



# Howard County Government News Release

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## **Howard County Executive Ball and Howard County Council Add Education Spending, Bringing Record Increase to \$45 Million Above State Mandated Maintenance of Effort in Support of Special Education, Early Childhood and Student Well-Being**

*Proposed \$84 million increase in recurring County and State funding is largest in school system history; first time Howard County Public School System getting over \$1 billion commitment*

ELLICOTT CITY, MD – Howard County Executive Calvin Ball and all five members of the Howard County Council today jointly announced \$5 million in additional County funding for the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) Operating Budget, bringing the increase in County funding above the Maintenance of Effort standard to a record \$45 million.

Combined with \$10.75 million in additional HCPSS reserves that can be used in this year's budget, nearly \$16 million will be added to the HCPSS budget proposal for recurring purposes.

Between the amended budget proposal and any additional HCPSS spend from reserves, it is expected that 288 new positions will be created in much-needed educational areas in the Fiscal Year 2023 Operating Budget.

Executive Ball and Councilmembers said they intend for the revised budget to support:

- over 150 new positions in special education;
- nearly 80 positions for pre-kindergarten (which include over 35 pre-kindergarten positions for special education);

- 26 positions for college and career readiness (which include 23 positions to target loss of learning in reading and math);
- 19 positions for behavioral health and student well-being (including an LGBTQIA+ specialist and Hispanic Achievement Liaisons);
- and 14 positions to support the opening of new high school 13, which when opened will be the County's first new high school since 2005.

The overall proposed school system budget for FY23 would be \$1.026 billion, which remains the highest amount ever and the first HCPSS operating budget to exceed \$1 billion in County history. If approved, this additional funding will increase the proposed budget to \$45 million above Maintenance of Effort, marking the largest increase above Maintenance of Effort in County history by at least \$15 million. The increase would bring County funding above Maintenance of Effort over the last four years to \$62.8 million, well more than triple the increase over the previous four-year period. Recurring County and State funding for HCPSS increases by nearly \$84 million, also the largest increase in HCPSS history.

To produce the new funding in FY23 supporting recurring educational needs, the jointly sponsored amendment avoids impacts to County services by moving \$4 million from the County Health Benefits Fund and \$1 million from the Risk Management Fund, and includes \$10.75 million from the HCPSS fund balance that had previously been identified by HCPSS as a potential source of supporting additional positions. In FY24 and beyond, the County will be responsible for funding these positions out of operating funding.

A separate amendment to the proposed budget is also being filed to shift \$15.6 million in proposed one-time County funding to County contingency, following a Maryland State Department of Education determination regarding qualifying nonrecurring cost exclusions. Howard County is appealing that decision.

"This increased funding meets the needs of our community, and makes our record funding for schools even stronger," said Executive Ball. "I am pleased that the executive and legislative branches worked collaboratively with the school system to adapt to evolving needs and provide resources in special education, mental health, career readiness and other areas."

"This revised budget represents our continued record investment in education while carefully balancing other critical needs in our community," said Council Chair Opel Jones, D3. "Strengthening supports for our educators and students has remained a top priority and I appreciate the County Executive's leadership in recognizing ways we can continue to do so. I'm proud that my colleagues and I have reached consensus and achieved this outcome."

"We have seen an increase in the need for special education services and mental health supports in our public schools, and these additional funds will help our students and educators thrive," said Council Vice Chair Christiana Rigby, D3. "I'm grateful to

County Executive Ball and our County Budget Office for identifying a source for this funding that supports our school system while maintaining other county services that our residents rely on.”

“We appreciate the County Executive’s recognition that education is a top priority for our constituents. We support these additional funds being applied to retaining Special Education personnel and funding positions for LGBTQ+, BSAP, Hispanic, and International liaisons in our community,” said Councilwoman Liz Walsh, D1.

“I’m pleased to support the County Executive’s \$5 million increase in recurring funds to HCPSS in an effort to support much-needed special education positions and other services that are vital to the success of our public school students,” said Councilwoman Deb Jung, D4.

The final vote on amendments and the budget is scheduled for May 25th.