



NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Council Members Jung and Walsh Pre-File Budget Amendments for Additional \$8 million in Education Funding

Ellicott City, MD (May 22, 2019) – Howard County Council Members Deb Jung and Liz Walsh have pre-filed amendments to the County Executive’s proposed FY 20 Operating Budget to provide an additional \$8 million in funding for the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

“The community has been clearly heard: they are relying on the County to continue funding our public schools to support student success,” said Jung. “Great schools require a deliberate financial investment.”

The two Council Members have proposed Amendments No. 3, 5, and 6 to Council Bill 24 that add funds to HCPSS for direct instruction, substitute teacher pay, and transportation-software needs. There are also one-time funds to address HCPSS’s healthcare deficit. “These amendments are just a first step to address HCPSS’s real and undeniable needs,” said Jung. “Moving forward the County and HCPSS must work in a more collaborative fashion to provide the predictability needed for this process to work at its best.”

Council Member Walsh underscored Jung’s statements, “There’s an inherent flaw in how we currently fund our schools,” said Walsh. “The proposed operating budget for the coming year is based on the student enrollment from two years ago. In our circumstance, this undercounts the number of kids already in our schools by about 2000 students. We cannot expect our schools and educators to catch up or keep up when we add to their charge another 800 or more kids every single year.” The Council Member continued by saying, “We as a County or a Council cannot close that gap entirely in one year, but we are resolved to find the plan to do so and are assured by HCPSS that we will have their full cooperation.”

Potential sources for the additional \$8 million proposed for reallocation to HCPSS were carefully evaluated. These areas included County departmental employee vacancies, in addition to categories that have established cash reserves and fund balances, which were chosen in an effort to minimize impact to quality and delivery of County services.

“We know that all budgets require making hard choices, but we are relieved that the amendments to the budget introduced by Council Members Jung and Walsh allocate the funds needed to stave off the worst impacts to the classroom,” said Colleen Morris, President of the Howard County Education Association. “As with our victory in securing Kirwan funding this year, HCEA looks forward to continuing to work collaboratively with the County, the School System, and community to find additional funding to meet the needs of our schools and Howard County.”

The County Council will be holding a Work Session this coming Friday, May 24th at noon to discuss all pre-filed budget amendments. The Council will vote to approve and adopt the FY 20 Capital and Operating Budgets on Wednesday, May 29th at 10 am. Both meetings are open to the public and can viewed online by visiting: <https://cc.howardcountymd.gov/Online-Tools/Watch-Us>.

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