



# Howard County Council

George Howard Building  
3430 Court House Drive  
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043-4392

## COUNCILMEMBERS

**Deb Jung, Chair**  
District 4  
**Liz Walsh, Vice Chair**  
District 1  
**Opel Jones**  
District 2  
**Christiana Rigby**  
District 3  
**David Yungmann**  
District 5

## Minutes - Approved

Joint Meeting of the County Council and Board of Education  
Hybrid Meeting (Virtual and In-Person Meeting)  
Video Streamed on <https://cc.howardcountymd.gov/watch-us>  
10910 Clarksville Pike  
Ellicott City, Maryland 21042  
Monday, February 12, 2024  
9:45 a.m.

**Councilmembers present:** Liz Walsh, Christina Rigby, Deb Jung, and David Yungmann.

**Councilmembers absent:** Opel Jones.

**Board of Education Members present:** Jennifer Mallo, Chair; Antonia Watts; Linfeng Chen, Ph.D.; Jacky McCoy; Jolene Mosley; and Robyn C. Scates, Esq.

**Board of Education Members absent:** Yun Lu, Ph.D., Vice Chair.

**Council Staff Present:** Michelle Harrod, Council Administrator; Lori Buchmann, Auditor's Office.

**Public School System Staff present:** Bill Barnes, acting Superintendent; Jahantab Siddiqui, Chief Administrative Officer; Darin Conforti, Executive Director of Budget; and Daniel Lubeley, Director Capital Planning and Construction.

Chair Mallo opened the meeting at 9:47 a.m.

## **Agenda**

### 1. Opening Of Meeting

Mr. Barnes gave introductory remarks. Ms. Jung gave introductory remarks.

### 2. Blueprint Commission Workgroup Report Review

Mr. Yousuf Ahmad, Senior Advisor for Education Policy and Performance in Howard County Government, gave a presentation on the work of the Blueprint Commission Workgroup, including the background on the creation of the Workgroup, the study of State Blueprint policies, the creation of

recommendations for the County, and how the Workgroup's recommendations differ from the current proposed budget book.

Mr. Ahmad and staff responded to questions from the Council and the Board. Topics discussed include: the new State mandated deadlines for Blueprint; the proposed \$3 million to meet the required pre-K expansion; the State's awareness of local changes to education budgets; ways the County could partner with private providers to meet certain benchmarks; how Blueprint affects on maintenance of effort; proposed legislative changes for fee waivers; the ramifications of not being compliant with the State requirements; Blueprint requirements relate to Federal regulations and certifications; the number of teacher certifications expiring in the coming years; remaining competitive and getting teacher salaries to \$60,000; vacancy gap in special education staffing; budget constraints in other counties; notification to the State of shortages; and other implications of Blueprint reforms on the County education budget.

### 3. FY25 Operating Budget

Ms. Mallo discussed the proposer FY25 Operating Budget, including the fact that the budget has not been approved by the Board. The Board has upcoming budget public hearings and work sessions. Mr. Barnes discussed the challenges and decisions that went into formulating the proposed budget; how this budget process differs from prior years; and the causes and impacts of a potential \$98.6 million budget gap.

Mr. Barnes and staff responded to questions from the Council and the Board on if the County was meeting its needs in the upcoming fiscal year for special education funding; if Blueprint impact for FY 2025 and future fiscal years; details of staff reductions, impact on current staff and vacancies; the current state of the fund balance; the potential affects to classroom sizes and the number of teachers in classrooms; and the split between County and State funding.

Chair Mallo closed the meeting at 11:48 a.m.