley Lane Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

howardcountymd.gov



From: Sent:	snap@howardcountymd.gov Monday, May 19, 2025 9:56 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068485 – opened and unassigned

	Case
Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget	
Case Number: CS0068485	
Case Opened: 05-19-2025	
Constituent:	
VIEW CASE	
Details:	
05-19-2025 09:55:07 AM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional comments	;
From: Carolina Innecco <noreply@adv.actionnetwork.org> Sent: Saturday, May 17, 2025 12:27 PM To: Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: Stand together for HCPSS: Close the funding gap now</crigby@howardcountymd.gov></noreply@adv.actionnetwork.org>	
[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Plea click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]	ase only
County Councilperson Christiana Rigby,	
Board of Education and County Council Members,	
We are grateful to the County Executive for providing an additional million to help fund HCPSS, but we're still short of the funding we That's why we're asking the Board of Education and the County C use available funds to close the budget gap, prevent increases to	e need. Council to

Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely, Carolina Innecco.

Carolina Innecco carolina.innecco@gmail.com<mailto:carolina.innecco@gmail.com> 4930 Worthington Way Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

howardcountymd.gov



From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Monday, May 19, 2025 9:56 AM
To:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068486 – opened and unassigned

	Case
Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget	
Case Number: CS0068486	
Case Opened: 05-19-2025	
Constituent:	
VIEW CASE	
Details:	
05-19-2025 09:55:07 AM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional com	iments
From: jennifer <jennross16@gmail.com> Sent: Saturday, May 17, 2025 11:11 AM To: CouncilMail <councilmail@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: School budget comment</councilmail@howardcountymd.gov></jennross16@gmail.com>	
[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]	Please only
Hello,	
My child attends Lime Kiln MS and before that went to Dayto cannot emphasize enough how important the GT program ar program - including 3rd grade strings program - were to us. T and programs at Dayton Oaks especially sparked and inspire learning our child has now that we hope propels her to colleg They set the stage for success in life no matter what career p ultimately choose. Many kids will grow bored and disinterester	nd music These teachers ed the love of je and beyond. path kids

when the classes are not challenging enough, which can affect their path in life. We would hate to see the GT program or any of the music/related arts programs cut.

If anything needs to be cut, we as parents of a student suggest cutting the curriculum extension units. Also, at Dayton Oaks, we were extremely dismayed the school and PTA jointly used money to put in a digital sign out front not many years ago. There was zero benefit to the students' learning to install a digital sign. These signs across the county at some schools likely require maintenance costs to the county that could be cut.

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Thanks for considering,

Jennifer Ross

howardcountymd.gov

From: Sent:	snap@howardcountymd.gov Monday, May 19, 2025 9:56 AM
	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity Case: CS0068484 – opened and unassigned
Subject.	case. cooloototototo opened and unassigned

Howard County	Case
Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget	
Case Number: CS0068484	
Case Opened: 05-19-2025	
Constituent:	
VIEW CASE	
Details:	
05-19-2025 09:55:02 AM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional comments	
From: Mari Soo-Tho <mari_soo-tho@hcpss.org> Sent: Saturday, May 17, 2025 1:29 PM To: Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: Stand together for HCPSS: Close the funding gap now</crigby@howardcountymd.gov></mari_soo-tho@hcpss.org>	
[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Pleas click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]	se only
County Councilperson Christiana Rigby,	
Board of Education and County Council Members,	
We are grateful to the County Executive for providing an additional million to help fund HCPSS, but we're still short of the funding we r That's why we're asking the Board of Education and the County Co use available funds to close the budget gap, prevent increases to c	need. ouncil to

Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely,

Mari Soo-Tho Special Education Teacher

Mari Soo-Tho mari_soo-tho@hcpss.org<mailto:mari_soo-tho@hcpss.org> 4739 Rams Horn Row Ellicott City, Maryland 21042

howardcountymd.gov

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From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Monday, May 19, 2025 9:54 AM
To:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068482 – opened and unassigned

Howard County Case	
Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget	
Case Number: CS0068482	
Case Opened: 05-19-2025	
Constituent:	
VIEW CASE	
Details:	
05-19-2025 09:52:57 AM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional comments	
From: Susie Kurstin <noreply@adv.actionnetwork.org> Sent: Saturday, May 17, 2025 9:12 PM To: Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: Stand together for HCPSS: Close the funding gap now</crigby@howardcountymd.gov></noreply@adv.actionnetwork.org>	
[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]	
County Councilperson Christiana Rigby,	
Board of Education and County Council Members,	
We are grateful to the County Executive for providing an additional \$14.5 million to help fund HCPSS, but we're still short of the funding we need. That's why we're asking the Board of Education and the County Council to use available funds to close the budget gap, prevent increases to class	

Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely, Susie Kurstin

Susie Kurstin skurstin116@gmail.com<mailto:skurstin116@gmail.com> 10020 Tanya Ct Ellicott City, Maryland 21042-4926

howardcountymd.gov



From:	Erin Wegner Brooks <erin@erinwegner.com></erin@erinwegner.com>
Sent:	Monday, May 19, 2025 11:16 AM
То:	CouncilMail; Budget Testimony; Yungmann, David; CouncilDistrict5@howardcountymd.gov
Subject:	Prioritize Our Schools — Restore Full Funding to HCPSS consider IMPACT with DATA

Dear Howard County Council and Leaders,

I am writing as a concerned parent in Howard County to urge you to restore funding to the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) in the FY26 Operating Budget.

Over the past several years, HCPSS has been consistently underfunded. HCPSS needs at least an additional \$29.2 million to keep our current level of services. Without any additional funding, our community will face larger class sizes, reductions in programs, and layoffs of valued teachers and staff -- all of which negatively impact the quality of education for our students and hurt our community. HCPSS is one of the main reasons families move to Howard County. The school system should not be leading the way in cuts. Education is a core public service — not a luxury item to be scaled back. An investment in our public schools is an investment that pays back in dividends and makes Howard County stronger.

As a parent of two children in HCPSS, I see firsthand how important and successful the orchestra and GT programs are in our schools. My daughter is currently in 3 GT classes and my son, just a 1st grade, is already in above grade level math.

Are you aware of the NUMBER OF STUDENTS the proposed cuts would impact? Let me share some hard data with you.

At Dayton Oaks alone,

- 87 out of 123 third grade students PARTICIPATE in the strings program, That's OVER 70% of our 3rd graders, demonstrating this program's strong reach and popularity.
- Over 40% of students participate in Instructional Seminars which allow students to apply advanced skills like research, communication, and technology use
- Over 35% of students in grades 3–5 are in Curriculum Extension Units (CEUs), with grades 4–5 receiving two CEU sessions.
- In grades 4–5, GT Math reaches 42% of students, providing instruction 1–2 years above grade level.

