

Division of Schools – Budget Summary

Overview of the Division

The Division of Schools provides the essential services necessary to deliver the Howard County Public School System's educational mission. The role of the division is to directly coordinate the supervision, leadership development, and evaluation of school-based administrators, coordinating information needed to be responsive to the community, and ensuring that quality instruction is occurring and being monitored in schools.

The Division of Schools is organized into three departments:

- Schools
- Student Well-Being
- Safety and Security

The services of this division are delivered through the budgets of the following programs:

- Chief of Schools
- Elementary School Instruction
- Middle School Instruction
- High School Instruction
- Program Support for Schools
- Homewood/Bridges
- Division of Schools
- High School Athletics and Activities
- Intramurals
- Co-curricular Activities

The Division of Schools staff promotes equity by ensuring that each student receives a high-quality education through access to individualized instruction, challenges, supports, and opportunities by observing and evaluating school-based administrators and ensuring that quality instruction is occurring and being monitored in schools while maintaining safe and secure facilities for students, staff, and community. Staff collaborate with schools to ensure that every student achieves academic success while enjoying a sense of belonging. Services are provided to support students' health, social-emotional growth and well-being, academic and behavioral success, and career and academic goal setting.

Summary of Major Budget Changes for FY 2026

The budget for the Division of Schools is increasing by a total of \$105.9 million or 35.46 percent compared to the current budget. This total change in budget is for budget additions and budget realignments. The amount of change for each is:

- Budget additions equal \$15.7 million, a 5.26 percent increase, and a (11.4) net change in FTE positions.
- Budget realignments equal \$90.2M.

More specific information on these budget changes is explained below which are followed by schedules summarizing the Division budget and changes by program.

Budget changes are grouped as Mandates, Commitments, and Priorities.

Division of Schools – Budget Summary

- Mandates are budget changes necessary to meet a specific legal requirement. The mandated cost changes in this year's budget support the continued implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.
- Commitments are changes made in the budget to support the costs for existing obligations such as contracts and prior negotiated pay and benefits.
- Priorities represent those budget items to support existing policy, Superintendent or Board defined goals and objectives, and specific issues.
- Realignments represent transfer of funds between programs, state categories and/or spend categories to support existing requirements. Realignments are budget neutral, although there can be significant changes between programs and accounts. The FY 2026 budget includes a significant movement of budget authority for budgetary realignments that have been done for three purposes:
 - Realignments to meet Blueprint Minimum School Fund reporting requirements. For FY 2026, employee benefits (Social Security, Medicare, pension, and health insurance) have been realigned from the Fixed Charges budget (Program 8001) into each program budget. As a result, all program budgets with positions will show a significant increase in budget reflecting the cost of the employee benefits in the program.
 - Realignments for the Superintendent's reorganization of divisions and programs done in July 2025.
 - Realignments of existing budget authority to meet budgetary needs and properly classify expenditures by state category, division, program, and/or account.

Budget additions for Mandates, Commitments, and Priorities are sub-grouped for clearer understanding of the reason(s) for the budget changes in the division and programs. Each division summary section provides a narrative explanation of budget changes and schedules that present the changes in budget dollars and full-time equivalent (FTE) positions from the current budget. The Factors Influencing and Summary of the Budget in the Executive Summary section of the budget book provides the combined summary of budget changes for all divisions and by state category.

A summary of budget changes for this division is provided below.

Mandates

- \$1,952,350 – Blueprint requirements for National Board Certification pay for teachers.

Commitments

- (\$3,261) – Benefit cost changes for net change in positions, increases for coach and advisor stipends, and increases for teacher national board certification pay.
- \$293,125 – Increase in bus contract costs in High School Athletics and Activities (8601) program for transportation based on FY 2025 levels and 2.5 percent CPI increase for FY 2026.
- \$113,349 – Increase of 1.0 Assistant Principal for Guilford Park High School in Division of Schools (4701) program.
- \$4,129,056 – Health Insurance cost increases based on preliminary actuarial estimates.
- \$102,307 – Negotiated pay increase for Lunch and Recess monitors in Division of Schools (4701) program.

