CHAPTER VI: HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'VE DONE IT WELL?

The HCPSS has two systemwide goals. They are:

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

➢ Provide a safe and nurturing school environment that values our diversity and commonality.

To determine how well the school system is accomplishing these goals, periodic reviews occur at both the district and school levels. Five Key Results Areas and associated indicators document improvement and identify needs. The Superintendent is responsible for results at the district level. This responsibility belongs to building principals responsible at the school level. Beginning in May 2003, the state of schools reports will be provided to the community. (Refer to Appendix G for the complete list of Key Results Areas with indicators.)

Indicators in the five Key Results Areas were approved by the District Planning Team (DPT) in June 2002. Currently the DPT is in the process of approving standards for the indicators. (Refer to Appendix CC for the Student Performance standards and to Appendix DD for the Human Resource Management standards. Leadership, Fiscal Stability, and Community Support standards have not been approved.)

The DPT, which began meeting during the 2001-2002 school year, is a group of community members and school system staff brought together to help the Superintendent monitor district performance. Teachers, administrators, central office staff, a Board of Education member, a higher education representative, a parent, and community and business leaders comprise the DPT. The group's structure reflects the school system's commitment to accessibility and accountability.

Howard County's *Comprehensive Plan for Accelerated School Improvement*, (March 2002), includes two significant target dates for improved student performance. First, by 2005, *all* schools are expected to meet standards in order for the school system to meet standards. Howard County is no longer an "average" of the overall school system. Second, by the year 2007, the achievement gap is expected to close for *all* groups of students at each school. All subgroups must meet standards. The entire learning community with all of its resources is focused on meeting these deadlines. For each of the five Key Results Areas, program evaluation information is included later in this chapter.

Howard County's two goals are aligned with federal and state goals as follows.

Federal: *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (January 2002) :

Close the achievement gap by 2012 so that no child is left behind. Emphasis is placed on the achievement of economically disadvantaged students, racially/ethnically diverse students, students with disabilities, and English language learners.
Focus on continuous improvement of classroom instruction in all schools.
Provide highly qualified teachers and paraprofessionals for all students. The students who are most in need of improvement must be taught by the most highly qualified staff.
Establish a statewide policy requiring that students who attend a persistently dangerous public school, or students who become victims of a violent criminal offense while in or on the grounds of a public school that they attend, be allowed to attend a safe public school.

State: *Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act*, Senate Bill 856, (April 2002):

Ensures continuous improvement.
Closes the achievement gap for every school and every classroom.

 The following shows the alignment between the priorities established in *Bridge to Excellence in Public Education Act* and the Howard County Public School System's five Key Results Areas.

Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act Improvement Elements	Howard County Public School System Key Results Areas
Student Achievement	Student Performance
Teacher Quality	Human Resource Management
High-quality Professional Development	Leadership
Expanded Opportunities for Parental and Community Involvement	Community Support and Leadership
Allocation of Resources	Financial Stability

Howard County's needs assessment brought the school system's improvement requirements into focus. (In order to evaluate progress, an analysis of each of the Key Results Areas follows for each of the two Howard County goals.)

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

HCPSS's target is for each school to meet state and county standards by the year 2005 and to eliminate all achievement gaps by ensuring that all student subgroups meet state standards by 2007.

Key Results Area—Student Performance

Indicators for student performance include:

Maryland School Performance Assessment Program replaced by Maryland School Assessment—Grades 3, 5, 8, and 10
Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills/Fifth Edition—Grades 2, 4, 6
High school assessments pass rate (percentage above 50th percentile until standards are set)
Gifted and Talented enrollment at all instructional levels
Maryland Functional Tests pass rates—reading, mathematics, and writing
Advanced Placement examinations (first administration—high school entrance requirements), Standard Achievement Test I (participation and percentage above 600)
Attendance rate for elementary, middle, and high schools
High school dropout rate
Sports/athletics (extracurricular)
Student satisfaction.

Reference: *What Do We Want For Our Children?* (August 2002). HCPSS. Indicators were updated by the assessment office to reflect the changes in state testing beginning with the 2002-2003 school year.)

Local assessments in reading and mathematics influence instruction throughout each school year. Since scientifically based research interventions are implemented to increase opportunities for breakthrough improvement, the school system carefully monitors student performance and collects data such as above, on, or below grade level performance in reading and mathematics in elementary and middle schools. This data supports flexible instructional grouping. Each student receives instruction that is rigorous based on state standards and challenging according to student achievement.

Each student in Grades 1-8 performing below grade level in reading and mathematics has a Student Support Plan (SSP) for Acceleration. An SSP is written by school staff in consultation with parents. The plan is reviewed quarterly to

monitor student improvement, adjust interventions, and facilitate flexible grouping. The most current data are available to influence academic decisions. An SSP joins the school system's three core values. Emphasis is on instruction; a school/home partnership; and continuous improvement for all students in all schools.