Cutting strings and removing GT teachers will impact a SIGNIFICANT amount of students!!!

Howard County's reputation for excellence is built on its schools. I urge you to prioritize our students and schools by restoring the necessary funding to HCPSS.

Thank you for your leadership and attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely, Erin Brooks 6561 Prestwick Drive, Highland MD District 5

Erin Wegner Brooks 443.676.4075 www.erinwegner.com



From:	Oxana <effsenia@gmail.com></effsenia@gmail.com>
Sent:	Monday, May 19, 2025 7:43 PM
То:	CouncilMail
Subject:	[SUSPECTED SPAM] \$29.2 million underfunded - please restore the funding!

Dear Howard County Council,

I'm writing as a concerned parent and educator to urge you to fully fund the Howard County Public School System in the FY26 Operating Budget.

HCPSS has faced years of underfunding. This year, the system needs at least \$29.2 million just to maintain current services. Without it, we'll see larger classs sizes, fewer program, and staff layoffs - all of which hurt our students.

It is unacceptable that our schools are the first to face cuts when budgets tighten. Education is a core service and should be protected, not sacrificed. The percentage of the Howard County Public School System's share of the recurring General Fund Revenue has not kept of with historic norms and inflations.

Two of my children are currently attending TRES and FQMS, and both schools are already stretched thin. We cannot afford to lose our music programs or mental health counselors—especially during a national epidemic of school shootings. We cannot afford more cuts!

Please prioritize students and restore funding to HCPSS. Please fight for our schools!

Thank you, 7th Congressional District

Oxana Chumak-Strianese, M.A.² FSI curriculum developer (contractor)

From:	Brandon Hicks <bhicks1676@gmail.com></bhicks1676@gmail.com>
Sent:	Wednesday, May 21, 2025 8:04 AM
To:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Raising Teacher Salaries
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Hello,

I am contacting you in order to bring attention to current teacher salaries in the Howard County school district. Because of all the sacrifices teachers are forced to make and what they have to endure, their pay should be significantly more than it currently is. Twice as many teachers said they experienced frequent job-related stress or burnout this year compared to workers in another field, and low salaries were the 2nd biggest stressors for teachers (Edweek). Teachers reported working an average of 53 hours per week, compared to 43 hours of weekly work reported by comparable workers. Teachers only keep 3 quarters of their pay, and 70 percent of school districts in the US are still under \$50,000, with Howard County being one of them at an average salary of \$46,900 a year. I'm asking that you use your executive power to raise minimum teacher salaries to \$50,000. This will allow all teachers to have a worthy pay for the hours they put in and the impact they have on our nation's future.

Thank you for your consideration,

Brandon Hicks

From:	Torie Grant <toriegrant@gmail.com></toriegrant@gmail.com>
Sent:	Wednesday, May 21, 2025 7:25 AM
То:	CouncilMail; Ball, Calvin; boe@hcpss.org; Thompson, Paul; Budget Testimony
Subject:	Fill the HCPSS Budget Gap - Don't Cut Teachers or Programs

Dear County Council Members, Executive Ball, and Board of Education Members,

Please work together to find funding to prevent all teacher, staff, and program cuts to HCPSS in FY26. We appreciate the increased dialogue between all of you as you respond to the community's urgent requests to find funding to fill the gap needed to prevent the 222+ teacher and staff cuts that were outlined earlier this month. HCPSS should be a top county priority, yet has seen a lower percentage of the overall budget in recent years and suffered teacher cuts and class size increases just last year. The community finds this underfunding and continued cuts to be unacceptable and we appreciate that you are listening.

As a community, Howard County has come together with thousands of emails to tell you that HCPSS and all its teachers and programs matter to the community. The community does not want to see class size increases, teacher cuts, and the loss of GT and music programs. Paraeducators and special education aides are so vital for teachers to be able to teach within the already too large class sizes.

As a mother of young children and a pediatrician, I am particularly concerned about cuts aimed at the elementary school level. Early exposure to STEM, music, and other GT topics is critical for the growth and development of young minds and for fostering a lifelong love of learning. Do not cut elementary GT and orchestra teachers. The community is passionate about these integral programs that not only promote essential academic development for our youngest learners, but also attract and retain families to our great county.

The community recognizes that Blueprint continues to put increased financial demands on the county. However, Blueprint should NOT come at the cost of losing current HCPSS teachers and programs. This was never the intention or written mandate of Blueprint. Expanding pre-K is valuable to the community, however, adding 2 years of schooling does not make up for or balance out cuts to the subsequent 13 years of schooling. We ask that you find funding to fill the gap for HCPSS FY26 Operating Budget and start to plan now, with the State of Maryland, for FY27's Blueprint financial requirements WITHOUT cuts to HCPSS teachers, staff, and programs.

Please continue to listen to the community and find funding for HCPSS to prevent ALL teacher, staff, and program cuts in FY26. Our students are counting on you.

I look forward to continuing to partner with you to maintain HCPSS's educational excellence for the years to come.

Sincerely, Torie Grant HCPSS parent, concerned community member, and pediatrician

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Thursday, May 29, 2025 10:01 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068926 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Howard County	Case
Short Description: Support for HCPSS Operating Budget	
Case Number: CS0068926	
Case Opened: 05-29-2025	
Constituent:	
VIEW CASE	
Details:	
05-29-2025 10:00:27 AM EDT - Christiana Rigby Additional comments	S
From: Stacey Krainer <stacey_krainer@hcpss.org> Sent: Thursday, May 22, 2025 9:11 AM To: Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov> Subject: Stand together for HCPSS: Close the funding gap now</crigby@howardcountymd.gov></stacey_krainer@hcpss.org>	
[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Ple click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]	ase only
County Councilperson Christiana Rigby,	
Board of Education and County Council Members,	

We are grateful to the County Executive for providing an additional \$14.5

million to help fund HCPSS, but we're still short of the funding we need. That's why we're asking the Board of Education and the County Council to use available funds to close the budget gap, prevent increases to class size, honor educator contracts, and deliver a "same services" budget to the residents of Howard County.

Specifically, we need:

* The Board of Education to utilize its available fund balances, however small, to supplement the County Executive's emergency appropriation.
* The County Council to use its power to amend the County budget to direct additional revenue to HCPSS.

We know that Howard County is navigating uncertainty, but no matter what the future holds, we will need educators and schools more than ever. When elected leaders, advocates, and educators all do our part, our whole community wins.

