

**Council Resolution 60-2016**  
**A resolution approving certain transfers between major categories of the Howard**  
**County Board of Education Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2016**

Written Testimony of Christina Delmont-Small  
 May 16, 2016 @ 7:00pm

My name is Christina Delmont-Small and I reside at 10206 Maxine Street in Ellicott City, Maryland. Although I am a candidate for Board of Education, I am testifying this evening as a parent and a taxpayer.

I am testifying against Council Resolution 60-2016. I respectfully request that the County Council NOT pass CR 60-2016 until the County Council has received information from the school system that will provide a better understanding of why these funds need to be transferred.

There are also some issues with budget transfers that the school system has made this fiscal year that should be examined before the transfers are approved:

Building Maintenance Funding Transfers

From July 1, 2015, through February 29, 2016, the BOE has transferred the following funds within the # 11 Building Maintenance Category:  
 \$605,188 From Repair-Buildings with \$205,188 transferred to Equipment-Replacement and \$400,000 transferred to Repair-Equipment (Attachments B – E).

#	Program	Expense Type	From	To	Date From	Date To	Attachment
11	Building Maintenance	Repair-Buildings	55,188	0	10/1/15	10/31/15	B
11	Building Maintenance	Equipment-Replacement	0	55,188	10/1/15	10/31/15	B
11	Building Maintenance	Repair-Buildings	100,000	0	10/1/15	10/31/15	B
11	Building Maintenance	Equipment-Replacement	0	100,000	10/1/15	10/31/15	B
11	Building Maintenance	Repair-Buildings	200,000	0	11/1/15	11/30/15	C
11	Building Maintenance	Equipment-Replacement	0	50,000	11/1/15	11/30/15	C
11	Building Maintenance	Repair-Equipment	0	150,000	11/1/15	11/30/15	C
11	Building Maintenance	Repair-Buildings	150,000	0	1/1/16	1/31/16	D
11	Building Maintenance	Repair-Equipment	0	150,000	1/1/16	1/31/16	D
11	Building Maintenance	Repair-Buildings	100,000	0	2/1/16	2/29/16	E
11	Building Maintenance	Repair-Equipment	0	100,000	2/1/16	2/29/16	E
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$605,188</b>	<b>\$605,188</b>			
<b>Program</b>			<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>			
	Building Maintenance	Repair-Buildings	605,188	0			
	Building Maintenance	Equipment-Replacement	0	205,188			
	Building Maintenance	Repair-Equipment	0	400,000			
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$605,188</b>	<b>\$605,188</b>			

**Questions:**

- What were these funds used for?
- With the issues of moisture, leaking roofs and mold in many of our school buildings, why are funds being transferred out of Repair-Buildings?
- HCPSS is requesting a categorical transfer of \$1,131,000 from Operation of Plant to Maintenance of Plant for "urgent maintenance projects." What are these "urgent maintenance projects" and how much funding is needed for each?

### Transportation Funding Transfers

In March of 2016, the BOE transferred funds within the Program Regular Transportation. They transferred \$300,000 out of Bus Contracts, \$200,000 out of Bus Contracts-Special Education, and \$100,000 out of Bus Contracts Pupil Personnel Services and put the \$600,000 into an account "Category 9 Budget Reserve" (see Attachment A, page D1).

#### Questions:

- What is this category and what are the funds to be used for?
- Do other Programs have a "Budget Reserve," if no, why not? If yes, which Programs have this expense and how much funding is in each and how will those funds be used?
- Throughout the FY17 operating budget, it is stated that the homeless student population is growing. If this is true, why are we funds being transferred out of the expense Bus Contracts Pupil Personnel Services?
- The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act (<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg116.html>) requires that students be transported to their home school and the projected number of requests for this service is estimated to increase over FY16 requests.

We are unable to determine from the FY16 budget the amount of funds dedicated to this expense.