Through the use of local assessments such as the *Primary Instruction and Assessment Guidelines* (PRIAG) for reading and unit assessments for mathematics, classroom teachers identify student performance in terms of above, on, or below grade level. The elementary language arts and mathematics coordinators have provided leadership in developing criteria for above, on, or below grade level identification. With the assistance of the reading and mathematics support teachers and resource teachers in collaboration with site-based team leaders and classroom teachers, consistent evaluation criteria have been established, which eliminates subjectivity while assessing each student's achievements. The usefulness of data enables staff to:

Teach students in accordance with their most recent performance.
Align all school academic instructional efforts to provide accelerated achievement.
Communicate with families to build the school/home partnership for learning.
Provide for continuous improvement.
Determine the effectiveness of scientifically based research strategies.
Purchase instructional materials that are designed to eliminate achievement gaps.
Establish professional development (PD) throughout the school year that is aligned with the long range PD plan that promotes exemplary teaching for student learning.
Establish professional development throughout the school year that promotes excellence in teaching and learning.
Eliminate achievement gaps because the data are disaggregated for the following student subgroups—special education, free and reduced price meals, limited English proficient students, gender and ethnicity.

(Refer to Appendix EE for a review of the most recent Grades K-5 reading and mathematics above, on, or below grade level data. Beginning with the 2002-2003 school year, above, on, and below grade level data will also be available for Grades 6, and 7, the middle school years.) These data are collected and compiled semiannually by the district's central office and are used for school and systemwide accountability. The data will be used each year in combination with all other data points.

Multiple criteria must be used to determine if a student's instructional level is below grade level. (Refer to Appendices FF and GG for an overview of the assessments used by the district to determine a student's instructional level and for exemplary reading and mathematics programs for the elementary, middle, and

high school grades.) Reading and mathematics interventions are then selected on the basis of the student's intensity of need for acceleration.

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Maryland School Assessment and Adequate Yearly Progress

The 2002-2003 school year marked the transition from the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP) to the Maryland School Assessment (MSA). Students in Grades 3, 5, 8, and 10 took the tests in March 2003. If all goes according to plans, the school system will receive student performance results by August 2003. Without the actual data, Howard County cannot determine how much progress each student must make from 2003 through 2008 in yearly increments to reach standards, and how much growth each school must make between 2003 and 2008 to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP). For the purpose of determining *if we have done it well*, the district is presenting an overview of the process it will use to measure student and school progress over time. When the annual *Comprehensive Master Plan* update is submitted to MSDE by July 1, 2004, the MSA results with five-year projections for student and school improvement will be included.

In developing state standards, MSDE has determined that all students will be proficient in reading and mathematics by 2014, which is five years beyond the life cycle of the *Bridge to Excellence Comprehensive Master Plan.* For elementary and middle schools, MSDE will include reading and mathematics performance and attendance rate to determine a school's AYP. For high schools, graduation rate will be included along with the content assessments to determine AYP.

Each student will be counted. A school must make AYP for all students as an aggregate group and for the disaggregated subgroups of low-income students, special education students, students learning to speak English, and minority students. For the disaggregated subgroups, which have not reached "proficient" but are making progress, a "safe harbor" has been established. A "safe harbor" means that a subgroup will be identified as making AYP if there is a 10 percent decrease in the number of students performing below "proficiency" in one indicator if the subgroup has made AYP in the other academic indicators, and the school has made AYP in the aggregate. All subgroups are eligible for "safe harbor" at the same time.

By 2014, all students (100 percent) must achieve proficiency. The 2002 MSPAP set the baseline and the target for 2003 for Title I schools. The first measure for non-Title I schools was 2003. Therefore, a non-Title I school cannot be identified as not having made AYP until 2004. The table on the following illustrates the progression toward standards for all system schools:

Year	Occurrence

Year	Occurrence
2003	MSA target was set for Title I schools
2004	Any district school not having made AYP will be identified
2005	First MSDE intermediate goal and HCPSS target for all schools to meet standards
2007	HCPSS target for the elimination of the achievement gap and all subgroups having met standards
2008	Second intermediate goal—Fifth year of implementation of the *Bridge to Excellence Comprehensive Master Plan*
2011	Third intermediate goal
2014	All students (100 percent) reach the proficiency level of the standards

(Refer to Appendix HH for the *State of the Schools* report presented to the HCPSS's Board of Education on May 22, 2003. This report will be presented annually to the Board and will include all student performance data in one comprehensive report.)

Objectives – First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

All students in all classrooms in all Howard County schools will demonstrate continuous improvement during the 2003-2004 school year, as measured by state and local standards.

Material and human resources are provided according to the school system's differentiated service model for accelerated school improvement. (Howard County's differentiated service delivery model was presented earlier in this document.)

All schools will create a professional development plan to accompany their School Improvement Plans.

Strategies – First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

School Improvement Plans address exemplary instructional practices as they relate to student achievement results.

School Improvement Plan objectives address the needs of all students and student groups who do not meet current indicator standards.

Targeted professional development, based on the long range systemic professional development plan, empowers teachers to meet the needs of their students.

Effective data analysis ensures that professional development activities are planned to meet the specific needs of staff.

School staff will use local assessments, classroom performance, implementation of Student Support Plans for Acceleration, analysis of all current data, team meetings, report card conferences with parents, and supportive interventions regularly to monitor and to assess student progress.

