

Master Plan – A State Requirement

The State of Maryland Bridge to Excellence legislation mandates that each school system develop a comprehensive five-year plan to describe how the Board of Education intends to make improvements in achievement for every student. The plan must describe the goals, objectives, and strategies that will be used to improve student achievement and meet state and local performance standards for all students. While the Master Plan is a separate document in its own right, it must describe specifically how Harford County Public Schools will improve student achievement for Special Education students, students with limited English proficiency, prekindergarten students, kindergarten students, gifted and talented students, and students enrolled in career and technology courses.

Fundamental changes in funding for education at the federal and state levels have resulted in new requirements for HCPS. Fortunately, changes in educational standards mandated by the federal and state governments align well with the Board Goals. Harford County Public Schools has been proactive in developing the FY 2012 Operating Budget in conjunction with the Master Plan. The development of the Master Plan concurrently with the Operating Budget demonstrates the critical link between the budget and the Master Plan. The budget represents the operational plan, stated in financial terms, for carrying out the goals of the school system.

The Bridge to Excellence Act also requires that the budget be aligned with the Master Plan and show specifically how the use of resources will address the goals and objectives of the plan. This budget represents one aspect of compliance with the new regulations.

The Maryland State Department of Education approved the Harford County Public Schools 2010 Master Plan Update on January 4, 2011.

Development and Implementation of the 2010 Master Plan

The development of the HCPS Master Plan involved a number of stakeholders. The ideas, beliefs, perceptions, and recommendations of representatives of the various groups were collected and assimilated into the Master Plan. HCPS personnel will continue to communicate and collaborate with the stakeholders with regard to implementation of the plan and progress towards achieving the goals set forth by the HCPS Board of Education.

The list below identifies the variety of forums utilized to gather data from and communicate with stakeholders:

- Town meetings open to all citizens
- Harford County Regional Association of Student Councils town meeting with Superintendent and Senior Staff
- Board of Education's Citizen Advisory Committees
- Harford County Business Roundtable
- Harford County Council
- Harford County Council of PTA's presentations
- Harford County Council of PTA's monthly meetings with Superintendent
- Superintendent's meetings with Harford County Education Association
- Superintendent and Board of Education's meetings with Harford Community College
- Board of Directors
- Superintendent's meetings with state delegates and senators
- Superintendent's monthly meetings with County Executive
- Departmental Citizen Advisory meetings
- HCPS Website-feedback forum

No Child Left Behind

In January 2002, the federal government enacted the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). This law reauthorized the former Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). The legislation significantly changed the role of the federal government in education, introducing more accountability and requiring schools to meet specific standards for student achievement. With standards put in place, states must test individual student progress toward meeting those standards. Since FY 2006, individual tests for reading and mathematics are administered annually in grades 3 through 8. Science is administered for grades 4 through 8.

As part of the NCLB, the U.S. Department of Education established, and the State of Maryland adopted, the following goals:

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1. By 2013-2014, all students will reach high standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and mathematics.
2. All limited English proficient students will become proficient in English and reach high standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and mathematics.
3. By 2005-2006, all students will be taught by highly qualified teachers.
4. All students will be educated in learning environments that are safe, drug-free, and conducive to learning.
5. All students will graduate from high school.

As part of the Master Plan, HCPS must show how these goals will be reached.

Foundation of Budget Development

Board Goals – The Master Plan Foundation

The vision, mission, and goals established by the Board of Education align well with the policies and objectives of the federal No Child Left Behind and the Maryland Bridge to Excellence. The broadest foundation for budget development is couched in the Vision and Mission of the Harford County Public Schools.

Vision

Harford County Public Schools will be a community of learners in which our public schools, families, public officials, businesses, community organizations, and other citizens work collaboratively to prepare all of our students to succeed academically and socially in a diverse, democratic, change-oriented, and global society.

Mission

The Mission of Harford County Public Schools is to promote excellence in instructional leadership and teaching and to provide facilities and instructional materials that support teaching and learning for the 21st century. The Harford County Board of Education will support this mission by fostering a climate for deliberate change and monitoring progress through measurable indicators.