Sincerely, Stacey Krainer

Stacey Krainer stacey_krainer@hcpss.org<mailto:stacey_krainer@hcpss.org> 5525 Dolores Avenue Halethorpe, Maryland 21227

howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6206913

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From:	Michelle Brown <michelle_brown@hcpss.org></michelle_brown@hcpss.org>
Sent:	Friday, May 23, 2025 8:18 AM
To:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Education in Howard County is failed by 3/5 of the county council
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear Council Members,

I send a hearty and sincere thank you to Ms. Jung and Ms. Walsh. You fought the good fight for HCPSS students and educators. We listened to you supporting us in the last council meeting.

To Mr. Yungman, Mr. Jones, and Ms. Rigby,

In many discussions that I have had with HCPSS educators and residents, the common theme has been, "the reason people move to Howard County is first and foremost because of the reputation of the school system.' The second theme is the magnificence of the parks and recreation department. What two areas are taking the biggest cuts? Education and Parks and Recreation. The reputation of HCPSS is at its breaking point. The educators cannot continue to more with less—we cannot even maintain with less.

Howard County brags about being business and development friendly to the detriment of our schools. The county council must raise the rates for developers. New houses, neighborhoods, and businesses do not just impact the basic county infrastructure—roads, sewer, water, emergency services, but also the schools. Our classrooms were not built to accommodate 30+ students and when classrooms are overcrowded it is simply impossible to manage the students not to mention the additional needs of the students with IEPs and 504 plans who are mainstreamed in all classrooms. It becomes dangerous for students and educators, and directly impacts learning.

Enough is enough. Because this is the second year in a row that I, as a high school library media specialist, have had to fight for my position, I have not delved into all the line items in the Howard County budget, but I do know that the percentage allocated to Education has steadily decreased to just 40% of the budget, when surrounding counties have maintained or increased the percentage of the budget allocated to Education. If Howard County wants to stay as the top county for children's education, then the county council needed you to support HCPSS and fully fund the budget.

Sincerely, Michelle Pahl Brown

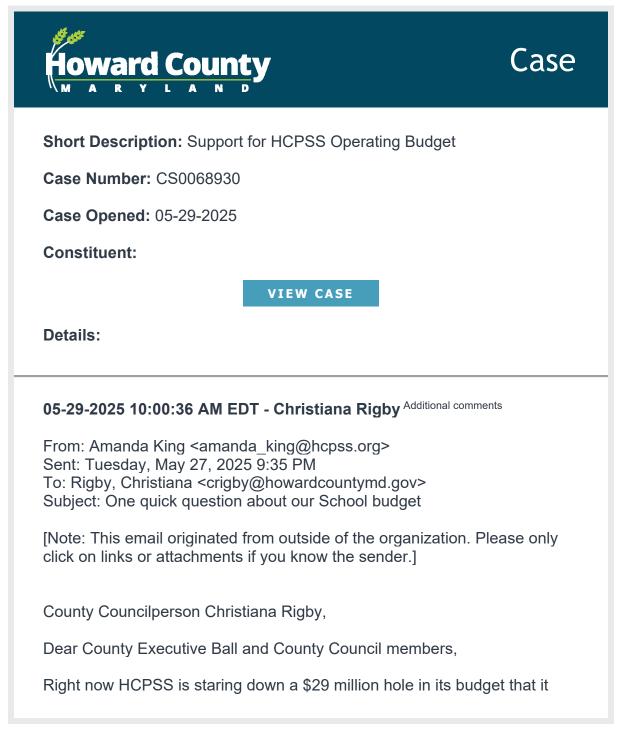
michelle_brown@hcpss.org Library Media Specialist * DEI Liaison Mt. Hebron High School 410.313.2880 We are EXCELLENCE. We are **COMMUNITY**. We are HEBRON. *Learner * Input * Deliberative * Intellection * Adaptability*

Currently Reading

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Thursday, May 29, 2025 10:01 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068930 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow
Flag Status:	Flagge

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cannot fill. County Executive Ball sent educators a list of reasons why he can't fully fund schools, but I still have one question for him and for the County Council:

What would you cut from HCPSS?

It's easy to cut school funding and leave the hard choices to the Board of Education. But if you think HCPSS should have no additional funding this year, then how much would you raise class size? Which programs would you eliminate? How many staff should be laid off? Should you freeze pay increases for educators during a teacher shortage?

If you can't, or won't answer those questions, then do the right thing and restore the funding that HCPSS students and educators deserve.

Thank you,

Amanda King amanda_king@hcpss.org<mailto:amanda_king@hcpss.org> 12053 Lamplighter Dr Ellicott City, Maryland 21042

howardcountymd.gov

Ref:MSG6206908

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From:	Cristina Mabry <cmabry02@gmail.com></cmabry02@gmail.com>
Sent:	Tuesday, May 27, 2025 5:54 PM
То:	CouncilMail; Ball, Calvin; boe@hcpss.org; BudgetFeedback@hcpss.org; Budget@hcpss.org
Subject:	Urgent Concern Regarding Proposed Program Cuts

Dear Members of the Board of Education, County Council and Mr. Ball,

I am writing as a concerned parent to express my deep opposition to the proposed budget cuts that would eliminate or reduce critical educational programs and support staff, including:

- The elimination of 3rd Grade Strings
- The reduction of elementary Gifted and Talented programs
- The elimination of middle school Paraeducators
- The conversion of high school Media Specialists to Paraeducators
- The reduction of Leadership Interns

These programs and positions are not expendable—they are essential to the success and well-being of students like mine.

One of my children has multiple educational disabilities and relies heavily on the kind of individualized support that paraeducators help provide. Removing these supports will make it significantly harder for him to access his education, manage his learning challenges, and maintain progress. Without these resources, his ability to succeed in school is in jeopardy.

My other child is a bright, high-achieving student who thrives on intellectual challenge. The elementary Gifted and Talented program has been essential in keeping her engaged and motivated. Reducing or eliminating this program will not only limit her growth but send a message that her academic needs are less important than those of other students.

I recognize the difficult budgetary decisions you face, but I respectfully urge the Board to explore alternative funding solutions that do not come at the expense of students'

educational equity and enrichment. Cuts like these would disproportionately harm students who need the most support and those who benefit from opportunities to excel.

Please prioritize a budget that reflects the district's commitment to meeting the diverse needs of all its learners. Our children deserve better than to be the first place we cut when finances are tight.

