
From: Alexandra Sasha Malcolmson <alexandra.malcolmson@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 5, 2025 7:20 PM
To: boe@hcpss.org; CouncilMail
Cc: Jones, Opel; publicinfo@hcpss.org
Subject: Support for Howard County's Music and Arts Programs

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Dear Members of the Howard County Council and Board of Education,

As a Columbia resident and longtime supporter of our public schools, I recently had the joy of attending the Howard County Gifted and Talented Choir concert at Glenelg High School. The performance was nothing short of extraordinary, highlighting not only our students' musical talent but also the dedication of our teachers and the strength of our public education system.

One of the students who performed that night, Daniel, is the son of a close friend and has been like a nephew to me for many years. He's been part of the county's choir programs since middle school, and I've watched firsthand how these opportunities have shaped him. On the ride home after the concert, Daniel shared how much he loved meeting students from other parts of the county, people he might never have met otherwise, and how meaningful it was to collaborate with them. It reminded me that music education builds community in ways few other programs can.

Daniel is a first-generation American and the first in his family to have access to this kind of musical instruction alongside a strong public education. For him, the choir isn't just about performance: it's about belonging, confidence, and discovering a sense of self through music. He hopes to continue in choir when he begins college next fall, as it has become an essential part of who he is.

He also has a younger brother who just started kindergarten this year at Bollman Bridge Elementary School, and I can't help but think about the opportunities ahead of him. I hope that by the time his brother reaches middle and high school, programs like this will still be thriving and available, supported by the same commitment to inclusion and access that has helped students like Daniel flourish.

I know there have been recent challenges to sustaining music instruction at every level, including reductions to the third-grade strings program. While I understand that budget decisions are never easy, I hope these difficult choices serve as a reminder of just how essential early access to music education is. The joy, skill, and sense of belonging I saw at this weekend's concert all began with programs like those in the elementary grades - and I believe protecting those early opportunities is key to keeping our county's music programs strong for years to come.

Music and arts programs are not extras. They are essential. They teach collaboration, discipline, empathy, and creativity, skills that serve students throughout their lives, no matter their path. These programs bridge opportunity gaps and bring students together across communities, income levels, and backgrounds. The return on investment for our students, our schools, and our county is immeasurable.

Thank you for your continued service and for your dedication to ensuring that Howard County remains a place where every student can find their voice. I urge you to maintain and, wherever possible, expand funding for music and arts education so that all students, now and in the future, can continue to learn, grow, and thrive through the power of music.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Malcolmson.

From: Miriam Miller <getmbr@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 24, 2026 12:30 PM
To: Ball, Calvin; Budget Testimony
Cc: CouncilMail; CouncilDistrict1@howardcountymd.gov; CouncilDistrict2@howardcountymd.gov;
CouncilDistrict4@howardcountymd.gov; Yungmann, David
Subject: Support Full Funding and Music Programs for HCPSS in FY2027 Budget

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Dear County Executive Ball and County Council Members,

As a Parent who daily sees the impact of our schools in the Centennial Community, I urge you to fully fund the Howard County Public School System in the FY2027 Operating Budget and to support the Board of Education's approved budget without change.

Our students have already experienced increased class sizes, staffing changes, and program reductions in recent years. As music parents, we saw the elimination of the 3rd grade strings program in FY2026 — a loss that reduced early access to music education for students county-wide.

The Board of Education has worked thoughtfully to approve a budget that avoids additional cuts to student programs. Any reduction to that request would diminish classroom experiences, staffing, and student opportunities.

We moved to Howard County for the strong public schools and well-rounded educational opportunities — including music, the arts, and sports — that support student growth, engagement, and achievement.

We trust you, as our elected officials, to do what is right for all Howard County students by fully funding the HCPSS request and to give our schools and educators everything they need to provide our students with an exceptional public education.

Thank you for your service and your consideration.

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