Division of Schools – Budget Summary

- \$89,269 – Increase for Coach and Advisor stipends based on current negotiated agreement in High School Athletics and Activities (8601) program.
- \$571,755 – Estimated change in retirement costs for positions included in this division.
- (\$5,121,798) – Year-over-Year Personnel Cost Change. This adjustment will appear in all program budgets that have budgeted personnel. A complete explanation for these changes is included in the Factors Influencing in the Executive Summary section of the budget book.

Priorities

- \$14,406,113 – Placeholder for employee compensation increases subject to collective bargaining.
- \$411,000 – Increase of 6.2 Teacher positions for Elementary School Instruction (3010) program based on projected enrollment and staffing ratios.
- (\$1,186,770) – Reduction of (17.9) Teacher positions for Middle School Instruction (3020) program based on projected enrollment and staffing ratios.
- (\$46,410) – Reduction of (0.7) Teacher positions for High School Instruction (3030) program based on projected enrollment and staffing ratios.

Realignments

- \$90,410,002 – Realignment of Employee Health Insurance, Social Security, Medicare, and Retirement from Fixed Charges to Division of Schools programs.
- (\$171,341) – Reduction of (2.0) pool positions in Program Support for Schools (3201) and realignment of associated salaries, wages, and non-personnel funding for FY 2025 reorganization. An additional realignment in FY 2025 to optimize staffing ratios based on enrollment including realignment of 2.0 positions in teacher staffing with changes among Elementary Schools Instruction (3010), Middle School Instruction (3020), High School Instruction (3030), and Early Childhood Programs (1301).

Summary schedules of these changes are presented in the following pages.

Division of Schools – Budget Summary

| SUMMARY OF FY 2026 PROPOSED BUDGET | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Program | Program Number | Approved Budget FY 2025 | Total Additions | Total Realignments | Net Budget Changes | Net Budget Changes FTE | Superintendent Proposed FY 2026 | \$ Change From FY 2025 | % Change from FY 2025 | |
| Chief of Schools | 0305 | \$ 2,080,381 | \$ 100,052 | \$ 517,492 | \$ 617,544 | - | \$ 2,697,925 | \$ 617,544 | 29.68% | |
| Elementary School Instruction | 3010 | 82,653,198 | 4,207,337 | 27,712,508 | 31,919,845 | (8.00) | 114,573,043 | 31,919,845 | 38.62% | |
| Middle School Instruction | 3020 | 63,647,056 | 2,615,076 | 19,470,673 | 22,085,749 | (11.10) | 85,732,805 | 22,085,749 | 34.70% | |
| High School Instruction | 3030 | 83,294,161 | 5,017,782 | 25,176,774 | 30,194,556 | 8.70 | 113,488,717 | 30,194,556 | 36.25% | |
| Program Support for Schools | 3201 | 5,431,499 | 218,959 | 1,613,912 | 1,832,871 | (2.00) | 7,264,370 | 1,832,871 | 33.75% | |
| Homewood | 3402 | 5,630,850 | 616,945 | 1,811,964 | 2,428,909 | - | 8,059,759 | 2,428,909 | 43.14% | |
| Division of Schools | 4701 | 49,016,685 | 2,544,771 | 13,639,687 | 16,184,458 | 1.00 | 65,201,143 | 16,184,458 | 33.02% | |
| High School Athletics and Activities | 8601 | 6,736,791 | 389,223 | 274,223 | 663,446 | - | 7,400,237 | 663,446 | 9.85% | |
| Intramurals | 8701 | 90,000 | - | 3,995 | 3,995 | - | 93,995 | 3,995 | 4.44% | |
| Co-curricular Activities | 8801 | 229,280 | - | 17,433 | 17,433 | - | 246,713 | 17,433 | 7.60% | |
| Schools Total | | \$ 298,809,901 | \$ 15,710,145 | \$ 90,238,661 | \$ 105,948,806 | (11.40) | \$ 404,758,707 | \$ 105,948,806 | 35.46% | |

