

HOWARD COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

# 2009 ANNUAL BRIDGE TO EXCELLENCE REPORT



# DEFINING EXCELLENCE

## Message from the Superintendent



**SYDNEY L. COUSIN**

*The Howard County Public School System has distinguished itself by continuing a tradition of outstanding student achievement. In fact, our school system has a reputation for excellence that is a source of local pride and continues to earn our schools national*

*recognition. This 2009 Annual Bridge to Excellence Report provides an overview of our most recent accomplishments.*

*Howard County students continue to make gains in academic performance as measured by the Maryland School Assessments (MSA) in both reading and mathematics. Most notably, an increasingly significant percentage of our students are scoring at the advanced level on the MSA.*

*I am also proud to report that all students in the Class of 2009 met the High School Assessment (HSA) graduation requirement. Our Class of 2010 is on track for an equally impressive showing, with 97 percent of students meeting the HSA requirement by the end of 11th grade.*

*Our students also excel in the sciences, social studies, physical education, fine arts, music and theater. They give back to the community through their involvement in numerous volunteer and service projects and they continue to bring home state championships in every field of athletics. They are truly remarkable.*

### **Our Mission**

The mission of the Howard County Public School System is to ensure excellence in teaching and learning so that each student will participate responsibly in a diverse and changing world.

### **Our Goals**

Goal 1 - Each child regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, disability or socio-economic status, will meet the rigorous performance standards that have been established. All diploma-bound students will perform on or above grade level in all measured content areas.

Goal 2 - Each school will provide a safe and nurturing school environment that values our diversity and commonality.

### **ex•cel•lence** *n*

1. the quality or state of being outstanding and superior
2. a feature or respect in which somebody or something is superior and outstanding

*Through the efforts of the entire organization, we continue to deliver the highest quality educational opportunities for students even in this most challenging fiscal climate. To accomplish this, we have implemented cost-saving efficiencies and redirected existing funds to critical need areas. Cost reductions are made strategically to protect the classroom and avoid any negative impact on the delivery of instruction.*

*In the HCPSS, excellence is not only a goal, but also a means for achieving our goals.*

*This is a tribute to the dedication of each of our 8,000 employees and especially the remarkable educators who prepare our students to meet these rigorous performance standards. I am proud to report that every day, in every classroom, office and department, the Howard County Public School System is defining excellence.*

Sydney L. Cousin  
Superintendent

# GOAL 1: ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

The academic performance of Howard County students continues to be incredibly strong and keeps the Howard County Public School System among the top performing school systems in the state and the nation.

Student performance as measured by the Maryland School Assessments (MSA) continues to show gains overall and across all student groups. Howard County students were highly successful in meeting the new High School Assessment graduation requirement and more students are enrolling in rigorous course work.

**At the elementary level, all student groups met the local MSA standard of 70 percent scoring at proficient or above in reading in 2008-09.**

In mathematics, all student groups met the local standard except English Language Learners (68 percent), students receiving Free and Reduced Price Meals (69 percent), and special education students (59 percent).

**All student groups in Grades 3-8 met the local MSA standard in reading, except for the English Language Learners, at 58 percent, and special education students, at 64 percent.** In mathematics, all student groups, except students receiving special services, met the local standard.



# ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

## MSA Trend Data Show Significant Increases for all Ethnic Groups

Howard County's Class of 2009 set the bar high as the first class required to meet Maryland's new High School Assessment (HSA) graduation requirement. In total, 99.8 % of the class met the requirement and no student failed to graduate due to not meeting the High School Assessment requirement alone. By the end of 11th grade, 97 percent of the Class of 2010 had already fulfilled the requirement.



Encouraging students to participate in rigorous coursework is an important strategy in supporting student achievement. At the high school level students have the option to participate in Honors, Gifted and Talented, or Advanced Placement courses. All high schools met the local standard of having 40 percent participating in Honors, GT, or AP courses in 2008-09. All student groups also met the standard and participation by all groups has increased over the past six years.