Sincerely,

Cristina Mabry 5505 Tang place, Columbia, MD 21045 Cmabry02@gmail.com From:Emily Freter <emilylfreter@gmail.com>Sent:Tuesday, May 27, 2025 11:27 PMTo:CouncilMailSubject:Urgent Funding Request

[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 hope this message finds you well. I am writing as a concerned member of our community and an advocate for high-quality public education in Howard County. As the upcoming budget decisions are being considered, I urge you to allocate additional funds to our public schools to prevent devastating cuts to essential programs and staff positions.

Programs such as Strings, Gifted and Talented (GT), and paraeducator support are not luxuries—they are vital components of a well-rounded, equitable education. Strings programs provide students with access to arts education and have been shown to improve academic performance and social-emotional development. GT programs ensure that advanced learners are challenged and engaged, and paraeducators play a crucial role in supporting both classroom instruction and individual student needs, particularly those with learning differences.

Cutting these programs would disproportionately affect our most vulnerable students and undermine the quality of education that our community has long valued and supported. We understand that budgets are tight, but investing in education is one of the most effective and forward-thinking uses of public funds.

I respectfully ask that you prioritize our students by ensuring that these programs and positions remain funded. Our children—and the future of our community—deserve nothing less.

Thank you for your attention and service.

Sincerely, Emily Freter Parent, Thunder Hill Community Member

From:	Emily Haines Lloyd <emilyhaines@yahoo.com></emilyhaines@yahoo.com>
Sent:	Tuesday, May 27, 2025 9:44 PM
То:	Ball, Calvin; CouncilMail
Subject:	Urgent Concern: Protect Funding for HCPSS and Prevent Harmful Cuts

Dear Howard County Council Members and County Executive Ball,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed cuts to the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) for FY26. The current budget shortfall of over \$9 million threatens essential programs and staff, including Gifted and Talented (GT) educators, strings instructors, media specialists, and many others who directly impact the quality of education in our county.

The loss of over 100 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions would be devastating to our students, teachers, and families. These cuts are not abstract—they will directly reduce the educational opportunities available to our children, eliminate critical enrichment programs, and increase class sizes in ways that will negatively affect student performance and well-being.

These are not luxuries—they are core supports that make our school system one of the best in the state.

I urge you to allocate additional funding to HCPSS to avoid these damaging cuts. Our children deserve a robust, well-resourced education that sets them up for future success. Please stand with our educators and families by fully funding our schools.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to the students of Howard County.

Sincerely

Emily Haines

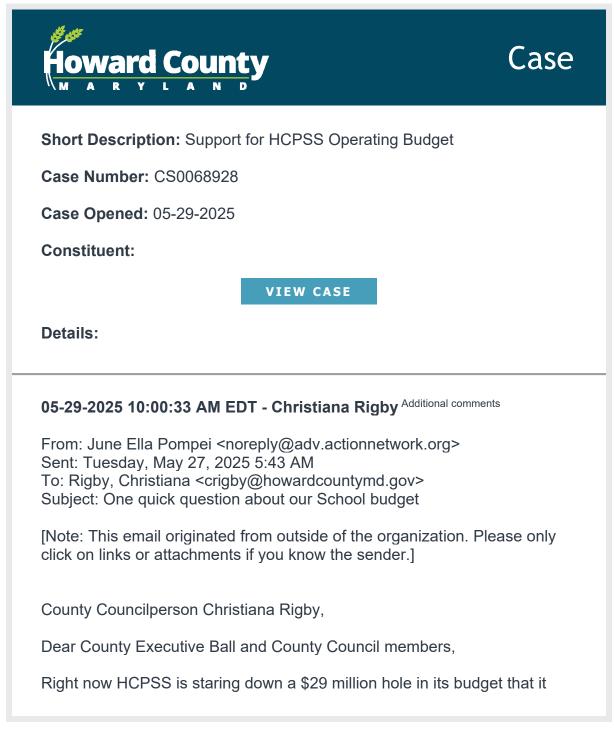
From:	Chang張 Jennifer珍毓 < jennifer_11294@hotmail.com>
Sent:	Tuesday, May 27, 2025 9:09 PM
То:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Add funds to hcpss to avoid cuts

從我的iPhone傳送

From:	snap@howardcountymd.gov
Sent:	Thursday, May 29, 2025 10:01 AM
То:	Smith, Brenda; Anderson, Isaiah; Gelwicks, Colette; Respass, Charity
Subject:	Case: CS0068928 – opened and unassigned

Follow Up Flag:	Follow
Flag Status:	Flagge

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cannot fill. County Executive Ball sent educators a list of reasons why he can't fully fund schools, but I still have one question for him and for the County Council:

What would you cut from HCPSS?

It's easy to cut school funding and leave the hard choices to the Board of Education. But if you think HCPSS should have no additional funding this year, then how much would you raise class size? Which programs would you eliminate? How many staff should be laid off? Should you freeze pay increases for educators during a teacher shortage?

If you can't, or won't answer those questions, then do the right thing and restore the funding that HCPSS students and educators deserve.

Thank you,

June Ella Pompei giunella@gmail.com<mailto:giunella@gmail.com> 8200 Sandy Stream Rd Columbia, Maryland 21045

howardcountymd.gov



Ref:MSG6206905

From:	Kim Pham <knpham2004@yahoo.com></knpham2004@yahoo.com>
Sent:	Tuesday, May 27, 2025 11:36 PM
То:	CouncilMail; Ball, Calvin
Subject:	No funding cuts to HCPSS

HCPSS is still over \$9M short in FY26. GT teachers, strings teachers, and many other vital programs and teachers are at risk of being cut. Over 100 FTEs will lose their jobs. These cuts directly hurt our students and educators. Please do not cut HCPSS funding. Thank you

Kim Pham

From:	Ronnette <rbailey_06@yahoo.com></rbailey_06@yahoo.com>
Sent:	Tuesday, May 27, 2025 9:40 PM
То:	Budget Testimony; CouncilMail; Ball, Calvin; Boe@hcpss.org
Subject:	Support for Base Budget Reduction Scenario 1

As a proud resident of Howard County with two children attending Howard County Public Schools, I would like to express my support for Base Budget Reduction Scenario 1.

While I understand that we are faced with hard budget decisions, I urge you to keep the 3rd Grade Strings program and the Elementary School Gifted and Talented opportunities for students.

My daughter, a current 6th grader has benefited immensely from participating in both programs. She continues to excel in the GT Math and Language Arts class and has become a talented viola player. Playing viola has helped her develop confidence and has aided in her academic success. This would not have been the case if she was not afforded the opportunity to learn to play the viola in 3rd grade.

