

**Howard County Public School System**  
Michael J. Martirano, Interim Superintendent  
Testimony to the Interagency Committee (IAC)  
Appeal Meeting – December 7, 2017

Good afternoon Dr. Salmon, members of the IAC, Designees and staff. I am Michael Martirano, Interim Superintendent of the Howard County Public School System. Thank you for inviting us to present the unique challenges faced by our school system and to discuss projects in our FY 2019 Capital Improvement Program. I am joined today by Bruce Gist, Executive Director of Capital Planning and Operations, and Scott Washington, Director of School Construction.

Thank you for the initial allocation of \$4.45 million in State funding, which represents approximately 51 percent of the total \$8.74 million requested. We would like to make you aware of some of our local concerns as you continue your review of the FY 2019 State Capital Improvement Requests.

Howard County continues to experience tremendous enrollment growth and must meet the capital needs of a steadily growing student population. We expect to welcome more than 850 new students in FY2019, and anticipate an average enrollment increase of approximately 1,000 students per year over the next seven years. To accommodate this growth, our 10-Year Long Range Master Plan includes one replacement and three new elementary schools, one new high school and five renovation and/or addition projects.

Our planning requires us to balance the need for new classroom seats while maintaining our existing schools. The FY 2019 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) request includes capital investments to ensure the safety and efficiency of our older schools, as reflected in our funding requests for roof replacement projects at Harpers Choice Middle School, Atholton Elementary School and Fulton Elementary School, and building envelope projects at Long Reach High School and Glenwood Middle School.

We thank you for recommending full funding of the Harpers Choice Middle School and Atholton Elementary School Roof Replacement projects (LEA Priorities #1 and #2, respectively) and ask that you consider funding the remaining \$2,713,000 for the Long Reach High School Building Envelope (LEA Priority #3) project. The project will make essential repairs to an aging roof, windows and masonry, and reduce water infiltration.

We also ask that you reconsider the status of the following projects:

- Fulton Elementary School – Roof (LEA Priority #4): The project currently has a B status. We request it receive an A status and be fully funded. The project will replace the aging roof and protect the structural integrity of the building, equipment and systems.
- Glenwood Middle School – Building Envelope (LEA Priority #5): The project currently has a C status. We believe all necessary information for this project has been provided, therefore allowing it to receive A status and be fully funded. The project will replace

aging windows and doors to provide a much more energy- and environmentally-efficient building.

- Talbott Springs Elementary School - Replacement (LEA Priority #6): The project currently has a C status. We believe all outstanding issues have been resolved and request the project receive an A status. We recently learned that, after review of the Feasibility Study, the Designees do not concur with the local decision to replace Talbott Springs Elementary School. We respectfully ask the IAC to reconsider the Designees' decision.

Talbott Springs Elementary School is our highest rated facility on the Facility Condition Index, with a score of 121.8% (based on the formula provided by the Public School Construction Program). In addition, the school provides many essential resources to one of Howard County's most disadvantaged communities, and serves as a community "safe haven," where residents receive much needed services and resources that can be difficult to obtain elsewhere.

Talbott Springs Elementary School collects food donations, which volunteers assist staff to prepare and provide a minimum of 40 backpacks of food to students each week through the Blessings in a Backpack program. The food donations are also distributed during holidays, inclement weather and other periods when school is out of session. The school also provides lunches for families during the summer and bag dinners for students who take part in extended day programming.

School administrators and student services staff support families each day in accessing food, clothing and other necessities, and collaborate with community service providers to resolve crises and urgent needs. The school also provides interpreters for its many Spanish speaking families to ensure access to community and school services. A Family Liaison works directly with families to improve attendance and student engagement.

Construction of a new school will ensure the Talbott Springs community may continue to access these and other essential services in a safe and familiar setting, without the interruption that would occur during a major renovation project.

- New High School #13 (LEA Priority #7) – New: This project was accelerated by two years due to the critical need to support enrollment growth in the southeastern part of the county. The project currently has a C status. We request the project receive an A status as we continue to move into the planning of the school. Prospective sites are currently under review by the State Clearinghouse.

On November 8th, the Designees presented two recommendation scenarios to the IAC; neither scenario recommended Local Planning approval for any projects statewide, due to the backlog of funding obligations. Unfortunately, a lack of Local Planning and funding approval would significantly impede the Howard County Public School System in accommodating the dramatic enrollment growth that is projected to continue for the next several years. Recent local budget reductions greatly limit our ability to completely fund projects through local sources.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Facilities Commission (Knott Commission) recommends that state funding be reserved for projects that renew an entire facility. This would exclude from state funding many projects that would sustain or extend the useful life of a facility, including major repairs, alterations, replacement of building systems, equipment, and components. This direction would require our system to further defer essential maintenance projects as a result of already strained local budgets.

We appreciate the support and cooperative relationship we have with the Public School Construction Program staff and will continue to work closely with the PSCP to constructively resolve the challenging issues facing our school system today and in the future.

Again, we thank you for the opportunity to share and discuss our concerns. We look forward to receiving your favorable support for funding of our FY 2019 CIP requests.

Michael J. Martirano, Ed.D.  
Interim Superintendent  
Howard County Public School System