## THE VANISHING ACHIEVEMENT GAP

Maryland School Assessment (MSA) Trend Data

African American Students	% Scoring Proficient or Above		Change
	2002-03	2008-09	
Grades 3-5 Reading	64	86	+22
Grades 3-5 Mathematics	59	78	+19
Grades 6-8 Reading	63	82	+19
Grades 6-8 Mathematics	31	70	+39

American Indian Students	% Scoring Proficient or Above		Change
	2002-03	2008-09	
Grades 3-5 Reading	54	93	+39
Grades 3-5 Mathematics	62	74	+12
Grades 6-8 Reading	*	76	*
Grades 6-8 Mathematics	*	85	*

Asian Students	% Scoring Proficient or Above		Change
	2002-03	2008-09	
Grades 3-5 Reading	88	96	+8
Grades 3-5 Mathematics	91	96	+5
Grades 6-8 Reading	79	94	+15
Grades 6-8 Mathematics	83	96	+13

Hispanic Students	% Scoring Proficient or Above		Change
	2002-03	2008-09	
Grades 3-5 Reading	57	82	+25
Grades 3-5 Mathematics	58	72	+14
Grades 6-8 Reading	58	81	+23
Grades 6-8 Mathematics	41	75	+34

White Students	% Scoring Proficient or Above		Change
	2002-03	2008-09	
Grades 3-5 Reading	88	97	+9
Grades 3-5 Mathematics	87	95	+8
Grades 6-8 Reading	88	96	+8
Grades 6-8 Mathematics	69	92	+23

# ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

**The number of students taking Advanced Placement exams continues to rise, as does the number of students who perform well on them.** In 2009, Howard County students took a record-setting 6,588 AP exams. Eighty-three percent of these exams earned a score of 3 or higher, compared to 59 percent nationally, and 63 percent in Maryland. These results capped a five-year trend of higher participation and performance. Between 2005 and 2009, the overall participation of HCPSS students in AP testing has increased 40 percent, while the number of AP exams taken has increased 52 percent.

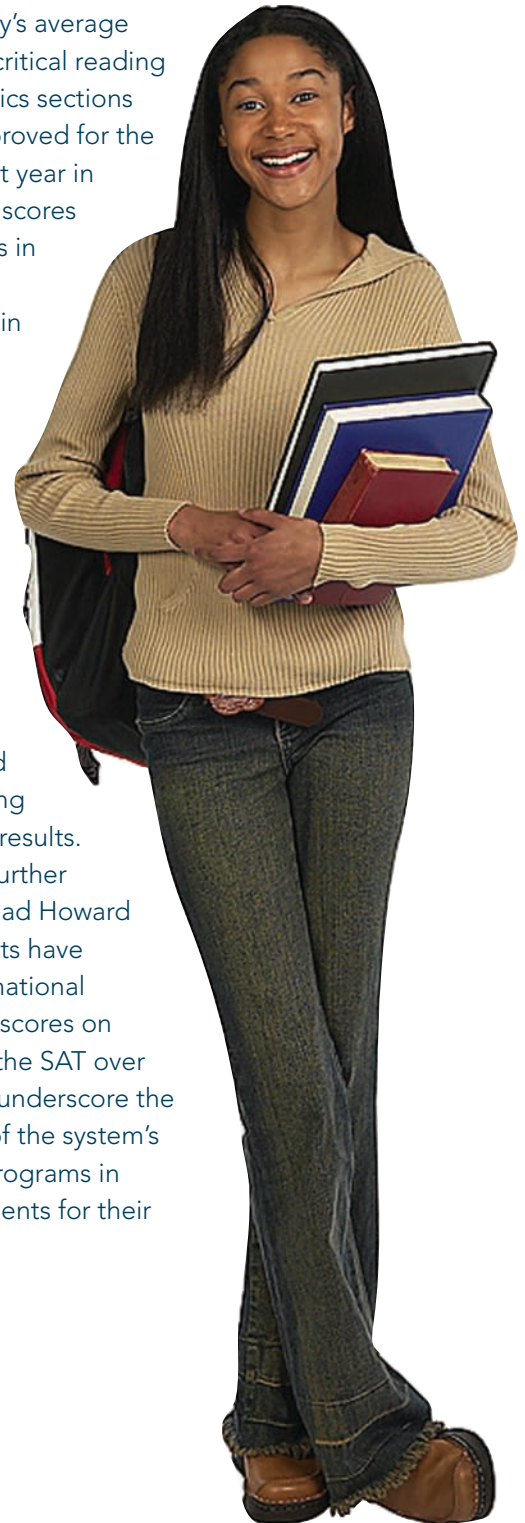
At the same time, overall, Howard County students earned 2,010 more scores of 3 or higher in 2009 than in 2005. African American students had the largest gains in the percentage of AP exams earning scores of 3 or higher, from 57.8 percent in 2005 to 69.2 percent in 2009, an increase of 11.4 percentage points.