Board of Education Goals for the Master Plan

- 1. Ensure a safe, positive learning environment for students and staff in our schools.**
- 2. Accelerate student learning and eliminate the achievement gaps.**
- 3. Ensure the effective use of all resources focusing on the areas of technology, fiscal and budgetary management, and community partnerships.**
- 4. Understanding that all employees contribute to the learning environment, we will maintain a highly qualified workforce.**

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Harford County Public School (HCPS) System is dedicated to providing a quality instructional program to all students. The school system's mission is to foster a quality educational system that challenges students to develop knowledge and skills, and to inspire them to become life-long learners and good citizens. Four strategic system goals, aligned to the five goals and the corresponding performance indicators of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, support

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the mission and led to the development of strategies and programs identified in the original five-year Bridge to Excellence Master Plan, 2003-2008.

HCPS Master Plan Goals

- Ensure a safe, positive learning environment for students and staff in our schools.
- Accelerate student learning and eliminate the achievement gaps.
- Ensure the effective use of all resources focusing on the areas of technology, fiscal and budgetary management, and community partnerships.
- Understanding that all employees contribute to the learning environment, we will maintain a highly qualified workforce.

It should be noted that it became apparent early in 2005 that the original HCPS five-year Master Plan was not the plan that would most benefit the system's strategic needs in this era of intense school improvement and system improvement initiatives. The primary benefit of the Master Plan to HCPS has been that it has demonstrated a longitudinal planning process, and it prompted the school system to want to improve upon a master plan process that was not meeting HCPS' strategic needs. With this in mind, the Board of Education decided to draft a five year strategic plan for the school system. Much of the work toward establishing the annual benchmarks for the HCPS Strategic Plan occurred during 2005-2007, and the plan became a living document in 2008. However two years ago, 2008-2009, Harford County Public Schools was in a transition period with the sudden loss of our superintendent, Dr. Jackie Haas, and the subsequent search and acquisition of our current superintendent, Dr. Robert Tomback.

Due to the loss of Dr. Haas, spring 2009 plans to revisit and refine the Strategic Plan were put on hold. Therefore, the 2010 HCPS Annual Review for the BTE Master Plan continues to address identified progress and challenges in regard to the above goals of the original master plan. It is prudent to state that guided by the leadership of Dr. Tomback and the oversight of the Board of Education, Harford County Public Schools' Strategic Plan will be revisited and refined in 2010-2011.

The following sections of the HCPS Executive Summary for the Bridge to Excellence Master Plan highlight the review of the current fiscal climate and demographic changes of the system, as well as a summary of the identified successes and challenges in our efforts to achieve the Master Plan goals.

Budget Narrative

Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) is a fiscally dependent school system with an actual enrollment of 38,637 students in fiscal 2010. HCPS is the 135th largest school system of the 17,817 regular school districts in the country when ranked by enrollment. There are 24 school districts in the State of Maryland. This places HCPS in the top one percent of school districts by size. The student body will be served by a projected 5,483.0 FTE faculty and staff positions for fiscal 2011.

Currently Harford County has 53 public schools along with 48 non public schools located within the County. Citizens in the County have a choice of public or private schools. 38,587 students attend public schools. The number of students attending private schools is unknown. The estimated population (as of June 30, 2010) from the County Office of Planning and Zoning was 248,610. According to the Bureau of Census, the school age population in 2000 was 45,189 of which 39,540 or 87.5% attended public schools. School enrollment was 35,963 in 1994 and reached a peak in 2002 of 40,264 and has declined slightly to 38,587. Through the recent military Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process, the County workforce and population is estimated to increase in excess of 10%, which will result in increased population for the public school system.

In the next several years, the Capital Budget proposes one new elementary school and various other renovation/modernization projects. The Fiscal Year 2011 Board of Education adopted Budget for Harford County Public Schools addresses the essential components of federal legislation known as *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB), state legislation known as the Bridge to Excellence Act (BTE), and continues to address the Strategic Plan and Master Plan. Meeting the educational needs of a growing and diverse community so that no child is left behind requires vision, knowledge, organization, effective planning, sufficient coordinated resources, and commitment from all stakeholders.