Second Year of Implementation: 2004-2005
Third Year of Implementation: 2005-2006
Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006-2007
Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007-2008

Objectives – Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Implementation Years

All students in all classrooms in all Howard County schools will demonstrate continuous improvement during the 2003-2004 school year, as measured by state indicators and local assessments.
Material and human resources are provided according to the school system's differentiated service model for accelerated school improvement. (Refer to Appendix C for the differentiated service delivery model.)
All schools will create a professional development plan to accompany their School Improvement Plans.
All Howard County schools will meet the first state intermediate goal.
Each Howard County school will make AYP according to state standards.

Since the Howard County target year for all schools to meet state standards is 2005 and the elimination of the achievement gap for all subgroups was 2007, the fifth year of the *Comprehensive Master Plan* implementation will serve as a year to support continuous improvement for all schools.

Strategies – Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Implementation Years

School Improvement Plans address exemplary instructional practices as they relate to student achievement results.
School Improvement Plan objectives address the needs of all students and student groups who do not meet current indicator standards.
Targeted professional development, based on the long range systemic professional development plan, empowers teachers to meet the needs of their students.
Effective data analysis ensures that professional development activities are planned to meet the specific needs of staff.

School staff will use local assessments, classroom performance, implementation of Student Support Plans for Acceleration, analysis of all current data, team meetings, report card conferences with parents, and supportive interventions regularly to monitor and to assess student progress.

School staff will use local assessments, classroom performance, implementation of Student Support Plans for Acceleration, analysis of all current data, team meetings, report card conferences with parents, and supportive interventions regularly to monitor and to assess student progress.

Student Satisfaction—Survey Grades 5, 7, 9, and 11
Sports/Athletics Extracurricular

Five-Year Plan for
School Year 2003-2004
Through School Year 2007-2008

Student satisfaction and sports/athletics extracurricular participation, the two remaining indicators, will be reviewed over the five-year life cycle of the *Bridge to Excellence Comprehensive Master Plan*, but not in the same manner as the other indicators, which are closely related to local and state assessments. Student satisfaction will be incorporated into the school system's School Improvement Survey. In June 2003, the instrument was distributed to gather baseline data. The first annual *Bridge to Excellence Comprehensive Master Plan* update, which will be submitted in July 2004, will present the survey's data for all participating subjects.

An academic and athletic scholarships report was presented to the Howard County Board of Education (BOE) on October 12, 2000. The purposes of the report were to:

Inform the BOE of the number of athletic scholarships awarded to high school seniors.
Compare and contrast the athletic scholarships to academic and service scholarships.
Reinforce that the HCPSS is meeting the philosophy, purpose, and standards outlined by the BOE and the National Federation of High Schools.

The data demonstrated that there were very few athletic scholarships offered compared to academic and service scholarships. However, additional research pointed out that students who participated in the interscholastic athletic program earned higher grades and lived healthier lifestyles.

Since the opportunities for athletic scholarships are extremely limited, they should not be the focus for high school athletic participation. Therefore, parents of middle school students should emphasize academic achievement because academic achievement provides improved opportunities for college and university scholarships. Athletics offers leadership skills and productive citizenship, which add to the quality of adult life.

An analysis of data for the graduating seniors of school year 1999-2000 follows:

Of the graduating seniors, 42 percent participated in the high school interscholastic athletic program.
The percentage of graduating seniors who were offered scholarships was between one and one and one-half percent.
Less than .4 percent or 11 out of 2,759 graduates were offered full athletic scholarships.
Over 65 percent of the athletic scholarships have been offered to female athletes.

The ratio of athletic scholarships to academic/service scholarships was approximately one (1) athletic scholarship to 40 academic scholarships.
Reference: Academic and Athletic Scholarships. (October 2000). HCPSS.

Key Results Area—Human Resource Management

Indicators for human resource management include:

Positions devoted to instruction
Retention rate of first, second and fifth year teachers
Reasons for resignations
Teacher experience and qualifications across schools
Teacher assignment
Staff diversity
Recruiting and hiring
Substitute usage
Use/impact of professional development opportunities.
Reference: *What Do We Want For Our Children?* (August 2002). HCPSS.

The Office of Human Resources supports excellence in teaching and learning by hiring quality staff for all instructional and support positions. In order to provide the school system with highly qualified staff, recruiting and retaining personnel is a major priority.

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Objectives

By the 2007-2008 school year, the staff at each district school will reflect a diversity of 10 percent in minority personnel, which includes gender, age, years of experience, and ethnicity.
By the 2007-2008 school year, teacher retention rate will be 85 percent or higher.

Strategies

Recruiting strategies include:

Supporting the Future Educators of America organization at all Howard County high schools
Training all school system recruiters and curriculum office interviewers
Visiting with the teacher candidates at all Professional Development School (PDS) sites
Providing welcoming receptions for PDS interns
Increasing website access for recruitment and certification assistance
Expanding online recruiting efforts

Targeting job fairs, career changers, special education, comprehensive content areas, and experienced educators
Expanding recruitment at 24 Historically Black Colleges (HBC)
Continuing to develop community partnerships to support teacher recruitment and retention.