However, the FY17 Board Request is \$484,000, so assuming that the FY16 amount appropriated for this expense was less than the \$484,000 requested for FY17, reducing it by \$100,000 (and not taking into account funds expended to date) the total amount left would be \$384,000. Will the transfer out of \$100,000 leave sufficient funds to transport homeless students for the remainder of FY16?

- If we are able to transfer out \$100,000 in FY16, is the amount that is requested for this expense (\$484,000) for FY17 an appropriate amount?

### Audit Prior to Approval of Categorical Transfer

A financial and programmatic audit of the Health & Dental Fund (Program 9715) and Fixed Charges (Program 8001) should be completed prior to approval of any categorical transfers. The audit should focus on the transfer of funds from the General Fund into Program 9715 and Program 8001 and how the budget for each is developed (why projections of funds needed and remaining fund balances have been inaccurate, metrics used to determine claims amounts, etc.).

Thank you. If you have questions/need additional clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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Ellicott City, MD 21043  
May 16, 2016

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


Subject: Council Resolution 60-2016

The Howard County Public School System has been transferring money out of the Special Education budget for years - \$470K in FY12, \$900K in FY14, \$1.1M in FY15, and now they are asking to transfer \$490K in FY16. In Town Hall meetings, Board of Education candidate forums, and PATH listening meetings, we consistently hear from parents and educators about the denigration of special education in HCPSS.

Please do not allow this transfer and ask the school system to focus on improving special education services instead. To this end, please also pass the County Executive's budget that fully funds special education, as well as the hiring of new teachers and the negotiated salary increases for educators.

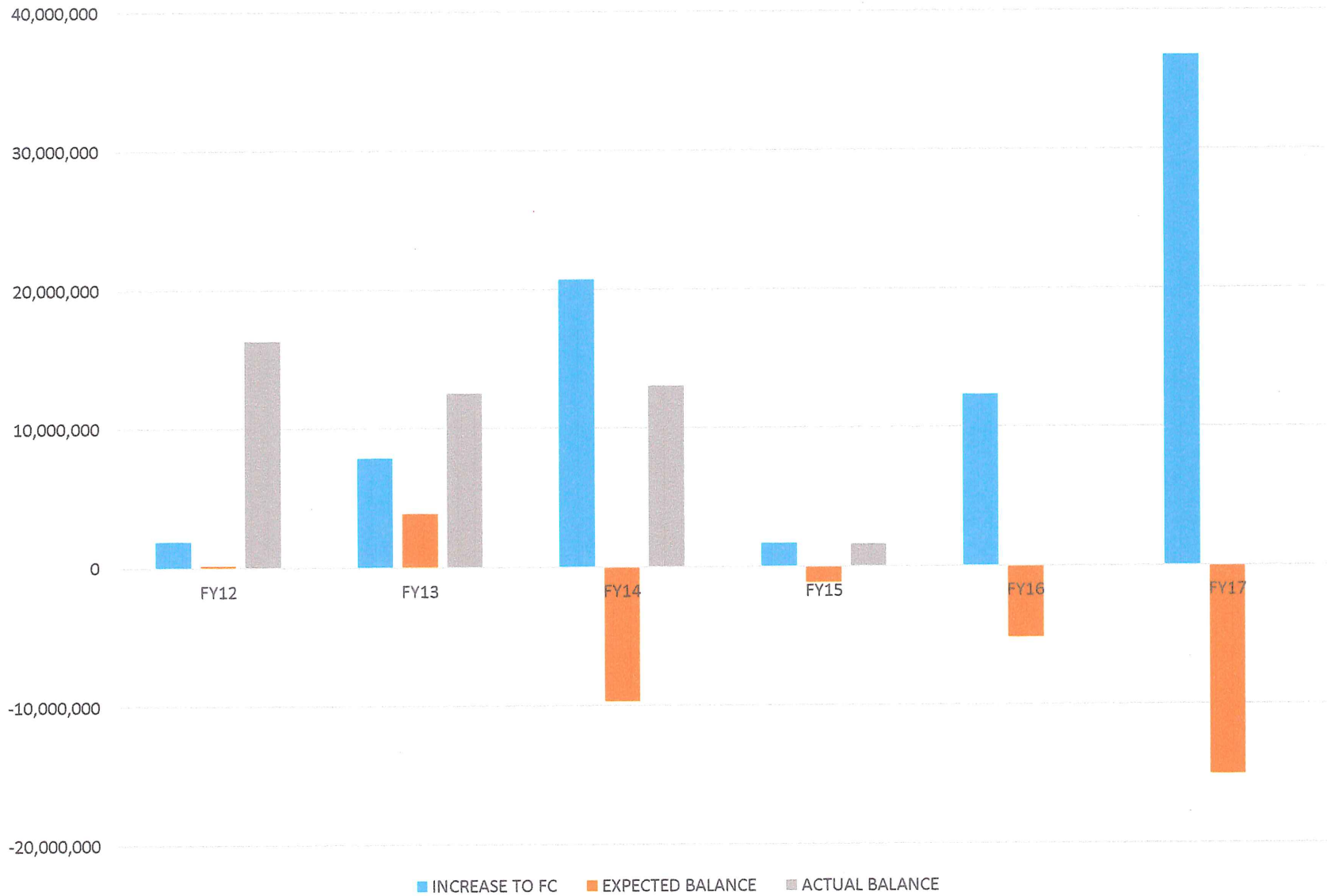
I am concerned that we are expecting hundreds of new special education students in kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade with no increase in teachers. Since our educators already feel their caseloads are too big to adequately meet the needs of special education students, HCPSS should be hiring additional special education professionals and staff. Please ask the school system to spend money on the direct instruction of students.