Tough fiscal times exist internationally, nationally, and locally. These are challenging times for the State of Maryland, Harford County Government and Harford County Public Schools. Harford County Government requested spending reductions from HCPS of \$3.9 million in fiscal 2009 and \$.5 million in fiscal 2010. Even with tough fiscal times, federal and state mandates regarding the education of our students remain. In fact, new mandates have been implemented each year. Fiscal 2011 and fiscal 2012 will be tough fiscal years for the school system.

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Every effort was made to be fiscally conservative in preparing the 2011 Budget. This budget required difficult decisions in order to align projected expenditures with projected revenue. Due to a slight increase in enrollment, Harford County Maintenance of Effort funding increased \$146,989 in fiscal 2011. The County Executive also agreed to fund an additional \$3.0 million to avoid salary reductions and for the first year startup costs for the Natural Resources/Agricultural Science magnet program at North Harford High School. State and federal revenues are projected to increase slightly for fiscal 2011. The fiscal 2011 Unrestricted Operating Budget is approved at \$422.5 million. The Restricted Fund Budget is projected to increase by \$.5 million to \$34.7 million. The Adopted Capital budget has been reduced to \$34.7 Million for fiscal 2011 with no new major building projects approved.

For fiscal 2011, HCPS faced cost of doing business increases in the Unrestricted Operating Budget totaling \$12.4 million. These expenditures which are beyond our control include benefit rate adjustments, non-public placement costs, additional inclusion helpers, utility and fuel increases, state/federal mandates and contracted service increases. With \$4.2 million in new revenue to offset these costs, HCPS implemented budget reductions totaling \$6.5 million for fiscal 2011. The remaining shortfall was offset with a \$.8 million increase in fund balance usage and \$.9 million of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds. The fiscal situation addressed in the budget, including the reallocation of existing resources to cover new expenses, will impact our schools, our students and all employees of Harford County Public Schools.

Following is a summary of the planned use of the Harford County Public Schools' planned use of ARRA funds in response to MSDE prompts:

1. How has having State Fiscal Stabilization (SFS) funds available influenced the school system's decisions regarding the master plan priorities for the year? How are specific ARRA grants (Title I ARRA Funds, IDEA ARRA Funds, National School Lunch Equipment Assistance, Homeless, other) being used to support the master plan priorities?

HCPS Response

State Fiscal Stabilization (SFS) funds are being used to offset the challenges of tough fiscal times and the responsibility to maintain high quality academic services for our students. Because of SFS funds and specific ARRA grants, Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) continues to be able to address the priorities identified in our master plan by focusing on student achievement (including closing the achievement gaps and turning around the lowest performing schools), teacher effectiveness (recruiting, developing, and retaining effective teachers), safe schools, and effective use of resources. Specifically, the SFS funds will be used to support health care costs system wide which, in turn, is allowing HCPS to continue to address HCPS master plan priorities without a reduction in teaching staff and curriculum delivery. The use of HCPS ARRA grant funds continues to be tied directly to the first two priorities as they directly align with the reform focus areas addressed in this report. The specific ARRA grants are supporting the priorities in the following ways:

A. Title I

i. Assurance 1: Title 1 ARRA funds continue to be used to provide staffing, wages, and training for the National Board certification program and the Student Achievement in the Arts summer program to enhance teacher effectiveness in these programs.

ii. Assurance 4: Two of our Title 1 schools are now in Year One of School Improvement - Comprehensive Developing Needs. ARRA funds are being used to buy 10.4 FTE to support learning intervention programs [family liaisons (7), math specialists (.4), and para educators (3)]; as well as to provide staffing for intervention programs that are outside the regular school program [GED; Summer School; Before/After School programs]. Funds also provide supplies and equipment designed to support these school based programs, which includes enhancing the instructional technology as necessary.