Division of Schools – Budget Summary

| General Fund | | SUMMARY OF FY 2026 BUDGET CHANGES BY PROGRAM A | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| PROGRAMS | 0305 | 3010 | | 3020 | | 3030 | | 3201 |
| | | Chief of Schools | Elementary School Instruction | FTE | Middle School Instruction | FTE | High School Instruction | Program Support for Schools |
| MANDATES | | | | | | | | |
| Blueprint-National Board Certification | - | - | 380,450 | - | 516,270 | - | 953,090 | 29,600 |
| Subtotal Mandates | - | - | 380,450 | - | 516,270 | - | 953,090 | 29,600 |
| COMMITMENTS | | | | | | | | |
| Benefit Cost-New Positions | - | - | 190,435 | - | (351,039) | - | 101,112 | 3,644 |
| Bus Contracts-Obligated Increase | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Guilford Park High School | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Health Insurance | 16,540 | - | 1,328,010 | - | 888,437 | - | 1,130,805 | 86,512 |
| Labor Contracts | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Retirement | 15,551 | - | 171,587 | - | 209,474 | - | 155,161 | (38,936) |
| Year over Year Personnel Cost Change | 10,360 | - | (2,600,233) | - | (665,791) | - | (1,467,842) | (121,979) |
| Subtotal Commitments | 42,451 | - | (910,201) | - | 81,081 | - | (80,764) | (70,759) |
| PRIORITIES | | | | | | | | |
| Employee Compensation | 57,601 | - | 4,326,028 | - | 3,204,495 | - | 4,191,866 | 260,118 |
| Enrollment Changes | - | - | 411,060 | 6.20 | (1,186,770) | (17.90) | (46,410) | - |
| Subtotal Priorities | 57,601 | - | 4,737,088 | 6.20 | 2,017,725 | (17.90) | 4,145,456 | 260,118 |
| SUBTOTAL BUDGET ADDITIONS | 100,052 | - | 4,207,337 | 6.20 | 2,615,076 | (17.90) | 5,017,782 | 218,959 |
| Budget Realignments | 517,492 | - | 27,712,508 | (14.20) | 19,470,673 | 6.80 | 25,176,774 | 1,613,912 |
| DIVISION TOTAL | 617,544 | - | 31,919,845 | (8.00) | 22,085,749 | (11.10) | 30,194,556 | 1,832,871 |
| | | | | | | | | (2.00) |

Division of Schools – Budget Summary

| SUMMARY OF FY 2026 BUDGET CHANGES BY PROGRAM AND SUMMARY GROUPINGS | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----|---------------------|------|--------------------------------------|------------|-------------|-------|--------------------------|-------------|
| General Fund | 3402 | | 4701 | | 8601 | | 8701 | | 8801 | |
| | PROGRAMS | | Division of Schools | | High School Athletics and Activities | | Intramurals | | Co-curricular Activities | |
| | Homewood | FTE | FTE | | FTE | Activities | FTE | | FTE | |
| MANDATES | | | | | | | | | | |
| Blueprint-National Board Certification | 72,940 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Subtotal Mandates | 72,940 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| COMMITMENTS | | | | | | | | | | |
| Benefit-Cost-New Positions | 8,979 | - | 36,779 | - | - | 6,829 | - | - | - | (3,261) |
| Bus Contracts-Obligated Increase | - | - | - | - | - | 293,125 | - | - | - | 293,125 |
| Gulford Park High School | - | - | 113,349 | 1.00 | - | - | - | - | - | 113,349 |
| Health Insurance | 85,242 | - | 593,510 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4,129,056 |
| Labor Contracts | - | - | 102,307 | - | - | 89,269 | - | - | - | 191,576 |
| Retirement | 8,872 | - | 50,046 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 571,755 |
| Year over Year Personnel Cost Change | 146,515 | - | (422,828) | - | - | - | - | - | - | (5,121,798) |
| Subtotal Commitments | 249,608 | - | 473,163 | 1.00 | - | 389,223 | - | - | - | 173,802 |
| PRIORITIES | | | | | | | | | | |
| Employee Compensation | 294,397 | - | 2,071,608 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 14,406,113 |
| Enrollment Changes | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | (822,120) |
| Subtotal Priorities | 294,397 | - | 2,071,608 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 13,583,993 |
| SUBTOTAL BUDGET ADDITIONS | 616,945 | - | 2,544,771 | 1.00 | - | 389,223 | - | - | - | 15,710,145 |
| Budget Realignments | 1,811,964 | - | 13,639,687 | - | - | 274,223 | - | 3,995 | - | 90,238,661 |
| DIVISION TOTAL | 2,428,909 | - | 16,184,458 | 1.00 | - | 663,446 | - | 3,995 | - | 105,948,806 |