I now have a rising 3rd grader looking to follow in the same footsteps of his sister. I urge you to allow him the opportunity to participate in the 3rd grade strings program, something he's been looking forward to since Kindergarten. He too is gifted and Math and Language Arts, and I urge you to continue to fund and support the Gifted and Talented Program as well.

My children as well as many other children in this county deserve the chance to be challenged academically and musically to reach their full potential.

Thank you for your support.

Ronnette Akwei

From:	Torie Grant <toriegrant@gmail.com></toriegrant@gmail.com>
Sent:	Tuesday, May 27, 2025 4:28 PM
To:	CouncilMail; Ball, Calvin; Thompson, Paul
Cc:	boe@hcpss.org; Bill_Barnes@hcpss.org
Subject:	HCPSS schools are still over \$9M short

Dear County Executive Ball and County Council Members,

Today the BOE posted slides proposing cuts to HCPSS in the range of 100-114 FTEs and the proposed loss of elementary GT teachers (which increases student-to-teacher ratios), 3rd grade strings, paraeducators (which puts extra demand on teachers), possible increased class sizes, and more. <u>These cuts will hurt our students and educators</u>.

The BOE needs at least \$9M (\$10M to also add athletic trainers) to avoid cuts next year. Please provide this additional funding so the superintendent's same-services budget can be funded and we can avoid teacher cuts, program cuts, and class size increases.

<u>Please step in with additional funding to prevent these cuts in FY26.</u> For FY27, please speak with the MSDE as to how Blueprint can be more affordable for Howard County. Blueprint is not intended to come at the cost of our current K-12 programs and teachers.

Please continue to work with the BOE to avoid any teacher or program cuts in FY26. Our children and students should be our top priority. Please consider putting other less urgent projects, such as the new library and new pickleball courts, on hold until our schools are funded!

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Torie Grant HCPSS Parent, concerned community member, and pediatrician

From:	Koliofotis, Ally <ally_koliofotis@umr.com></ally_koliofotis@umr.com>
Sent:	Wednesday, May 28, 2025 3:13 PM
To:	CouncilMail; boe@hcpss.org
Subject:	Saving our Teachers
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Does Howard county not understand the importance of funding GT resources and Music? This is exactly what sets our county apart from other counties. There is a huge population of GT students who are the very students who are increasing the test scores for the county. Without the continued support for these students, how are students supposed to receive the proper education and support they need? We are quick to give students who don't want or care to learn any and every resource to make their lives easier. But taking it away from students who are willing and able? It's a classic story of biting the hand that feeds you. How will Howard county respond to lower test scores? For a county that prides themselves on education, you need to do a better job of making it priority. There is waste in other places. Look for them.

Similarly, Howard county's music education program is renowned. It has been for years. Students start their love of music at young age, these are the students that turn into amazing musicians. And let's not forget the positive impact music education has on math and reading skills.

Without funding for these things, this county is taking away what it has build its reputation on, and without it the system will crumble.

We will hold you accountable for what happens. We are watching.

Ally Koliofotis Senior Field Account Manager **UMR** A UnitedHealthcare Company

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From:	Amanda Gazan <agazan@yahoo.com></agazan@yahoo.com>
Sent:	Wednesday, May 28, 2025 12:01 PM
To:	CouncilMail; Ball, Calvin
Subject:	Please give HCPSS more funds
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Good afternoon,

Please consider giving HCPSS more funds so that teachers and programs are not cut! The children of Howard County deserve better. Our school system continues to have to take away programs and staff and nothing is ever added. This cycle needs to STOP! Please give more funds to HCPSS!!!

Sincerely, Amanda Gazan (HOCO resident and mother of 2 HCPSS students) From:dana garrett <danangarrett@yahoo.com>Sent:Wednesday, May 28, 2025 8:28 AMTo:Ball, Calvin; CouncilMailSubject:FULLY fund our schools!

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

Dear Mr. Ball and County Council members,

This is my second email. I am disappointed with your priorities and lack of responsibility for the situation that faces the school system. How can you blame the management when you are the ones whom are ultimately in control? Sounds like an excuse! Take the power that you have been given from the election. Do your jobs!!! Make Howard County better! Prove to the folks in Washington that we can do better!

As a HCPSS employee for five years, a parent of two children whom are HCPSS students I daily see the challenges our schools are facing. I encourage you to dig deep and roll your sleeves up and make a difference! Our schools should be fully funded and even with that...over fund our schools! Fix the problems! Please stop throwing money at gardens, theatres and a new library! While they are worthwhile projects, we need to maintain our current community responsibilities first! Overfund our schools!

Thank you! Dana Garrett

Sent from my iPhone

From:	donna adams <adamsd44@gmail.com></adamsd44@gmail.com>
Sent:	Tuesday, May 27, 2025 9:58 PM
То:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Budget

Good evening! I do Hope that you are awake, listening and working on ways to increase the budget so that Necessary TEACHERS do NOT lose their jobs or current positions!! It is OUR responsibility to ensure our children's education is stable! I have 6 Grandchildren currently in the HCPS system! I have proudly paid my taxes that primarily finance our school system. My taxes seem to increase steadily each year yet each year I am forced to BEG Council Members to use the increases to Fund our Education system as they are required to do! Why are we not eliminating math & reading coaches ? These positions do not directly benefit nor work Directly with children !!! We are one of the Wealthiest counties in the Country !! How EMBARRASSING and SAD that our Children's Education is NOT our PRIORITY?! Our Children need both their primary teachers and their GT teachers in order to help them maintain and build upon their skills and knowledge!!! Do the right thing - save our Teachers !!! By doing so, we are Gifting our Children the Future they deserve and we are Obligated to give them !!! Sincerely, Donna Adams

Sent from my iPhone

From:	Emily Gotowka <emilygotowka@gmail.com></emilygotowka@gmail.com>
Sent:	Wednesday, May 28, 2025 12:32 PM
To:	CouncilMail; Ball, Calvin
Subject:	Fully Fund HCPSS
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

I am writing on behalf of my children in our schools. They deserve the best education possible. Cutting GT and 3rd grade strings is unacceptable. You must do better for our children. You must add funds to HCPSS to avoid arbitrary cuts that will affect every child.

Emily Gotowka

From:	Jacquelyn DeBella <jacquelyndebella@yahoo.com></jacquelyndebella@yahoo.com>
Sent:	Tuesday, May 27, 2025 9:44 PM
То:	BoE Email; Bill Barnes; Ball, Calvin; CouncilMail
Subject:	HCPSS 2025-2026 budget

Dear Dr. Ball, Superintendent Barnes, Howard County Council Members, and HCPSS BOE,

I have included all of you on this email to encourage collabaration, honesty, equity, and transparency about the budget. HCPSS is still 15.3 million from the budget they need for the 2025-2026 school year. Now is the time to be completely honest, take out the data sheets, and show the checkbook balances.