SAT Performance					
		2006	2007	2008	2009
Critical Reading	HCPSS	537	537	540	542
	Maryland	503	500	499	500
	Nation	503	502	502	501
Mathematics	HCPSS	557	556	557	558
	Maryland	509	502	502	502
	Nation	518	515	515	515
Writing	HCPSS	536	537	544	541
	Maryland	499	496	497	495
	Nation	497	494	494	493

2009 Advanced Placement Exam Participation and Performance			
	# AP Exams Taken	# Scores 3 or Higher	% Scores 3 or Higher
Howard County	6,588	5,468	83
Maryland	97,147	60,814	63
Nation	2,929,929	1,725,168	59

Howard County's average scores on the critical reading and mathematics sections of the SAT improved for the second straight year in 2009. Average scores rose two points in critical reading and one point in mathematics.

These results not only top national and statewide results by wide margins, but also go against a four-year national and state trend toward declining or unchanged results. These results further enhance the lead Howard County students have held over the national and statewide scores on all sections of the SAT over time and they underscore the effectiveness of the system's instructional programs in preparing students for their futures.



## GOAL 2: SAFE AND NURTURING ENVIRONMENT



Research has shown that when students feel connected to their schools they are more likely to be academically motivated, to engage in learning, and to attend school regularly. The school system's second strategic goal, which ensures that each school will provide a safe and nurturing school environment that values our diversity and commonality, supports this crucial connection. To this end, each school includes safe school objectives and strategies in their annual School Improvement Plan. The results are noteworthy.

- **Overall student attendance at the elementary, middle and high school levels continues to be at or near the excellent standard.** All elementary

and all but one middle and one high school met the standard of 94 percent attendance. Forty-two out of 72 schools met the excellent standard of 96 percent. In addition the number of habitual truants, students unlawfully absent for 20 percent of their days enrolled, dropped from 134 in 2007-08 to 125 in 2008-09.

- **All Howard County schools are meeting the local and state standard for safe student behavior.** Less than 2 percent of students were involved in unsafe behavior based on suspensions or expulsions for arson, drugs, explosives, firearms or other guns and weapons, or physical or sexual assault.

- **Overall in-school and out-of-school suspension rates remain low.** In 2008-09, in-school suspension rates ranged from 0.4 percent at the elementary level to 2.1 percent at the middle and high school levels. Out-of-school suspension rates remained fairly stable at the elementary level, less than one percent, and the high school level, 5.6 percent; but dropped at the middle school level from 5.6 to 4.7 percent.

- **Students and parents continue to indicate the overall climate in schools is safe, welcoming and nurturing.** A total of 16,895 students participated in the spring 2009 School Environment Survey. In general, students expressed positive perceptions of their schools' climate, giving the highest rating to "welcoming environment" and lowest rating to "physical environment." Data was gathered from 4,588 parents in a 2008 School Environment Survey tended to follow the student response pattern.

**The Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) initiative** has emerged as a solid approach to positively influencing student behavior in schools. The initiative provides a continuum of behavioral interventions and supports for all students in multiple settings. During the 2008-09 school year, 47 schools, including the Homewood Center, implemented PBIS. Funding was provided for all participating schools to purchase data collection software, which enabled more in-depth analysis of disciplinary referral data. Funding was also provided to schools

for the purchase of PBIS resource materials and to support summer and after-school PBIS planning sessions.

Thirty-three of the system's 47 PBIS schools received awards from the Maryland State Department of Education's Recognition Program in 2009. The awards acknowledged schools that met defined criteria in the implementation of PBIS including sustainability for interventions and supports put in place and data that demonstrate the program has had a positive effect on both discipline and achievement for at least two years.



**HCPSS takes a strong stand against bullying.**

In 2009, the Board of Education adopted a policy on bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, and intimidation, which went into effect on July 1, 2009. Student Services staff developed a bullying prevention and intervention CD, which provided schools with level specific resources for staff, students and families. The system continued its anti-bullying awareness campaign with the Annual Safe Schools Poster Contest, professional development for Student Services staff, and workshops for families.