B. IDEA (Pass-through; Discretionary; Pre-school)

i. Assurance 1: As outlined in the HCPS ARRA IDEA Recovery Use of funds application, alignment has been made with the HCPS Master Plan. Specifically, funds are continuing to be used to support highly effective teachers through imbedding school based professional development designed to increase understanding of policies, procedures, and responsibilities of teachers in the provision of specialized services for students with special needs. ARRA funds are providing special education assistant principals in our secondary schools identified as needing additional support to ensure effective implementation of policies and procedures for students with special needs. In addition, special education teacher mentors and facilitators have been hired to support special education teachers. Professional development in transitioning to MD Online IEPs and increased administrative support of special education oversight is also being funded through ARRA funds.

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ii. Assurance 4: In our HCPS schools identified for School Improvement, AYP is not met in special education reading and math. Additional special education teachers (6), para educators (5), a behavior specialist, math coaches (4) and a school psychologist have been hired to provide support for our special needs students in order to close achievement gaps, as outlined in our Master Plan. Instructional resources and supplies have been provided system-wide to target interventions for students with disabilities and at risk for IEPs.

C. National School Lunch Equipment Assistance

All School Lunch Equipment grants funds have been spent and provided much need cafeteria equipment allowing for effective use of resources.

D. Homeless

ARRA funds continue to be used to provide professional academic assistance for homeless students in area homeless shelters. Funds are being used to hire teachers to provide individualized academic assistance for students living in area homeless shelters. Homeless ARRA funds are directly aligned with the Master Plan priority of student achievement.

E. Infants and Toddlers

ARRA funds are used to support an early childhood special education teacher as well as two speech therapists to assist young children. In addition, ARRA funds supported the purchasing of supplies and materials.

F. Other

1. State Fiscal Stabilization funds are being used to support health care costs of HCPS employees. As a result, all Master Plan priorities can continue to be implemented without reduction of effort.

2 ARRA funding streams are being coordinated to support this reform priority. Data analyses influenced funding decisions in that HCPS is able to provide targeted and imbedded professional development and support for underperforming schools. In addition, ARRA funds have provided staffing as needed for intervention programs, including appropriate training for those teachers and paraprofessionals working outside of the regular school day programs (B/A programs, summer programs). In addition, professional development is provided for the additional staff at our Title I schools and within the special education department ensuring that we are able to address the specific identified student needs for Title I schools and for special education students in targeted schools. In order to increase the efficacy of teachers and address the achievement gap of our students with special needs, IDEA State-Pass-Through and Early Intervening funds allow for additional special education administrative support, math coaches, behavioral specialists as well as specific equipment designed to support classroom instruction for our students with special needs.

Review of 2009-2010 Goal Progress: Identified Successes and Challenges

Maryland School Assessments/High School Assessments

HCPS Successes

The Maryland School Assessment, a measure of student proficiency in Reading, Mathematics, and Science, was administered in the Spring, 2010, to students enrolled in grades 3 through 8. High school students were measured in these areas by three High School Assessment Tests: Algebra/Data Analysis, Biology, and English 10. In the Elementary grades, the per cent of students testing at Proficient or Advanced rose very slightly in 2010, to 90.1% (all students). For five of the eight sub-groups, proficiency levels in Reading remained steady or slightly increased. Proficiency rates for seven out of the eight reported sub-groups exceeded 80%, an all-time high. At the middle school, the overall Reading proficiency rate also increased slightly, to an all-time high of 87.5%, and three subgroups exceeded 90% proficiency—American Indian, Asian/Pacific Islander, and White students. Proficiency rates were generally stable for sub-groups. The highest growth rate occurred for special education students, whose proficiency increased by nearly four percentage points. In Mathematics, proficiency rates for both elementary and middle schools increased slightly in 2010. Elementary schools' overall math proficiency is approaching 90%, with Asian-Pacific Islander and White students already surpassing that rate. With the exception of special education students, every subgroup improved at least slightly this year in mathematics. At the middle school, proficiency rates for all but American Indian and Asian/Pacific Islander students increased as well. In Science, fifth graders (in the aggregate) achieved a proficiency rate of 75.7%, a three-point increase compared to 2009. In addition, proficiency increased by more than five points for American Indian, Asian/Pacific Islander, and African-American students. Special education students' proficiency rate remained about the same. In eighth grade, proficiency for students in the aggregate increased by two points, including a six-point increase for special education students.