This is a county where the majority of the population settled here for the schools. I remember buying a house and selecting the realtor, who was a former teacher, because she knew the schools. You can survey the public and I can almost guarantee that's the number 1 answer on the board.

What makes a "good" school system? That's subjective but I can tell you it's more than just the basics .

For past 7 years, my subject, 3rd grade strings has been on the "chopping block". No one on this email understands what I do and perhaps doesn't care. I have spent my career in title one schools. I have dedicated my life to working with minorities and populations with the greatest need. It is not easy but I am good at it. I am more than a music teacher. I am teaching decoding, math, social skills, collaboration, history, a foreign language, growth mindset, problem solving, artistry, and working with students with IEP's, 504's, BIP's and many ESOL students. My classroom is a safe space. When my students perform they are brave and brilliant. Education is about taking risks, exploring, and trying new things. If we cut 3rd grade strings, we take that away from our most vulnerable learners. Education is not just math and reading - it's so much more. These are families who do not have money for food or clothing so music lessons and other enrichment is out. I am concerned about this. Denying these opportunities is an equity issue. A public school is supposed to be a place to experience new things and have opportunities.

There are several recent factors that have me greatly concerned. The following makes me believe that decisions and negotiations were made behind closed doors about the budget.

1. I am glad you are having a meeting together (BOE and CC) but June 9th is too late. The HCPSS decisions will be made on June 4 so I am unclear what the point of the meeting will be. The budget and cuts will be decided. Help me to understand.

2. There is no public testimony at a BOE meeting until June 12th so programs and individuals have no chance to explain what they do and why they are valuable to HCPSS.

3. Dr Ball's most recent email congratulating himself on the budget - a budget that once again shorts the school system . Numbers don't lie so if that's not accurate, share the math and show your work .

I am an honest and hardworking person. I want to believe in all of you and trust you. Right now, I see the destruction of a world class education system. Our most vulnerable students lose out again and again. They will be pushed out to homeschool, home and hospital, private placement (not private school), regional, homewood, or worse stay in a comprehensive school and never have their needs met. The programs that families want and have moved here for will be voted out. The irony is the music dept is always doing sustainable and community minded things. They have the ECHO program which collects used instruments, up cycles them and literally puts them in the hands of students. This has saved the county thousands of dollars. The strings program has also collaborated with premier artists like Ben Folds bringing tourism and positive press to our area.

Dr Ball and County Council and BOE members - teachers and paras will be fired . There are not enough jobs if the class sizes increase and GT, strings, and paras are cut. How can we place our trust in any of you when you are not

willing to do what is best for students? You continue to ask us to do more with less. We watch our friends, mentors, and even students leave. Once they leave - those individuals leave with the training and knowledge HCPSS gave them and they are not returning. Dr Ben Carson said " The choices you make are long lasting and life changing ".

You can change this - it's not too late . Find the money . Look in the county budget . Ask Wes Moore . Talk to MSDE . Please do not continue to use the blueprint as an excuse .

I look forward to reopening the door on the budget . This is for the future and for the students .

Sincerely,

Jacquelyn DeBella Mom of Nico , Homewood Center Mom of Francesca , Mayfield Woods MS Teacher , title one schools Taxpayer Resident of Howard County Musician Volunteer

From:	Jessica Estrogano <jessica.estrogano@gmail.com></jessica.estrogano@gmail.com>
Sent:	Tuesday, May 27, 2025 8:39 PM
То:	CouncilMail; Ball, Calvin
Cc:	Linfeng Chen; Ben <3; Jones, Opel; boe@hcpss.org
Subject:	HCPSS FY26 Budget

Good Evening,

I was made aware of the FY26 budget reconsiderations being made by the Howard County Board of Education (BOE) that are required due to the Howard County Council's FY26 budget decisions. **Howard County families need you to step up and fully fund the public schools in this county at the amount requested by the Howard County BOE, every year.** Prior to 2020, HCPSS received approximately 54% of the County budget, with a decline in percentage of the County budget every year since, and only 47% of the County budget in FY25. The bigger dollar amount the County Executive is advertising does not equate to an increased percentage.

The Spending Affordability Advisory Committee projects a budget deficit of nearly \$340 million by 2031, just 5.5 years away. This accumulated decline affects the most vulnerable and leaves horrid debt for our future generations. Taxes and fees on residents continue to rise while developers continue to receive favorable zoning and land use decisions. Howard Hughes Corporation resides on public amenities paid for by taxpayer dollars to increase its property values. **Remember: You serve your constituents, not corporations.** You are funding a new Performing Arts Center at \$68 million and a new central library and parking garage at \$150 million- **these are nice-to-haves, not necessities**. Nobody is negatively impacted by not building a new arts center or a new library and parking garage. As shown in the below image from the Howard County BOE, children and families will be significantly and negatively impacted if schools are not funded at the HCPSS Board of Education's full budget request every year.

I don't want to hear that we don't have the money. **We absolutely have the money, we just need youthe people with decision making power-to make ethical decisions** because they are the right thing to do, rather than careless decisions to please your boss(es) or generate personal revenue for yourselves. You owe this to the children, families, and the future of this county, country, and world.

Fully fund HCPSS at the Howard County BOE budget request, every year, or lose my vote.

With Hope, Jessica Estrogano

BASE BUDGET REDCTION	SCENARIO 1		SCENARIO 2	
BASE BODGET REDCTION	AMOUNT	FTEs	AMOUNT	FTEs
Eliminate Middle School Paraeducators	(254,696)	(5.00)	(254,696)	(5.00)
Convert High School Media Specialist (13.0) to Paraeducator	(634,821)		(634,821)	
Leadership Interns	(331,391)	(3.00)	(331,391)	(3.00)
High School Teacher Secretaries	(351,188)	(6.00)	(351,188)	(6.00)
Reduce Dual Enrollment	(300,000)		(300,000)	
Non-School Based Budget Cuts	(1,389,928)	(7.00)	(1,393,560)	(7.00)
Eliminate Elementary School Media Paraeducators	(2,139,446)	(42.00)	(2,139,446)	(42.00)
ES 1.0 Excluding KDG and Title 1 (includes RA positions)				
MS Class Size 1.0 (FARMS Adjusted)	(1,494,008)	(16.70)		
HS Class Size 1.0 (FARMS Adjusted)	(1,977,100)	(22.10)		
Eliminate 3rd Grade Strings			(1,073,538)	(12.00)
Reduce Elementary Gifted and Talented			(3,489,000)	(39.00)
(Add Athletic Trainers)			1,100,000	
TOTAL BASE BUDGET REDUCTIONS	(8,881,578)	(101.8)	(8,867,640)	(114)
REMAINING SURPLUS/(GAP)	(79,022)		(87,570)	

From:	Joy C <joy.casey3@gmail.com></joy.casey3@gmail.com>
Sent:	Wednesday, May 28, 2025 10:27 AM
To:	CouncilMail; Ball, Calvin
Subject:	para educators and GT????
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Cmon guys.....