Hiring strategies include:

Resident teacher Certificate Program for selected critical content areas
December hiring for graduates in critical content areas
Open contract offers to highly qualified candidates
Recruitment of personnel with years of teaching experience
Recruitment of personnel from diverse cultural backgrounds
Signing bonuses awarded to 125 candidates in critical content areas
Prescriptive staffing
Scholarship programs for instructional assistants pursuing careers in teaching.

Teacher retention strategies include:

Grant-supported initiatives for new teachers, including non-tenured teacher workshops and one-on-one mentoring
Grant-supported substitute teacher days to provide additional instructional planning time for teachers in School Improvement Unit (SIU) schools
Provisionally certified teacher support programs (PCTS) for teachers working toward standard professional certification
School visitation sessions for teachers to discuss human resource issues such as certification and No Child Left Behind requirements
Teacher Incentive Program (TIP)
Staff recognition programs
Retirement seminars
Tuition reimbursement
Professional development inservice workshops and graduate level coursework
Partnership with Howard Community College
Partnership with the Howard County Education Association.

The HCPSS has one of the best teacher retention rates in Maryland. Substantial teacher support is provided through a new teacher orientation program, yearlong site-based school mentors, resource teacher support in all content areas at both the elementary and secondary grades, a teacher support center, certification assistance and counseling, and a flexible benefits package that includes medical, dental, vision, and dependent care. Life insurance is also provided by the school system.

Second Year of Implementation: 2004 -2005
Third Year of Implementation: 2005 -2006
Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006 -2007
Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007 -2008

For the life cycle of the *Bridge to Excellence Comprehensive Master Plan*, the objectives and strategies will remain the same with appropriate modifications based on all available data sources and budget constraints. Therefore, any changes to the objectives and strategies during the second, third, fourth and fifth implementation years will be provided in the annual updates.

Key Results Area—Leadership

Indicators for leadership include**:**

Effectiveness of evaluation process
Effectiveness of funded programs
Clarity of system and school vision and priorities to all staff and community
Staff confidence in leadership to obtain needed resources
Community confidence in superintendent, other key staff to provide high quality education.

Reference: *What Do We Want For Our Children?* (August 2002). HCPSS.

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Objectives

Collect administrator feedback on the evaluation process and its effectiveness for promoting improvement.
Use formal evaluation information to drive programmatic and budgetary decisions.
Collect information from stakeholder groups to determine knowledge of system and school vision and priorities.
Collect information from staff to determine confidence in leadership to obtain needed resources.
Collect information from community to determine confidence in Superintendent and other key staff to provide a high quality education for children.

Strategies

Issue evaluation guidelines to formalize relationship between administrator evaluation and school improvement.
<u>Time line</u>
Develop Guidelines (April—August 2003).

Distribute to school administrators (September 2003).
Finalize contract for, administer, and use results to develop strategies to improve effectiveness of evaluation process as a tool for improvement.
<u>Time line</u>
Board approves staff recommendation to enter into negotiations with vendor (April 2003).
Administer the School Improvement Survey for the first time (May 2003).
Receive results of first administration (July 2003).
Use results to develop strategies for improving effectiveness of evaluation process as a tool for improvement (July—October 2003).
Evaluate funded programs to determine their effectiveness.
<u>Time line</u>
Identify programs for evaluation and establish parameters and time lines.
Execute evaluations of programs slated for review.
Provide results to program managers and other appropriate staff.
Incorporate program evaluation results into planning and budgetary deliberations.
<u>Time line</u>
Managers responsible for evaluated programs review and use results to develop budget proposals. (August—September 2003).
Budget proposals submitted to appropriate supervisors for consideration (October 2003).
Superintendent's proposed budget submitted to Board (January 2004).
Board of Education budget request submitted to County Executive (March 2004).
Board of Education adopts final budget (May 2004).
Finalize contract for, administer, and use results to develop strategies to improve clarity of system and school vision and priorities.
<u>Time line</u>
Board approves vendor contract (April 2003).
Administer the School Improvement Survey for the first time (May 2003).
Receive results of first administration (July 2003).
Use results to develop strategies for improving clarity of system and school vision and priorities (July—October 2003).
Finalize contract for, administer, and use results of School Improvement Survey to develop strategies to increase staff confidence in leadership to obtain needed resources.
<u>Time line</u>
Board approves vendor contract. (April 2003).
Administer the School Improvement Survey for the first time (May 2003).
Use results to develop strategies for improving clarity of system and school vision and priorities (July-October 2003).

Second Year of Implementation: 2004-2005

Objectives

Collect administrator feedback on the evaluation process and its effectiveness for promoting improvement.

Use program evaluation results to drive programmatic and budgetary decisions.

Collect information from stakeholder groups to determine knowledge of system and school vision and priorities.

Collect information from staff to determine confidence in leadership to obtain needed resources.

Strategies

Begin annual evaluation of school administrators.
Time line
The Time line is being developed by the Associate Superintendent for Administration. It will be provided in the first *Bridge to Excellence Comprehensive Master Plan* update in July 2004

Administer and review results of annual School Improvement Survey and develop methods for improving evaluation usefulness in school improvement.
Time line
Administer School Improvement Survey (May 2004).
Receive School Improvement Survey results (July 2004).
Use results to develop strategies for improving effectiveness of evaluation process as a tool for improvement (July—October 2004).