Performance on the HSA Biology Test remained stable in 2009 for most groups, although special education students' proficiency declined. Relative to High School Assessment results, most students continue to pass most tests

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by the end of grade 10. In English, in 2009, nearly 80% of students in the aggregate had taken and passed the HAS by the end of grade 10: with the exception of special education and LEP students, more than half the students in each disaggregated group had taken and passed the test. In Algebra/Data Analysis, in 2009, 89 per cent of students in the aggregate had taken and passed the test by the end of grade 10, a number that rose to 92.8% by the end of grade 11. In Government, slightly more than 90% had passed by the end of grade 10 and 94% by the end of grade 11. In Biology, some 82% of tenth grade students in 2009 had passed the test by the end of grade 10 and 87.9% by the end of grade 11.

The MSA performance of Limited English Proficiency elementary and middle school students has remained constant or increased slightly at the same time that the number of LEP students served has increased. In Reading, for example, the proficiency rate of elementary school LEP students has increased by 8 per cent since 2007 at the same time as the size of the population has increased by more than 40 per cent. In middle school, there has been a nearly 13% increase in proficiency and a population increase of 57 per cent. Results in mathematics are similar, with annual proficiency rate increases since 2007 in reading and since 2008 in mathematics. In both subjects, proficiency rates for LEP students achieved their highest levels since testing began. Because of differences in the calculation of high school proficiency levels, the number of LEP students reported annually has been much smaller. Nonetheless, for high school mathematics (algebra/data analysis), the LEP proficiency rate in 2009 was nearly 93 per cent (an increase of nearly 30 points over 2008). Relative to progress towards attaining English Proficiency, of 369 students, 304 (82.6%) met the System AMAO 1 target for 2010. Compared to the minimum proficiency target for English language proficiency (System AMAO 2), which is 16%, Harford County's rate was 25.2%, with 119 of 472 students meeting the target.

For 2010, 27 of 32 elementary schools and four of nine middle schools achieved AYP. In 2009, 8 of 11 high schools also achieved AYP, along with one special placement school. HCPS staff are aware of the steady increases in the Annual Measurable Objectives as we move towards 2013-14, when NCLB "expects" all students to perform at proficient or better levels. Compared to 2004, when all HCPS elementary schools achieved AYP and AMO's for Math and Reading were less than 50%, by 2010, AMO's in Reading and Mathematics exceeded 80 per cent. The rapid increase in AMO's, particularly over the past few years, has been challenging, especially for traditionally underperforming groups. HCPS is pleased, however, to note significant improvements in the proficiency rates of these groups. For instance, in reading, the per cent of fifth grade special education students judged Proficient has increased by 26 points since 2004 and third graders' proficiency has increased by more than 10 points. In mathematics, the third grade special education proficiency rate has increased by 10 points, fourth graders by 20 points, and fifth graders by 16 points. In addition, between 2007 and 2009, special education students' rate of passing Algebra/Data Analysis has improved significantly, from 53.3% to 68.8%. In 2009-2010, the dropout rate for HCPS high school students declined for the fourth straight year, falling below the state standard of 3.00%. For students in the aggregate, the 2009-2010 figure of 2.13% was the lowest shown since 1993. In fact, only four subgroups' dropout rate exceeded the state standard in 2010. Looking at subgroups, the dropout rate for LEP students dropped from 9.8 in 2009 to 4.11 in 2010. The dropout rate for white, non-Hispanic students fell from 2.13 to 1.74%, the lowest ever. The percentage of students graduating from high school in 2009-2010 was the second-highest recorded since 2002 for students in the aggregate and exceeded the state standard. Asian/Pacific Island students and FaRMS students also recorded highest-ever graduation rates, and white students' rate of 89.92% was the highest since 2004-2005. It is encouraging that the per cent of students entering 12th grade who have not yet met the graduation requirement fell from 6.9% in 2009 to 6.3% in 2010. There was increasing use by students of the Bridge Project and the combined score option in meeting graduation requirements in 2010 compared to 2009.