Respectfully,

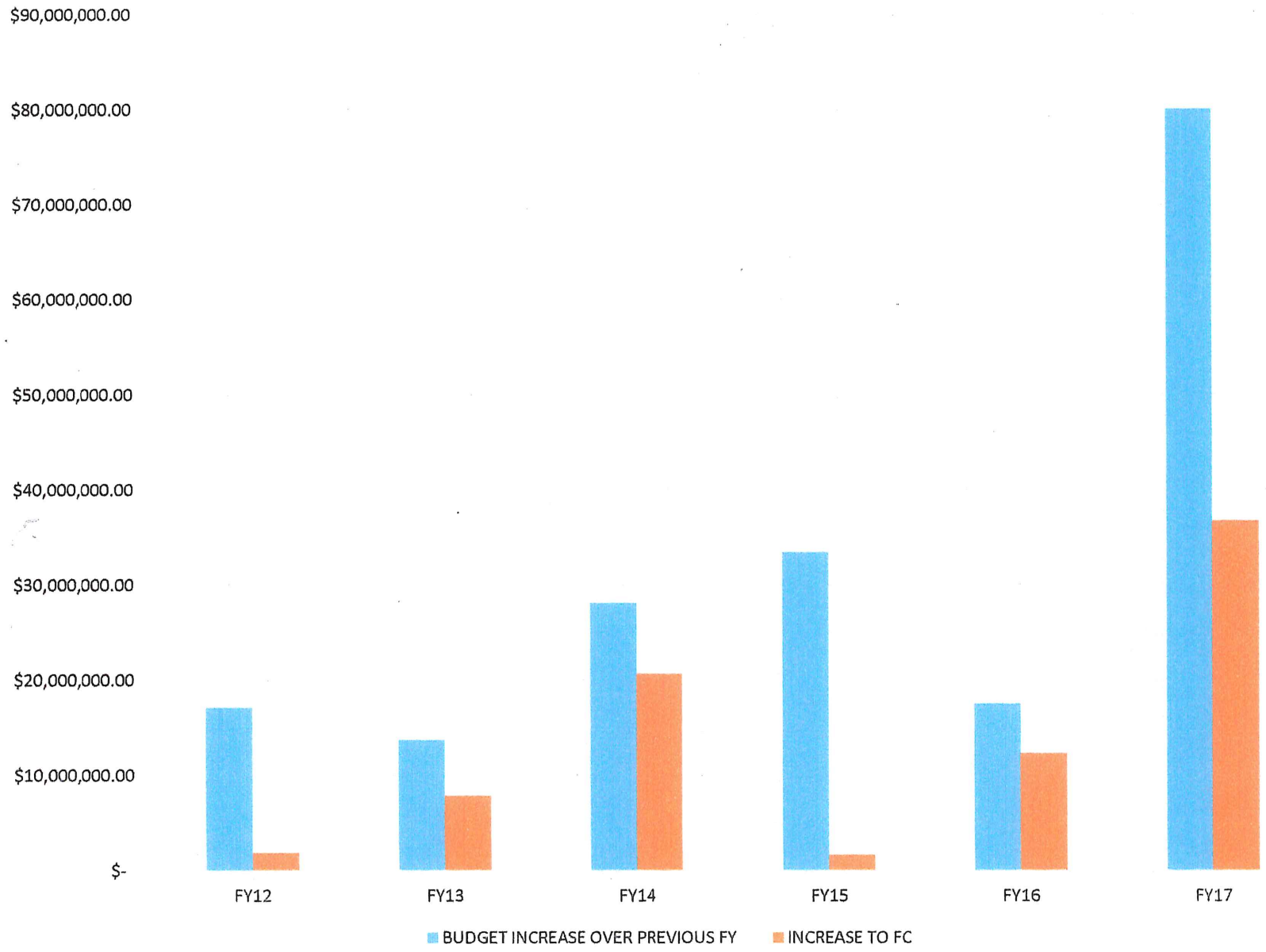


Barbara Krupiarz

Fixed Charges Budget Line Item by Fiscal Year



### Operating Budget and Fixed Charges Increases over Previous Fiscal Year



**Testimony of Leslie Kornreich**

**RE: Council Resolution 60-2016**

Many of you know that I am a parent of a child with special needs. We moved here 19 years ago when someone told us, unequivocally, that Howard County Public Schools is the place to send your special needs child. I trusted them, and for many years afterward I could enthusiastically pass the same recommendation along to friends I knew were looking for a school for their special needs child. I am sad to say I cannot do that anymore.

I no longer trust that our school system leadership places any priority on special education. While insisting year after year that there are no cuts to special education, HCPSS has moved \$4.5 million out of special education in the last 6 fiscal years. The last 3 budgets have had no increase in school based teachers and support staff while projecting over 1,000 new students each year. And the money removed each year from special education has gone to fund the undisclosed location known as the "fixed charges" category.

Projections for the health fund, a major component of the fixed charges category, seem to have been made by someone in HCPSS going to Vegas and putting it all on black. The predictions have been so dire as to instill fear that HCPSS would go bankrupt from paying its share of employee health costs, when in reality this fund has wound up with millions in surpluses. What happens to all this leftover money? Shouldn't there be millions of dollars left in the health fund from previous years carried over? And before approving a single transfer, shouldn't you be able to answer these questions?

And what services are our special needs students NOT receiving with this money moved out of special education? One parent provided an example just today: "My son's SLP said they are considering a rotating schedule for delivering services to children due to a shortage of SLPs. Why would they be moving money out when we have a shortage of providers? My assumption is that teachers are being thwarted when they ask for help or report a case load that is too high and therefore only reporting to Central Office that everything is okey dokey because that's all that central office wants to hear."

Special education teachers and support staff are being "surplused" from at least 3 elementary schools next year, meaning their positions will be left vacant at the schools they are leaving.

Cutting elementary paraeducators was on the "cut or keep" survey sent out by HCPSS a couple of weeks ago.

Special education teachers, paraeducators, and related service providers all over the county are telling us, the parents, to please advocate for their needs because they are afraid to speak up for themselves. They have asked us to tell you, to tell the Board of Education, to tell anyone who will listen that the most dire need, the one that keeps them up at night and keeps them at school long past when the kids have gone home, the one that stresses them out most during the day, is lack of support. Lack of support from their leadership, lack of financial support, and lack of support staff to help teachers meet the needs of their special education students.