Evaluate funded programs to determine their effectiveness.
Identify programs for evaluation and establish parameters and time lines.
Execute evaluations of programs slated for review.
Incorporate program evaluation results into planning and budgetary deliberations.
Time line
Managers responsible for evaluated programs review and use results to develop budget proposals. (August—September 2004).
Budget proposals submitted to appropriate supervisors for consideration (July 2004).
Superintendent's proposed budget submitted to Board (January 2005).
Board of Education budget request submitted to County Executive (March 2005)
Board of Education adopts final budget (May 2005).

Administer and review results of annual School Improvement Survey and develop strategies for improving clarity of system and school vision and priorities.
Time line
Administer School Improvement Survey (May 2004).
Receive School Improvement Survey results (July 2004).
Use results to develop strategies for improving effectiveness of evaluation process as a tool for improvement (July—October 2004).

Administer and use results of School Improvement Survey to develop strategies to increase staff confidence in leadership to obtain needed resources.
Time line
Administer School Improvement Survey (May 2004).
Receive School Improvement Survey results (July 2004).

Use results to develop strategies for improving clarity of system and school vision and priorities (July—October 2004).

Third Year of Implementation: 2005-2006

Objectives

Collect administrator feedback on the evaluation process and its effectiveness for promoting improvement.
Use program evaluation results to drive programmatic and budgetary decisions.
Collect information from stakeholder groups to determine knowledge of system and school vision and priorities.
Collect information from staff to determine confidence in leadership to obtain needed resources.

Strategies

Continue annual evaluation of school administrators.
Time line
The Time line is being developed by the Associate Superintendent for Administration. It will be provided in the first *Bridge to Excellence Comprehensive Master Plan* update in July 2004.
Administer and review results of annual School Improvement Survey and develop strategies for improving evaluation usefulness in school improvement.
Time line
Administer School Improvement Survey (May 2005).
Receive School Improvement Survey results (July 2005).
Use results to develop strategies for improving effectiveness of evaluation process as a tool for improvement (July—October 2005).
Evaluate funded programs to determine their effectiveness.
Identify programs for evaluation and establish parameters and time lines.
Execute evaluations of programs slated for review.
Incorporate program evaluation results into planning and budgetary deliberations.
Time line
Managers responsible for evaluated programs review and use results to develop budget proposals. (August—September 2005).
Budget proposals submitted to appropriate supervisors for consideration (October 2005).
Superintendent's proposed budget submitted to Board (January 2006).
Board of Education budget request submitted to County Executive (March 2006).
Board of Education adopts final budget (May 2006).
Administer and review results of annual School Improvement Survey and develop strategies for improving clarity of system and school vision and priorities.
Time line
Administer School Improvement Survey (May 2005).
Receive School Improvement Survey results (July 2005).

Use results to develop strategies for improving effectiveness of evaluation process as a tool for improvement (July—October 2005).
Administer and use results of School Improvement Survey to develop strategies to increase staff confidence in leadership to obtain needed resources.
<u>Time line</u>
Administer the School Improvement Survey (May 2005).
Receive School Improvement Survey results (July 2005).
Use results to develop strategies for improving clarity of system and school vision and priorities (July-October 2005).
Administer and use results of School Improvement Survey to develop strategies to increase staff confidence in leadership to obtain needed resources.
<u>Time line</u>
Administer School Improvement Survey (May 2005).
Receive School Improvement Survey results (July 2005).
Use results to develop strategies for improving clarity of system and school vision and priorities (July-October 2005).

Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006-2007

Objectives

Collect administrator feedback on the evaluation process and its effectiveness for promoting improvement.
Use program evaluation results to drive programmatic and budgetary decisions.
Collect information from stakeholder groups to determine knowledge of system and school vision and priorities.
Collect information from staff to determine confidence in leadership to obtain needed resources.

Strategies

Continue annual evaluation of school administrators.
<u>Time line</u>
The Time line is being developed by the Associate Superintendent for Administration. It will be provided in the first *Bridge to Excellence Comprehensive Master Plan* update in July 2004.
Administer and review results of annual School Improvement Survey and develop strategies for improving evaluation usefulness in school improvement.
<u>Time line</u>
Administer School Improvement Survey (May 2006).
Receive School Improvement Survey results (July 2006).
Use results to develop strategies for improving effectiveness of evaluation process as a tool for improvement (July—October 2006).
Evaluate funded programs to determine their effectiveness.

<u>Time line</u>
Identify programs for evaluation and establish parameters and time lines.
Execute evaluations of programs slated for review.
Incorporate program evaluation results into planning and budgetary deliberations.
Managers responsible for evaluated programs review and use results to develop budget proposals. (August—September 2006).
Budget proposals submitted to appropriate supervisors for consideration (October 2006).
Superintendent's proposed budget submitted to Board (January 2007).
Board of Education budget request submitted to County Executive (March 2007).
Board of Education adopts final budget (May 2007).
Administer and review results of annual School Improvement Survey and develop strategies for improving clarity of system and school vision and priorities.
<u>Time line</u>
Administer School Improvement Survey (May 2006).
Receive School Improvement Survey results (July 2006).
Use results to develop strategies for improving effectiveness of evaluation process as a tool for improvement (July-October 2006).
Administer and use results of School Improvement Survey to develop strategies to increase staff confidence in leadership to obtain needed resources.
<u>Time line</u>
Administer School Improvement Survey (May 2006).
Receive School Improvement Survey results (July 2006).
Use results to develop strategies for improving clarity of system and school vision and priorities (July—October 2006).
Finalize contract for, administer, and use results of School Improvement Survey to develop strategies to increase staff confidence in leadership to obtain needed resources.
<u>Time line</u>
Administer School Improvement Survey (May 2006).
Receive School Improvement Survey results (July 2006).
Use results to develop strategies for improving clarity of system and school vision and priorities (July-October 2006).

Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007-2008

Objectives

Collect administrator feedback on the evaluation process and its effectiveness for promoting improvement.
Use program evaluation results to drive programmatic and budgetary decisions.

Collect information from stakeholder groups to determine knowledge of system and school vision and priorities.

Collect information from staff to determine confidence in leadership to obtain needed resources.

Strategies

Continue annual evaluation of school administrators.
Time line
The Time line is being developed by the Associate Superintendent for Administration. It will be provided in the first *Bridge to Excellence Comprehensive Master Plan* update in July 2004.
Administer and review results of annual School Improvement Survey and develop strategies for improving evaluation usefulness in school improvement.
Time line
Administer School Improvement Survey (May 2007).
Receive School Improvement Survey results (July 2007).
Use results to develop strategies for improving effectiveness of evaluation process as a tool for improvement (July—October 2007).
Evaluate funded programs to determine their effectiveness.
Time line
Identify programs for evaluation and establish parameters and time lines.
Execute evaluations of programs slated for review.
Incorporate program evaluation results into planning and budgetary deliberation.
Time line
Managers responsible for evaluated programs review and use results to develop budget proposals. (August—September 2007).
Budget proposals submitted to appropriate supervisors for consideration (October 2007).
Superintendent's proposed budget submitted to Board (January 2008).
Board of Education budget request submitted to County Executive (March 2008).
Board of Education adopts final budget (May 2008).
Administer and review results of annual School Improvement Survey and develop strategies for improving clarity of system and school vision and priorities.
Time line
Administer School Improvement Survey (May 2007).
Receive School Improvement Survey results (July 2007).
Use results to develop strategies for improving effectiveness of evaluation process as a tool for improvement (July—October 2007).
Administer and use results of School Improvement Survey to develop strategies to increase staff confidence in leadership to obtain needed resources.
Time line
Administer School Improvement Survey (May 2007).
Receive School Improvement Survey results (July 2007).
Use results to develop strategies for improving clarity of system and school vision and priorities (July—October 2007).

Key Results Area—Financial Stability

Indicators for financial stability include:

    Budget devoted to instruction
    Equity of resources
    Administrative cost
    School quality relative to cost
    Sufficient resources exist for programs
    Management of resources
    Cost savings initiatives.
Reference: *What Do We Want For Our Children?* (August 2002). HCPSS.

The Key Results Area of Financial Stability is essential for any plan that embraces educational excellence. A fiscally strong school system reflects the community's desire to support high standards for its educational programs. Adequate funding of instructional initiatives, such as closing the achievement gap, is paramount in moving the Howard County Public School System forward in its quest for excellence. Planned financial stability is important as a means of measuring continuous improvement. Financial stability objectives and the strategies to meet these objectives, when viewed over a five-year period, may be repetitive because they are reflective of the fiscal cycles of school budget. These budget cycles are basically finalized on an annual basis.

Some of the Key Results measurements of financial stability are the percentage of the budget devoted to instruction, equity in the distribution of resources, a minimization of administrative costs, and the measurement of school quality as it relates to cost. Moreover, sufficient resources must be available to support programs, resources must be managed efficiently and effectively, and the school system must be able to demonstrate cost-saving initiatives in order to allocate scarce dollars where they are most needed. In order to accomplish the tenets of financial stability, the objectives and strategies that follow are recommended.

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Objectives

    Achieve equity of resource distribution across schools.
    Reduce the variance between budget estimates and actual expenditures for more accurate budgetary development.
    Increase the percentage of operating budget devoted to instruction.

Strategies

    Create a differentiated resources formula to address equity of resource distribution

across schools.
Analyze the difference between budget estimates and actual expenditures at the end of the fiscal year.
Develop acceptable variance parameters.
Develop comparative data from surrounding school systems to determine the average percentage of the operating budget funds devoted to instruction.

Second Year of Implementation: 2004-2005

Objectives

Continue equity of resource distribution across schools.
Reduce the variance between budget estimates and actual expenditures for more accurate budgetary development.
Increase the percentage of operating budget devoted to instruction.
Develop cost-saving initiatives in order to direct scarce resources to instructional programs.

Strategies

Monitor the differentiated resources formula to ensure equity in the distribution of resources across schools.
Monitor the analysis of the variance results.
Provide program managers with budget/expenditure data and acceptable variance parameters.
Develop the operating budget with an increase in the percentage of the budget devoted to instruction over the previous fiscal year.
Conduct brainstorming sessions with staff in order to develop a list of the area/programs where cost-saving initiatives could be realized.
Prioritize the list of cost-saving initiatives.
Select the most productive cost-saving initiatives for implementation.