We all know that no child left behind is in fact leaving behind MANY of our kids who are hungry to learn and eager to be pushed academically.

Our paraeducators provide INCREDIBLE support to these kids that are struggling mentally, physically and emotionally and need extra academic help. Without them the primary teacher has to focus most of their attention on this population and you know who gets left behind????? our happy, eager and excited to learn population.Dont screw everyone over in the name of saving money.

We have always been exceptional. Why are you bowing out on supporting our kids? Paraeducators help lift up the IEP kiddos who need an extra hand while the GT classes allow for us to also lift up our next generation of learners.

Please smarten up about the kids - if your kid went to hcpss you'd think differently.

Joy Casey Volunteer in the classroom Long term sub parent to 3 hcpss kids -- 1 in elem/ 1 in middle/ 1 in HS

From:	Kelli Cheek Mobley <kelli.cheek@gmail.com></kelli.cheek@gmail.com>
Sent:	Wednesday, May 28, 2025 7:02 AM
То:	CouncilMail
Subject:	Base Budget Reduction Considerations

Good morning:

In light of the new budget and proposed cuts with are asking to keep the vital services of GT teachers bd string instrument teachers. Our family has a beautifully talented son at Deep Run Elementary. He loves plying the viola and participating in GT activities. What can we do as taxpayers to support these programs.

Many thanks, Kelli Cheek Mobley From:Lisa Stechschulte <lisasteck@gmail.com>Sent:Tuesday, May 27, 2025 9:04 PMTo:CouncilMailSubject:Fund our schools!

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

Hello, County Council,

I am writing to urge you to keep Howard County the premier county in Maryland by covering the gap in the HCPSS budget to retain our reputation as an excellent county for raising kids.

My children attend Deep Run Elementary in 5th, 2nd, and PreK-3. They are thriving due to the outstanding GT program that enriches every student and gives gifted students the opportunity to excel while remaining part of our diverse community. My oldest has honed his focus, creativity, and teamwork skills through strings, which he began in 3rd grade. Losing GT and strings programs in the elementary school will hurt children who are not in a position to afford private lessons and tutors, including many families at Deep Eun Elementary, deepening the economic opportunity divide.

Our family moved to Howard County for our excellent public schools. Please fund the budget gaps to ensure we do not lose our greatest county treasure.

Best, Lisa Stechschulte Lowe 6426 Dry Barley Ln, Columbia, MD 21045

From:	Marcie Wells Brimer <marcie.brimer@gmail.com></marcie.brimer@gmail.com>
Sent:	Wednesday, May 28, 2025 6:39 PM
To:	CouncilMail; Ball, Calvin
Subject:	HCPSS budget
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

Dear Howard County Council Members and County Executive Ball,

I am writing to you today as a registered voter, a homeowner in Howard County, and a mother whose child will be entering the 1st grade at Deep Run Elementary School next fall. I am deeply concerned about the possibility of budget cuts to the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

I strongly urge you to reconsider any proposed reductions to the HCPSS budget. As a community, our priority should be investing in the education of our children. Our schools are the foundation of our future, and adequately funding them is crucial for the success of our students and the overall well-being of our county.

I believe that funding our schools should take precedence over other county projects and goals. A strong public education system benefits everyone in Howard County, and I ask that you prioritize the needs of our students by fully funding the HCPSS budget.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely, Marcie Brimer

From:	Sherpa, Phurba <phurba.sherpa@umaryland.edu></phurba.sherpa@umaryland.edu>
Sent:	Wednesday, May 28, 2025 8:10 AM
То:	CouncilMail; Ball, Calvin
Subject:	Urgent Action Needed: Protect Our Students and Educators from Harmful Cuts

Dear County Executive Ball and Members of the Howard County Council,

I am writing as a concerned member of the Howard County community to urgently request that you allocate additional funding to the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) to prevent devastating cuts in the FY26 budget.

HCPSS is currently facing a shortfall of over \$9 million. Without additional funding, more than 100 full-time educator positions including Gifted & Talented teachers, strings instructors, and other essential staff are at risk of being eliminated. These cuts will have a direct and deeply harmful impact on our students' education and well-being.

Our students deserve access to a full and rich educational experience. Cutting these programs not only undermines academic excellence but also damages the support systems our children rely on every day.

Please act now to fully fund HCPSS and protect the quality of education in our county. Final decisions on cuts are being made next week, there is no time to lose.

Sincerely, Phurba Y. Sherpa 10401 Boca Raton Drive Ellicott City MD 21042

Get Outlook for iOS

From:	Sara Goggin <sgoggin22@gmail.com></sgoggin22@gmail.com>
Sent:	Wednesday, May 28, 2025 9:39 PM
To:	CouncilMail; Ball, Calvin; boe@hcpss.org
Subject:	school budget
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

I am emailing all of you to urge you to work together to prioritize fully funding our schools. Howard County is an area that people move to because of the quality of our school and it is very disheartening to year after year be in the position where cuts are strongly talked about. I have already seen the results of the recent class size increases for my daughters and now that is being discussed again. These cuts directly hurt our students and our educators that work so hard to teach our students with less and less support.

My oldest child has greatly benefited from participating in 3rd grade strings this year. It has grown her confidence and encouraged her love of attending school. She also attended 2 GT CEUs where the content kept her engaged and sparked many conversations about what she learned. These experiences were her highlights of this school year.

I encourage you to work together to find the funds to prioritize our school system and our future in this county to avoid cutting any programs, teacher or paraeducator positions.

Thank you for your time and consideration, Sara Goggin

From: Sent: To: Subject:	Stefanie C. Taylor <stefanie_taylor@hcpss.org> Wednesday, May 28, 2025 2:17 PM BoE Email; Jolene Mosley; Linfeng Chen; Andrea Chamblee; Meg Ricks; Jennifer Mallo; Jacquelin McCoy; Antonia Watts; Student Board Member; Ball, Calvin; CouncilMail; Bill Barnes Budget Concerns</stefanie_taylor@hcpss.org>
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

To whom it may concern:

I am a proud media specialist in the Howard County Public School System. I saw with alarm that there are two possible budget reductions that would impact our library media programs: 1) Replacing high school media specialists with paraeducators and 2) eliminating elementary media paraeducators.