Attendance in 2009-2010 for elementary and middle school students (in the aggregate) once again topped 95%, with high school students close behind at 93.1%. Only once since 2003 has high school attendance been that high. With the exception of FaRMS students in high school, every subgroup showed attendance rates above 90 per cent.

HCPS Challenges

Although all students are generally showing improvement on MSA Reading and Mathematics tests, schools are increasingly challenged to demonstrate Adequate Yearly Progress because of the rapid increase each year in the Annual Measurable Objectives. Compared to 2010, the AMOs will increase by five to seven per cent in reading and mathematics at each level. Special education students continually are challenged to achieve proficiency on MSA; in 2010, of the 14-odd schools that failed to achieve AYP, special education students failed to achieve the AMO in at least one subject. The proficiency rate in mathematics for special education students in middle school has continued to fall below 50 per cent. The school system is challenged to strengthen instruction and provide effective interventions to assist these students in meeting grade level standards in mathematics. Relative to high school assessment, HCPS remains concerned about discrepancies in student pass rates on the tests, particularly at the end of the 10th grade. For instance, the difference between African-American and "All" students in 10th grade pass rate on the Algebra/Data Analysis test was 17.5 points in 2010. By the end of 11th grade, that discrepancy was reduced to just less than 12

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points. However, the relatively high failure rate (21%) of the 10th grade African-American test takers served to reduce their course options in grade 11 because many required intervention and test preparation work. Similar pass rate discrepancies were noted in Biology (African-American, Special Education, and FaRMS students had 10th grade failure rates at least twice as high as White students), English, and, to a lesser extent, government. Relative to high school graduation and drop-out, in spite of overall progress on both indicators, some troubling subgroup trends and disparities remain. For instance, in 2010, the per cent of females dropping out of school increased dramatically from 1.72% to 2.48%, even though males' dropout rate declined (to around half the females'). Hispanic and special education students continued to show a relatively high drop-out rate compared to peers. Finally, regarding attendance, there is general comparability among all sub-groups and across levels although African-American, Hispanic, special education, and FaRMS high school students continue to attend school less consistently than other groups. The pattern of disparity has been generally consistent since 2003, and merits continuing monitoring.

Highly Qualified Teachers (HQT)

HCPS Successes

Harford County Public Schools had 94.9 percent of Core Academic Subject Classes (CAC) taught by Highly Qualified (HQ) teachers, our highest percentage to date. In addition, our Title I schools continue to have 100 percent HQ teachers for the CAC. HCPS is slowly closing the gap between the percentages of HQ teachers teaching core academic subject classes in low poverty schools as compared to high poverty schools. The percent of HQ teachers teaching these classes in high poverty schools has increased each year since 2005-06. At the elementary level, all CAC are taught by HQ teachers.

HCPS Challenges

A lower percentage of core academic subject classes are taught by experienced HQ teachers in our high poverty secondary schools as compared to the low poverty secondary schools, however we continue to make progress in this regard. HCPS continues to address the challenge of ensuring, to the extent possible, that all classes are taught by highly qualified teachers.

Safe Schools

HCPS Successes

- No HCPS school has been identified as persistently dangerous.
- No elementary schools were identified as having suspension rates exceeding the MSDE 2009-2010 identified limit of 10%.
- No HCPS school had a truancy rate that exceeded state standards.
- Content on bullying and harassment was updated and incorporated into the middle school and 9th grade Health classes.
- All HCPS staff received training and/or review regarding the topics of discrimination, harassment, bullying, and bias.
- HCPS students received information related to harassment policies and expectations at back-to-school orientation meetings.