Third Year of Implementation: 2005 -2006
Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006 -2007
Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007-2008

For four years of the life cycle of the *Bridge to Excellence Comprehensive Master Plan*, the objectives and strategies will remain the same with appropriate modifications based on all available data sources and budget constraints. Therefore, any changes to the objectives and strategies during the third, fourth and fifth implementation years will be provided in the annual updates.

Key Results Area—Community Support

Indicators for community support include:

Community level of satisfaction
Active business partnerships
Opportunity for two-way communication
Community input is solicited and valued
Information is accurate, meaningful, and timely
Quality of communication products and services
Volunteers
Diversity of committees.
Reference: *What Do We Want For Our Children?* (August 2002). HCPSS.

The indicators used to evaluate the Key Results Area of Community Support are consistent with the goals of the school system's Strategic Public Relations Plan. The school system's public engagement efforts support excellence in teaching and learning by building positive, long-term relationships that result in increased understanding of, advocacy for, and commitment to the school system's mission and goals. This objective is ongoing, as are most of the strategies employed.

The Howard County Public School System is currently working with a national company to develop, administer, and score surveys that were distributed to parents, staff and students in June 2003. The company will assist the school system in preparing and reporting data from the surveys to the community. Data gathered through these surveys will provide critical information for system level and individual school improvement in this Key Results Area. Repeat administrations of the survey are planned to provide data for trend analysis. Since the data will be collected and compiled on a routine basis, all stakeholders will be able to use the information to make informed decisions and to accelerate school and student improvement. The school system will use the data to monitor progress toward reaching the systemwide goals and meeting the 2005 and 2007 targets.

The school system conducts multiple, ongoing outreach efforts to build a network of stakeholders, that will promote involvement and support for excellence in teaching and learning. These include, but are not limited to:

Each Howard County Public School has an active Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
The school system has a systemwide PTA Council.
Each central office program and content area has an advisory committee comprised of a representative sample of school personnel and community representatives.
The textbook committee reviews and provides input into the selection of textbooks that will be used in all classrooms.
There are 180 school to business partnerships and 410 at-large partnerships.
Ten schools are members of the National Network of Partnership Schools, John Hopkins University.
Howard County has contracted with an independent, private company to develop a new School Improvement Survey. Until the school system has the survey results

tabulated, the district does not have any data to report. However, the data will be included in a future *Bridge to Excellence Comprehensive Master Plan* annual review.

Howard County's website offers families and community members access to school information as it becomes available.

Channel 72, the Education Network, provides daily school information and programming.

Community Outreach Program videos are developed with input from the community

The videos are translated into Korean, Spanish, and Chinese and are broadcasted on Cable Channel 72.

Upon request, community groups receive copies of the videos with companion brochures, which are also translated into Korean, Spanish, and Chinese.

Each afternoon and evening Board of Education (BOE) meeting begins with a Public Forum.

The BOE meets with community groups when requests are made by the group.

The BOE invites parents to quarterly *coffee and conversation* meetings to provide informal opportunities for the community to dialogue with board members.

Each BOE meeting is televised live and then rerun on Channel 72 throughout the following weeks until the next scheduled BOE meeting takes place.

Staff, parents, and community members may view the reruns on a flexible schedule of daytime, evening and weekend telecasts.

The HCPSS has a written, BOE approved, family involvement policy.

Although parents are welcome to visit their children's school at any time during the year, the first and second marking periods offer parent/teacher conferences.

In order to meet family needs and to offer flexible participation, one evening each marking period is designated by each school for evening conferences.

Several systemwide communications and major school documents are translated into at least four languages—Spanish, Korean, Chinese, and Urdu.

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Objectives

Members of the Howard County Public School System community will indicate that positive relationships exist between the school system and its various stakeholder groups.

Members of the Howard County Public School System community will indicate that sufficient and varied opportunities exist for two-way communication at the school and system level.

Members of the Howard County Public School System indicate that their input is solicited and valued as a part of school and system level decision-making processes.

Members of the Howard County Public School System report that the information they receive from the Howard County Public School System and its individual schools is accurate, meaningful, and timely.

Members of the Howard County Public School System community report that local school and school system communication products and services are of the highest quality.

The Howard County Public School System will collaborate with the Howard County business community through long-term, active business partnerships.

The Howard County Public School System will maintain or increase the level of volunteerism in its schools.

The Howard County Public School System will ensure that the ethnic and gender makeup of all internal and external Charter Committees represents the ethnic and gender diversity of Howard County.

Strategies

Equip all school system employees to serve as effective school system ambassadors.

Enhance school system relationships with community opinion leaders.

Encourage community members to make positive contributions to public education.

Develop outreach activities that target parents of infants and toddlers.

Strengthen relationships with local elected officials.

Strengthen relationships with local news media.

Increase the opportunities for two-way communication at the system and school level with each of the major stakeholder groups.

Use a variety of venues for communicating with each major stakeholder group.

Use effective technologies as a means to collect timely input from stakeholders on major school system issues, initiatives, and priorities.