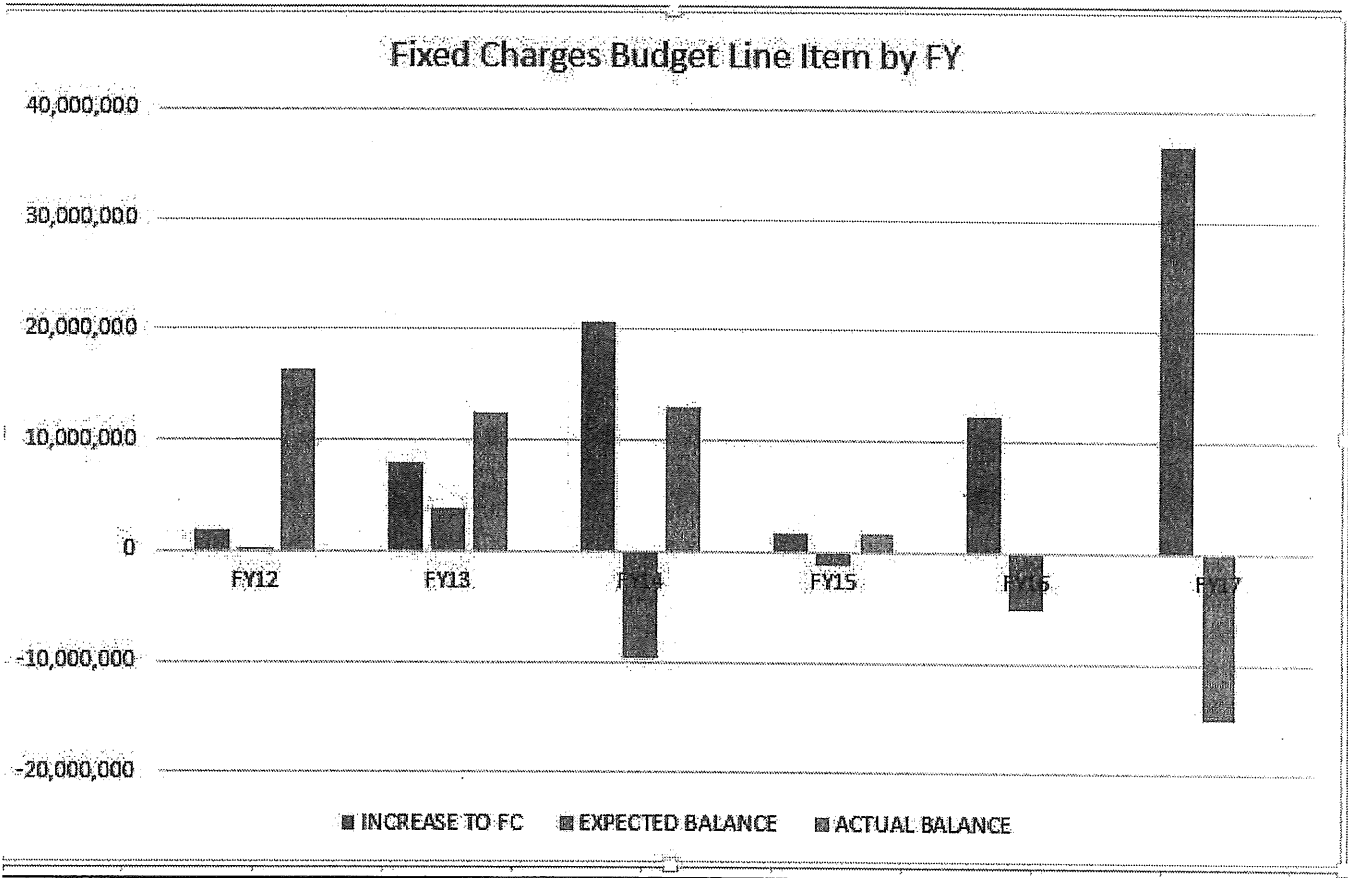
But I digress. We are here to talk about categorical transfers. I just couldn't figure out a way to talk about that without addressing the priorities they fund. Neither I, nor you, nor the members of the Board of Education themselves have the information necessary to document where every dollar removed from special education would have been spent, nor an accounting of where the money moved into fixed charges has been spent in the past and will be spent in the future. You should insist, as Cuba Gooding Jr. did in the movie Jerry Maguire, that before you approve a single transfer HCPSS must "show me the MONEY!"