HCPS Challenges

- Additional funding will be needed to create in-school alternative settings to ensure FAPE compliance for students with disabilities.
- Competing staff development priorities make it difficult to limit the amount of training time for behavior interventions.
- Funding streams will need to be created to support and expand program costs associated with PBIS and Safe and Drug Free Schools

Specific Student Groups

1. High School Programs/Career & Tech Ed

HCPS Successes

- HCPS completed the fourth full year of the Comprehensive Secondary School Reform program at the high school level and has refined the program for year five in 2010-11.
- Magnet programs in HCPS are expanding. Besides the existing Science and Mathematics Academy at Aberdeen High School, the International Baccalaureate Program at Edgewood High School, and the technical programs at Harford Technical High School, a new Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences Program was approved and opened in the fall of 2010 at North Harford High School.

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- Specialized Career and Technology Education programs at designated high schools are thriving as enrollment continues to increase. The Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness Program at Joppatowne High School completed its fourth year of implementation with its first graduating class in 2010. The Biomedical Sciences Program at Bel Air High School completed its third year of implementation and will have its first graduating class in 2011. Additionally, the CISCO Networking Academy at Joppatowne High Bridge to Excellence 2010 Annual School is in its 11th year and the Academy of Finance Program at Edgewood High School is in its 12th year.
- Other Career and Technology Education programs in the county are being updated and/or new ones developed to align with Maryland Career and Technology Education Programs of Study. These statewide model programs are designed to prepare high school students for the 21st Century's global economy and its rapidly changing workforce needs. Updated programs include Careers in Cosmetology, Automotive Technician, Graphic and Printing Communications, Finance and Accounting, Business Management, Administrative Service, Career Research and Development, Academy of Health Professions, and Food and Beverage Management (ProStart). New programs include the Teacher Academy of Maryland and Marketing.

HCPS Challenges

- Providing access to CTE programs to more students across the county.
- Developing new or upgrading existing CTE programs to address labor market needs, particularly those associated with the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) initiative
- Increasing CTE program offerings in the alternative high school to address identified student needs and increase achievement.

2. Early Learning

HCPS Successes

- The percentage of kindergarten students with previous pre-k experience who enter kindergarten 'fully ready' in the area of mathematical thinking has steadily increased each year since 2004-2005, reaching a high of 82% in 2009-10. The percentage of kindergarten students with previous pre-k experience who enter kindergarten 'fully ready' in the area of language and literacy reached 71% in 2009-10.
- HCPS successfully completed the first year of implementation of the newly adopted math and reading curriculum in kindergarten. HCPS just completed the first year of language arts assessment (Texas Primary Reading Inventory –TPRI) using technology tools for gathering data.
- The implementation of new reading and mathematics assessments at the kindergarten level is enabling teachers to use data to revise their instructional lessons to better meet the needs of their students.
- Continued communication with local early childhood providers has assisted with school readiness data for stable and increasing data.
- HCPS school readiness data increased significantly for the first year in all areas for minority populations.

HCPS Challenges

- Increasing numbers of children with diverse needs will entail an increase need for resources.
- As more children are identified for prekindergarten, a plan to increase classrooms should be addressed.

3. Gifted and Talented

HCPS Successes

- 92% of the elementary schools have implemented G&T Service Identification Committees and have established criteria to match students to services.
- All elementary schools now use cluster grouping and differentiated materials to meet the needs of gifted reading students.

HCPS Challenges

- While progress has been made, much work still remains in providing middle school gifted and talented students with consistent and rigorous services.

Cross-cutting Themes

1. Educational Technology

HCPS Successes

- Technology refresh program replaced 2365 computers.
- HCPS completed the installation of a mounted LCD projector in every classroom with the installation of 1119 units.

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- To increase student engagement, installations of interactive technologies to include 781 interactive whiteboards were implemented across 53 schools. Also, implemented were immediate feedback responders and document cameras.
- Conducted in excess of 6300 hours of technology literacy and integration professional development to over 1000 employees.
- Developed scope and sequence for technology integration into curriculum for grades 1-5.