Develop processes that ensure stakeholder group input is sought in the beginning of the process and used for determining priorities.

Use proven public engagement and communication strategies to involve all stakeholders in the local school improvement process.

Include a communications plan as an integral part of each major school system and Board of Education initiative.

Develop timely communications programs, products, and projects to showcase the various components of the school system.

Provide a school system website that is user friendly and provides the public with accurate, meaningful, and timely information.

Target relevant communications to the identified need of specific individual stakeholder groups.

Assess the publication needs of the system on an ongoing basis.

Ensure that all school system publications are of the highest quality and present a consistent visual image.

Second Year of Implementation: 2004 -2005
Third Year of Implementation: 2005 -2006
Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006 -2007
Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007 -2008

For the life cycle of the *Bridge to Excellence Comprehensive Master Plan*, the objectives and strategies will remain the same with appropriate modifications based on all available data sources and budget constraints. Therefore, any changes to the objectives and

strategies during the second, third, fourth and fifth implementation years will be provided in the annual updates.

Outreach to Underachieving Populations

The program described below offers a variety of strategies to meet the school system's goals. Any one strategy or a combination of strategies may be implemented in any Howard County Public School at some point during the school year. However, the data-driven needs of a school's student population and the school's school improvement plan for a specific year determine which strategies are operative at any given time.

The school system has targeted 2007 as the year when all subgroups will meet or exceed standards. To reach this target, a systemic approach to involve families of low-performing students as partners in accelerating student achievement has been developed. Family and Community Outreach Programs are designed to assist schools, parents/families and the community in developing the frameworks and resources necessary to establish and maintain effectiv*e* partnerships for student success. Partnerships are included in School Improvement Plans Student Support Plans for Acceleration.

One of the roadblocks to engaging families is the lack of a common definition of family involvement. The National Network of Partnership Schools has developed a framework based on six types of family involvement thanks to the research of Dr. Joyce Epstein and her colleagues. The six types are:

1. Parenting – helping families to strengthen school programs, family practices and student learning and development, set home environments that support students as learners
2. Communicating – designing effective forms of two-way communication with parents about school programs and student progress
3. Volunteering – recruiting and organizing parent help and support
4. Learning at home – providing information and resources to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related decisions, activities, and planning
5. Decision making – including parents in school decision and developing parent leaders
6. Collaborating with the Community – identifying and integrating resources from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.

The HCPSS uses these six levels of involvement through a variety of outreach efforts. The approach is systemic and includes central office programs and school-based initiatives.

Family involvement offers a variety of strategies to meet the school system's goals. Any one strategy or a combination of strategies may be implemented in any Howard County Public School at some point during the school year. Therefore, the specific strategies that are being implemented at each Howard County school will vary.

First Year of Implementation: 2003-2004

Objectives

By 2007-2008, central office resources and services will be integrated and aligned to promote and maintain a comprehensive program of partnerships for student success with families and community members.
By 2007-2008, schools will use the Epstein framework to develop school, family, and community partnerships to support school improvement objectives.
By 2007-2008, all schools will implement school-wide programs to involve families and communities in promoting safe and nurturing environments.

Strategies

Develop a Central Office Leadership Team for School, Family, and Community Partnerships.
Coordinate family/community outreach in Community Based Learning Centers.
Coordinate Parent Liaisons in all SIU schools to engage underrepresented families.
Collaborate with Student Services for family involvement initiatives in all Academic Intervention Summer Programs.
Increase collaboration with Head Start to promote school readiness.
Develop and coordinate Community Advisory Council for Family and Community Outreach.
Continue professional development workshops, courses, and conferences for staff that focus on family involvement and family outreach.
Develop parent workshops that promote the personal, cognitive and social development of students (Parents as Mediators, and Family CHATS).
Develop a variety of two-way communications with families (newsletters, websites, neighborhood liaisons, videos, focus groups).
Continue community outreach to underserved populations and communities through partnerships with community organizations, faith groups, and businesses.
Speakers bureau videos, learning modules, mentors, after school tutors, training workshops, and cultural enrichment are some of the resources available to families and the community.

Serve as a repository for books, theoretical papers, research articles and other materials of best practices for family involvement.

Provide support to schools and offices using the framework of six types of involvement (parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community).

Provide support to schools in developing one year action plans that involve families and communities in students' academic achievement (reading, mathematics, science, social studies, attendance, tardiness, readiness, homework, Maryland functional tests SAT Prep, HSA, et cetera).

Provide support to schools in implementing specific planned activities that involve families and communities in addressing issues of school safety, achievement equity, climate, and diversity; and in the awareness of applicable policies on harassment, discrimination and violence (community forums, focus groups, workshops).

Link results to school improvement plans and district goals.

Second Year of Implementation: 2004 -2005
Third Year of Implementation: 2005 -2006
Fourth Year of Implementation: 2006 -2007
Fifth Year of Implementation: 2007-2008

For the life cycle of the *Bridge to Excellence Comprehensive Master Plan*, the objectives and strategies will remain the same with appropriate modifications based on all available data sources and budget constraints. Therefore, any changes to the objectives and strategies during the second, third, fourth and fifth implementation years will be provided in the annual updates.