

A Message from the Superintendent

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Each year, the budget development process affords a school district the opportunity to align its values and goals to available funding. The budget is not the driver of change but represents an opportunity to advance the implementation of our established priorities. The Superintendent's FY 2027 Proposed Operating Budget was crafted to advance the five priorities outlined in the HCPSS Strategic Plan by proactively prioritizing the conditions every student needs to succeed, especially those who have been underserved.

The strategic plan encompasses the priorities of our students, staff, and families, and must continually serve as a guiding light for our actions and budgeting. For some students and staff, we are hitting the mark. But for too many, we are not yet accomplishing what we aim to achieve—and that is to be a great school system for all.



In many ways, we are headed in the right direction, or we are implementing the right adjustments to realign our direction to our desired outcomes. But in several areas, more is needed—more resources, more staffing, more focus and more funding. Unfortunately, “more” isn’t always available—at least in terms of funding. The same budget realities that have existed for several years are magnified even further for the 2027 fiscal year:

- It costs more to maintain current services and staffing;
- Enrollment continues to trickle down, impacting the amount of available funding;
- Funding formulas are flawed and not keeping up with the realities of our classrooms, our society and our nation’s fiscal environment; and
- The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future requires us to reallocate funding and resources from many areas that Howard County has always prioritized to the areas deemed most critical in the legislation.

With decreasing enrollment and rising costs to maintain current services, we need to remain laser-focused on the priorities detailed in our strategic plan and our commitment to funding strategies that will result in transformative change for students who need it most.

This budget proposal uplifts necessary, strategic decisions and reallocates resources to align with the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future and our own high-priority initiatives, such as the redesign of special education programming and increased supports for multilingual learners and their families.

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Throughout this budget development process, I implore everyone to remain grounded in the shared priorities we have established and shared goals we have stated as part of the HCPSS Strategic Plan. I look forward to receiving feedback from students, staff, and community members throughout the budget development process, and working with the Board and our County partners over the next few months as we work collaboratively on behalf of students. I appreciate everyone's partnership as we strive to be a great school system for *every* student.

Sincerely,



William J. Barnes
Superintendent