**(More on back)**

**Projected Balances in Health Fund vs. Actual Ending Balances:**

(Source: the Howard County Education Association)

- 2011 Projected Balance \$0; Actual Balance \$21,642.934 (off by \$21M)
- 2012 Projected Balance \$166,640; Actual Balance \$16,342.109 (off by \$16M),
- 2013 Projected Balance \$3,964,674; Actual Balance \$12,527,992 (off by \$8M)
- 2014 Projected Balance (NEGATIVE) \$9,635,526; Actual Balance (POSITIVE) \$13,031.658 (off by \$23M).



Source: HCEA

Categorical Budget Transfers FY09 – FY15

From	To	Explanation	Amount	FY	Source
Special Education	Fixed Charges	Prefund Health Fund for FY16	\$1,100,000	FY15	4/9/15 BOE Meeting
Special Education	Fixed Charges	Prefund Health Fund for FY15	\$900,000	FY14	4/10/14 BOE Meeting
Special Education	Mid-Level Administration	To fund the 2.0 technology replacement plan for school-based administrative employees cut from the Capital Budget.	\$470,000	FY12	4/12/12 BOE Meeting
Special Education	Maintenance of Plant	Funding is available due to vacancies in Special Education salary accounts. Funding is moved to Maintenance of Plant to meet additional expenses created by the moves from Faulkner Ridge Center to Old Cedar Lane and the Ascend One building.	\$294,500	FY11	4/14/11 BOE Meeting
Special Education	Instructional Supplies	To meet technology and replacement equipment needs and support the division of Cradlerock School.	\$1,245,100	FY11	4/14/11 BOE Meeting
Total Transferred FROM Special Education to Other Programs			\$4,009,600	FY11, FY12, FY14, FY15	

(Source: HCPSS Categorical Transfer Report from BoardDocs)

**(More on back)**



From	To	Explanation	Amount	FY	Source
Instruction – Salaries	Special Education	Funding is available due to vacancies in Instructional Salary accounts. Funding is moved to Special Education where sufficient turnover did not occur.	\$450,000	FY10	4/15/10 BOE Meeting
Community Services	Special Education	To meet special education needs.	\$28,940	FY10	4/15/10 BOE Meeting
Operation of Plant	Special Education	Funding is available due to vacancies in Operation of Plant salary accounts. Funding is moved to Special Education where sufficient turnover did not occur. There were fewer vacancies in Special Education than in past years and contracted/temporary help funds were used to provide services where vacancies did occur.	\$620,000	FY09	4/30/09 BOE Meeting
Fixed Charges	Special Education	Funding is available due to a rate decrease for the retirement fund received after the fiscal 2009 budget was approved. Funding is moved to Special Education where sufficient turnover did not occur.	\$600,000	FY09	4/30/09 BOE Meeting
Transportation	Special Education	Funding is available due to a decrease in gas prices. Funding is moved to Special Education where sufficient turnover did not occur.	\$250,000	FY09	4/30/09 BOE Meeting
Total Transferred TO Special Education from Other Programs			\$1,948,940	FY09, FY10	

Funds Transferred FROM Special Education	\$4,009,600
Funds Transferred TO Special Education	\$1,948,940
Net Result: Funds transferred FROM Special Education	\$2,060,660

(Source: HCPSS Categorical Transfer Report from BoardDocs)

County Council Meeting – 5/16/16. Against Resolution 60-2016

Deeba Jafri, 5840 Rockburn Woods Way, Elkridge MD 21075

Chairman Ball, members of the County Council,

Here I am. Again. After Thursday at the Board of Education meeting. Believe me it gives me no pleasure to have to keep tabs on our education system's leadership when I could be curled up on the couch reading a book. But sometimes you just have to speak up when you know something egregious is about to take place.