# FISCAL YEAR 2009 OPERATING BUDGET

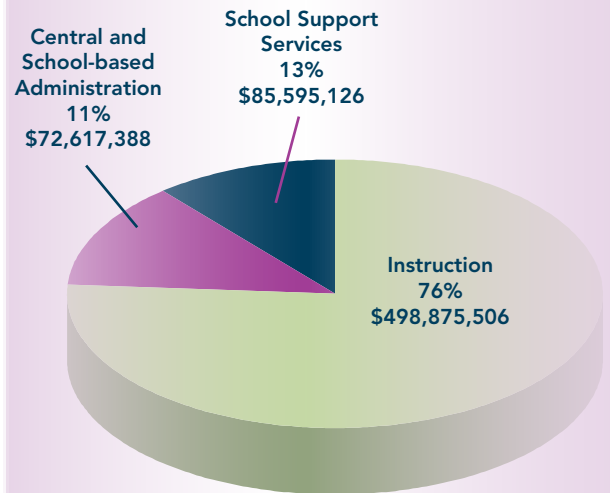
The school system's operating budget for fiscal year 2009 totaled \$657.1 million. The budget funded existing services and supported the system's momentum toward improved academic performance.

The Howard County Executive and County Council provided strong support for the school system. While the state fiscal situation was not ideal and county revenues were less than predicted, the county increased its funding for the school system by \$27.6 million.

As the 2008-09 school year progressed, the financial climate was having a serious impact on revenue streams at the federal, state, and county levels. With the intention of strategically planning for the inevitable budget reductions, the Superintendent met with all staff groups and asked them to identify and implement cost-saving measures so funds could be immediately repurposed to areas of critical need. Program heads used the opportunity to find better, more cost-effective ways to deliver services. Ten and a half vacant central services positions were left unfilled. Teaching vacancies that occurred during the school

## FY09 Distribution of Operating Funds

Total: \$657.1M Increase: \$44.1M (7.2%)



year were filled with long-term substitutes whenever possible. Other school-based vacancies were carefully reviewed to determine if hiring could be delayed.

As a result, immediate funding issues were addressed successfully and the school system was strategically positioned to face future financial challenges.





# FISCAL YEAR 2009 CAPITAL BUDGET



**M**ore than half of Howard County's public school buildings were built over 30 years ago. The oldest building still in use is West Friendship Elementary School, which originally opened in 1925. As schools age, the need for major repairs and renovations increases.

A Comprehensive Facilities Assessment of all schools was completed in 2009. The analysis included a comparison of each school to the educational specifications for new school facilities and an assessment of the physical condition of each building and its systems. The results have been used to prioritize capital needs, including the order of the systemic renovation projects.

The school system is expecting more than 3,700 additional students over the next ten years and plans to add 1,295 additional seats to supplement existing capacities.

## Fiscal Year 2009 Capital Budget\*

Project	Completion	Prior Authorization	FY09 Request	Project Total
Elkridge Elementary Addition	Aug 2009	787,000	6,285,000	7,072,000
Mt. Hebron High Renovation	Aug 2011	3,100,000	27,000,000	30,100,000
Maintenance/Warehouse Facility	Aug 2011	1,100,000	0	1,100,000
Old Cedar Lane Addition/Renovation	Aug 2011	1,320,000	0	1,320,000
Northfield Elementary Renovation	Aug 2010		5,977,000	5,977,000
Triadelphia Ridge/Folly Quarter	Aug 2011		825,000	825,000
Facility Modernization		2,000,000	2,200,000	4,200,000
Systemic Renovations		100,785,000	16,492,000	117,277,000
Roofing Projects		8,477,000	4,500,000	12,977,000
HS Technical Ed Program Expansion			1,000,000	1,000,000
Full-Day Kindergarten		30,495,000	6,761,000	37,256,000
Playground Equipment		1,380,000	200,000	1,580,000
Relocatable Classrooms		6,410,000	1,100,000	7,510,000
Site Acquisition & Construction Reserve		18,153,000	0	18,153,000
Technology		16,678,000	7,326,000	24,004,000
School Parking Lot Expansions		1,000,000	600,000	1,600,000
Barrier-Free Projects		4,203,000	200,000	4,403,000
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>\$195,888,000</b>	<b>\$80,466,000</b>	<b>\$276,354,000</b>

\* Projects and funding may have changed in subsequent budgets

# AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

## STAFF

**Tara Brown**, Talbott Springs Elementary, received the (elementary) First Year Educator Award.

**Michelle Bagley**, Centennial High, received the Coca Cola Scholars Award.

**Erik Burnett**, Atholton High, received the Distinguished Assistant Award.

**Rebecca Clark**, Centennial High, has been selected as the 2008-2009 Dance Educator of the Year by the Maryland Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (MAHPERD).