Media specialists are a critical component for our schools. We are teaching staff, support staff, front line tech staff, student support advocates, school event planners, PBIS leaders and more. We bring so much to our schools. We are master's level, professional educators. We teach valuable skills, including the ability to identify reliable sources, discern the difference between facts and fake news, and how to locate and access information. We make sure that our materials represent the diversity of our world, and provide access points so that students of color, multilingual learners, LGBTQ+ students, and people with disabilities can fully participate in their education. We collaborate with the other teachers in our buildings so we can curate resources to support students of every grade level in every subject.

Paraeducators are amazing - I would not be able to do my job as effectively without my paraeducator working at the circulation desk while I am doing administrative tasks, book ordering, weeding, curating reports and the like. The media paraeducator positions are critical in the elementary and middle school level. As high schools are even larger with populations of over one thousand students, two media specialists help keep access to a professional at all times.

In addition, the Code of Maryland Law (COMAR) states that "The school library media program shall be integrated with the local school system's instructional programs by having **certified school library media personnel**:

(1) Participate in the development and implementation of all educational programs;

(2) Instruct students, in cooperation with other teachers, in information literacy skills including reading, research, and critical thinking skills which have been integrated into other areas of the curriculum." (COMAR 13A.05.04.01B.1-2)

A further examination of the law reveals that "each local school system shall develop and implement a plan for its school library media program which shall include the following goals and subgoals to: Provide personnel who include: (a) **Certified school library media personnel with technical and clerical assistance** at the school building level to organize and operate a school library media program" (COMAR 13A.05.04.01.C.4.a)

The inclusion of "technical and clerical assistance" is important because it speaks to the fact that most of what media specialists do is not actually check out books to patrons. Paras are invaluable because they handle checkout duties, run reports, shelve books, pull resources (at the direction of the professional librarian), and create book promotion displays. We cannot do what we do, as well as we do it, without media paras.

At a time when critical thinking and ethical use of information are at the forefront of the daily news, professional librarians and library paraeducators are more important than ever.

Please take a look at where students will be impacted on a daily basis, and please put student impacted positions first.

As you face the extraordinary challenge of balancing the budget, please preserve our library media programs with full staffing of both professional media specialists and media paraeducators. Libraries are the central hub of learning for every person in our community. Please let us keep it that way! Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

~Stefanie Taylor

Library Media Specialist Lime Kiln Middle School 410 -880-5988

Positive Behavior Intervention Supports Co-Chair (she/her)



From:	Theresa McClain <theresa_mcclain@hcpss.org></theresa_mcclain@hcpss.org>
Sent:	Wednesday, May 28, 2025 1:09 PM
To:	Theresa McClain
Subject:	Budget Cut Concerns - KEEP OUR MEDIA PARAS!
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

To whom this may concern,

My name is Theresa McClain and I have been an Elementary Library Media Specialist in the county for seven years. I am **deeply upset by the scenarios laid out** by Superintendent Barnes in the budget discussions for the 2025/2026 school year.

I would like to take this opportunity to **express my concerns about eliminating all Elementary School Media Paraprofessionals**, the **documentation from the Maryland Department of Education to support my concerns** as well as **propose an alternative** with less instructional impact and a greater financial impact to help support the budget gap.

Firstly, the elementary school media paraprofessionals are the backbone of our media programs. They support every aspect of the library media program, and support us as media specialists to effectively do our jobs as leaders, instructional partners, information specialist, teacher, and program administrator.

Looking over the **Superintendent's priorities** for his **Vision and Mission in Action** on the **Strategic Plan**, I see the media paraeducators' impact on all 3 items listed. First, the media paras ensure **equitable opportunities and access** to all materials in the library, including books, eBooks, Audiobooks, and databases full of information. They also work with the Library Media Specialists to create **innovative learning and working environments** through participating in makerspace activities, interactive projects and displays in the Media Center, and helping students learn in the Media Centers. Lastly, paraeducators build strong and meaningful relationships across the school community with every staff, every students, administrators, and parents, which **fosters an inclusive environment and culture of belonging**. **Please ask yourself - HOW can you ELIMINATE a POSITION that directly SUPPORTS the Superintendent's priorities for the county?**

There is <u>supporting documentation</u> in <u>Maryland COMAR 13A.05.04.01</u>, specifically 01. Public School Library Programs. As it is written, "A. Each local school system shall establish in each school a unified school library media program for the use of all students which shall include, but not be limited to: (4) Certified school library media personnel and support staff." In every school library media program, it states that a certified school library media specialist should be included, as well as support staff. The support staff is our media paraeducator, and they are imperative to the success of **a public school library.** Without them, the elementary school libraries across the county will suffer greatly.

Finally, please consider all elementary school band and orchestra programs as an area to be cut for the 2025/2026 school budget. Unlike the Library Media Specialist and paraeducators, there is nothing in the documentation in Maryland COMAR 13A.04.16.01 01. "Requirements for Fine Arts (Dance, Media Arts, Music, Theatre, Visual Art) Instructional Programs for Grades Prekindergarten—12" that states a requirement for every elementary school to have a band or orchestra program for 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students. In fact, these programs often pull students from various related arts classes (PE, Music, Technology, Library Media, Art) or classroom learning that is required, which in turn prevents students from submitting assignments and assessments necessary for their grades on their report card. Elementary Band and Orchestra is an "elective" on an inflexible, fixed schedule with no elective blocks. It makes so much more sense to wait and delay this elective until middle school when students are more responsible and have the time in their schedule. I believe it would benefit both students and parents, as well as elementary teachers and middle school band directors to delay band and orchestra until middle school due to funds, student retention, scheduling, and more. Additionally, when an elementary band or orchestra teacher is out, they are not required to obtain a substitute teacher, write sub plans or hold classes. Every other teacher in the elementary school building is required to do this - so what is the need of these positions if they aren't required to find coverage for their classes?

Thank you so much for your time - please keep our Media Paras in our Elementary School Libraries!

Best, Theresa

Theresa McClain Library Media Specialist Bellows Spring Elementary



Code of Maryland Regulation (COMAR) Referenced:

- https://dsd.maryland.gov/regulations/Pages/13A.05.04.01.aspx
- https://dsd.maryland.gov/regulations/Pages/13A.04.16.01.aspx