I totally get that midway through the year HCPSS may need to move funds around from one category to another, I understand that. And I'm not here to argue why funds are being moved into fixed charges when the HCPSS projections have been so off and we always run a surplus there. If you have information that we don't, please enlighten us. Dealing with and trying to understand the HCPSS budget is like opening Pandora's Box. Nothing is clear. It really needs to be turned over to the Campaign for Plain English, I so wish we had that here.

Anyway, what I am here to say is don't move \$490,000 out of Special Education to fixed charges. Special Education lost \$1.1 million to fixed charge last year. There are lots of things we can do to make Special education better, things I hear from my own 4<sup>th</sup> grader from her daily observations and I have heard from special education teachers myself. They already do a really hard job brilliantly, all they care about is making their students the best that they can be. I know that one simple thing that would help is more training for the one-on-one aides. Currently they get 3 hours for the student they are dealing with, they should have at least a day. Those providing close adult supervision also need extra training.

It shocks me that we would consider shortchanging special needs children in our society. It is our duty to make sure that we maximize the potential of every child in our county education public school system.

I don't care if you're a fiscal conservative or a bleeding heart liberal it's just not the thing to do. It's not what Howard County is. Not our identity at all. "The test of the morality of a society is what it does for its children." Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the famed anti-Nazi dissident and Lutheran pastor said that. I believe it is a true measure of a good, compassionate and empathetic society.

I believe Howard County is that and I believe that my county council members believe that too. I know you'll do the right thing. Hunniya believes you'll do the right thing. Send this resolution back to HCPSS. Tell them Special ed should not have funds transferred out of it. Tell them to fix it and send it back to you.

Lisa Markovitz

President, The People's Voice, LLC - 3205 B Corporate Court, Ellicott City MD 21042

### Testimony on Council Resolution 60

Each year, the County Executive and County Council approves a budget for the Howard County Public School System. Later, they often come to you, to request permission to move funds around into and out of various categories, as time passes and forecasts are replaced with realities, well sometimes, and make adjustments. Historically, given their expertise and familiarity with their budget details and the needs of the system, their requests would rarely require investigation, review and research on your part.

Unfortunately, lately, we have seen, for many months now, in countless examples, the very justified lack of trust of the leadership of the School System. The Governor, and Comptroller have expressed these concerns as have other legislators in a bi-partisan way, and your constituents spoke loudly at the polls last month, all of these voices pointing out the intense need to dig into these numbers and provide oversight.

Thus, we request that you require more information about why the areas suggested to have funds removed from a category don't need those funds, especially in special education. Please ask just exactly how they are going to spend the additions to Fixed Charges. This category is made up of benefits for teachers and staff, which are self-funded. Is this requested amount going to alter the forecast in the current budget year request? Or is it going to get rolled forward, yet ignored in the dire forecast of immense deficit which then garners more from the General Fund to assist, and once money is categorized as Health/Dental, it is not to be refunded, even if the deficit never materializes.

Pay attention to this shell game, please. The funding needs of Fixed Charges are over-estimated, well beyond any rational, even conservative benefit estimate. The surpluses that materialize instead of the predicted deficits are not refunded to insureds, nor even taken into consideration to not request an increase in benefit costs to the insureds. The actual versus forecasted figures have been provided during the budget hearings. Please compare those figures to these category requests and get more information.

It appears that this type of resolution is deemed to be passed if not voted upon in 30 days. If you need more than 30 days to make your decision, then vote no, and ask them to resubmit their request, with even one dime of alteration, it can be resubmitted. I suggest this local law be amended, to allow you 60 days to make these decisions. I am sure when it was first enacted, we didn't have the problems we currently are experiencing, but times change and laws need to change with them, and your responsibility for oversight, unfortunately has to also change until the trust issues and transparency of how money is being spent is also resolved. Thank you.