**Sydney Cousin**, Superintendent, was named a recipient of the 2008 Human Rights Award, by the Howard County Human Rights Commission.

**Dr. Cousin** was also named one of sixty 2009 Influential Marylanders by *The Daily Record*.

**Robert DeAngelis**, Pupil Personnel Worker, received the MSPA 2009 Educator of the Year Award.

**Cristina DeForge**, Psych Services (Central Office and Wilde Lake Middle), received the Maryland School Psychologists' Association (MSPA) 2009 Presidential Award.

**Kristie Dietrich**, Cedar Lane, received the Distinguished Assistant Award.

**Michael Duffy**, Athletics and Activities Manager at Howard High, was selected as Athletic Director of the Year by the Maryland State Athletic Directors' Association.

**Nancy Duffy**, River Hill High, received the HCPSS Office Professional Recognition Award.

**Kim Feldman**, Oakland Mills High, was named Howard County Maryland Teacher of the Year.

**Tina Flynn**, Elkrige Landing Middle, was selected as the Maryland Middle School Counselor of the Year by the Maryland School Counselor Association.

**Ann Hackeling**, special educator at Wilde Lake Middle, received the Outstanding Teacher award from the Central Maryland Chapter of the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association (AFCEA).

**Cynthia Hankin**, Principal of Deep Run Elementary, was chosen as the recipient of Howard County's Washington Post Distinguished Educational Leadership Award.

**Ken Klock**, Athletics and Activities Manager at Reservoir High, was designated a Certified Master Athletic Administrator (CMAA) by the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators' Association (NIAAA).

**Gail Love**, first year Spanish teacher at Patapsco Middle and Mt. Hebron High, was awarded the 2009 Maryland Foreign Language Association's Celeste Carr Teacher Study Abroad Scholarship.

**Diane Martin**, Director of Student, Family and Community Services, was honored by the Alpha Foundation of Howard County with the 2009 Silas E. Craft Parental Recognition Award.

**Aniece McClure**, Bonnie Branch Middle, was named Middle School Counselor of the Year by the Howard County Association of Counseling and Development.

**Tony Miceli**, Burleigh Manor Middle, received the Middle School Advisor of the Year Award by the Maryland Association of Student Councils.

**Jamie Murphy**, Home Hospital teacher, received the Shirley R. Mullinix Award for Excellence.

**Terri O'Connell**, Mayfield Woods Middle, was named Maryland History Day Teacher of the Year.

**Geordie Paulus**, Elkrige Landing Middle, was named Howard County's Outstanding Technology Leader in Education. Paulus went on to receive the Maryland Outstanding Technology Leader in Education Award.

**Rebecca Pfenninger**, Rockburn Elementary, was named Howard County's 2008 Outstanding Technology Using Educator.

**Roy Rosnik**, Marriotts Ridge High, received the High School Teacher of Excellence Award from the Technology Education Association of Maryland.

**William Ryan**, River Hill High, was named Maryland High School Principal of the Year by the Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP).

**Brian Sackett**, Atholton High, received the (secondary) First Year Educator Award.

**Peggy Schultz** was named Pupil Personnel Worker of the Year by the Maryland Association of Pupil Personnel.

**Melissa Shindel**, former Assistant Principal, Patuxent Valley Middle, was selected as the 2008-09 Maryland Assistant Principal of the Year, by the Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP). Shindel was named 2009 National Assistant Principal of the Year by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). Shindel is now principal at Clarksville Middle School.

**Tracy Ganey Spillman**, GT resource teacher at Lime Kiln Middle, was named Howard County's Washington Post Agnes Meyer Outstanding Teacher of the Year.

# AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

**Brenda Thomas**, former Principal of Lime Kiln Middle, was honored by the Maryland State Department of Education as a Service-Learning Principal of the Year.

**Donna Ueckermann**, Oakland Mills High, was selected as the Maryland High School Counselor of the Year by the Maryland School Counselor Association.

**Kami Wagner**, Mt. Hebron High, was named High School Counselor of the Year by the Howard County Association of Counseling and Development.

**Ben Wade**, Deep Run Elementary, was named Elementary School Counselor of the Year by the Howard County Association of Counseling and Development.

**Gary Williams**, Rockburn Elementary, received the Excellence Award for Building Operations.

**Shelly Williams**, Band director at Mount View Middle, was named Educator of the Year by the Howard County Parents for School Music.

**Carol Wolter**, Physical Education teacher at Guilford Elementary, received the Simon McNeely Award from the Maryland Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance for outstanding teaching and service in dance, health and physical education.

**John Wyseman**, a work study/transition teacher at Reservoir High, was recognized by County Executive Ken Ulman and the Commission on Disability Issues at the county's Annual Disability Awards Program.

**Carol Brzezinski** and **Sally Oswald** received the 2009 curriculum award from the Maryland Educators of Gifted Students (MEGS) for writing the G/T Curriculum Extension Unit entitled *Cherish the Chesapeake*. Brzezinski is the G/T Resource Teacher at Triadelphia Ridge and Centennial Lane elementary schools; Oswald is the G/T Resource Teacher at Hammond and Bollman Bridge elementary schools.

**Jessica Michaelson**, Laurel Woods Elementary, **Sherri Morisco**, Folly Quarter Middle, and **Susan Varner**, Hollifield Station Elementary, were among 90 teachers from 12 countries selected to participate in the 2008 Boeing Educators to Space Camp.

Athletics and Activities Managers **Mike Senisi**, Atholton High; **John Davis**, Glenelg High; and **Rick Lloyd**, River Hill High; each earned the designation of Certified Athletic Administrator by the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA).

**Crystal Hood** and **Kecia Holliday**, Alternative Education Program, Swansfield Elementary, were named Advocates of the Year by the Howard County Association of Counseling and Development.

The Class of 2009 at each high school selected their Teacher of the Year:

**Dale Harriman**, Atholton  
**Linda Blakeslee**, Centennial  
**Barry Beerman**, Glenelg  
**Ben Grabenstein**, Hammond  
**Paula Mee**, Homewood (Bridges)  
**Laura Herbers**, Homewood (Gateway)  
**Rick Gardner**, Howard  
**Eric Sandersen**, Long Reach  
**Renard Parson**, Marriotts Ridge  
**Tom Sankey**, Mt. Hebron  
**Donald Shea**, Oakland Mills  
**Mary Curtin**, Reservoir  
**Jack Dibler**, River Hill  
**Shanae Fant**, Wilde Lake

## SCHOOLS/DEPARTMENTS

For the fourth consecutive year, **River Hill High School's Department of Music** was named a GRAMMY Signature Schools Finalist, by the GRAMMY Foundation.

**Bryant Woods, Clarksville, Deep Run, Guilford, Swansfield and West Friendship** elementary schools received a Governor's Citation for Superior Maintenance.

**River Hill High School** was named a Maryland State School of Character, and was a nominee for the National School of Character award.

The **Office of Special Education** received several 2008 Best Practices Awards from the Maryland State Department of Education. The Middle School Cohort Co-Teaching Initiative took first place for Special Education Programs and the PALS Initiative took first place for Preschool Programs.

## SCHOOL SYSTEM

The school system was recognized as Large Business of the Year by the Howard County Chamber of Commerce.

HCPSS received the 2008 Partnership District Award from the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) at Johns Hopkins University.

The school system received the 2009 Choose Civility Award as an outstanding example of civility in Howard County.

The school system was awarded Healthy Workplaces Accreditation in 2009 by the Howard County Health Department.

## 2008-09 BOARD OF EDUCATION



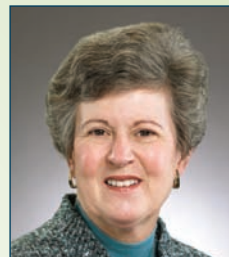
Frank J. Aquino, Esq.



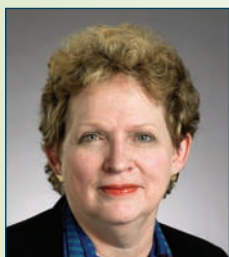
Lawrence H. Cohen



Allen Dyer, Esq.



Sandra H. French



Ellen Flynn Giles



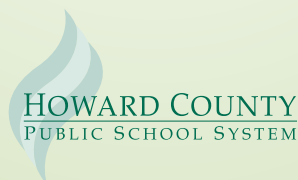
Patricia S. Gordon



Janet Siddiqui, M.D.



Adejire Bademosi  
Student Member



10910 Route 108, Ellicott City, Maryland 21042 • 410.313.6600 • [www.hcpss.org](http://www.hcpss.org)

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