HCPS Challenges

- Ubiquitous Access is restricted by limited computer lab access, amount of intervention programs consuming computer lab time, limited classroom space to setup additional workstations, limited budget, and limited support resources.
- The current resources of two full time 10-month technology coordinators and 'after-hours' technology liaisons are not sufficient to successfully meet the goals of the Technology and Master plans.
- Access to teachers to allow for job embedded professional development remains a challenge.
- Funding shortfalls to maintain existing implemented technologies; refresh technology funded by federal, state and local grants; and increase staff to meet the growing reporting demands.
- Aging technology infrastructure which cannot meet the growing demand of online and multi-media instructional resources.

2. Education That is Multicultural

HCPS Successes

- Over 300 students, comprised mostly of students from the at-risk and minority subgroups, participated in the 21st Century Community Learning Centers after-school program at five elementary schools.
- Approximately 700 students from at-risk populations (underachieving, lower socioeconomic, and minority males) were involved in the boys 2 Men mentoring and afterschool program.
- ETM infusion goals, learning styles, multiple intelligences and differentiated instruction are included in all newly written or revised curriculums.
- Five technicians provided tutoring and other academic support to identified students at two elementary and one middle school.
- Five permanent substitutes provided coverage for teachers receiving staff development, meeting with parents, and IEP meetings.
- Parent outreach provided at the annual Title I Conference and *Forty Developmental Assets* was shared with parents.
- A series of three Diversity Network meetings were held including community organization leaders, school personnel, students, and parents focusing on communication, barriers and partnership opportunities.
- A total of 186 new teachers completed the ETM course requirements in 2009-2010.
- A total of 121 new support staff (including bus drivers, food and nutrition workers, custodians, clerical and instructional employees) received training in cultural proficiency in 2009/2010.
- A committee was established and developed a strategic plan to address the recommendations of the MSDE Task Force on the Achievement of African American Males.
- Fourteen teachers and administrators attended the state NAME (National Association for Multicultural Education) Conference focusing on strategies to eliminate the achievement gaps.

HCPS Challenges

- Eliminating the achievement gaps for all students.
- Increasing academic support for targeted schools to make AYP.
- Increasing effectiveness and efficiency of business partners.
- Increasing the graduation rate for all students.

Master Plan Goals

Goal 1. Ensure a safe, positive learning environment for students and staff in our schools.

The Board of Education of Harford County recognizes that the quality and adequacy of the facilities housing the school system's staff and students contribute in significant ways to the life - safety aspects of educating youth, and to the effective delivery of all instructional programs. Well-maintained facilities, structured in ways to promote the integration of modern programs, require carefully planned and executed designs, capacities, and procedures. Research suggests that modern well-maintained buildings and supporting services contribute to how well instruction is presented and how much students learn.

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Current practices which are ongoing in the area of learning environment and which support this goal include implementation and administration of such local strategic documents as the Safety and Security Action Plan, the Comprehensive Maintenance Plan, and the Capital Improvements Program. These local plans, updated annually, provide system wide and comprehensive views of new and ongoing needs relative to these major areas of school system operations. These plans are available for review through the Harford County Public Schools System's Office of Communications.

The following HCPS Board of Education (BOE) 2010 Strategic Plan goals have significant alignment to the original HCPS Master Plan Goal:

- Goal 1: Every child feels comfortable going to school.
- Goal 2: Every child achieves personal and academic growth.
- Goal 3: Every child benefits from accountable adults.
- Goal 4: Every child connects with great employees.

Alignment

The portion of the Elementary and Secondary Education No Child Left Behind Act which aligns to Board Goal 1 is as follows:

ESEA Performance Goal 4. All students will be educated in learning environments that are safe, drug free, and conducive to learning.

ESEA Performance Indicator:

- The number of persistently dangerous schools as defined by the state.

Outcome Goals:

1. Ensure a positive school climate.
Operational Objectives:
 - a) Ensure a positive school climate that will foster an environment wherein teachers can teach and students can learn.
 - b) Provide ongoing support activities and programs for students to supplement the curriculum, and encourage students to become actively involved in school/community projects to combat drug abuse.
 - c) Eliminate harassment and discrimination in the school environment.
 - d) Respect and appreciate diversity in the Harford County Public School System's work and school environment.
 - e) Provide all students with services and programs to support their physical, personal, social, and emotional development.
2. Establish safe and secure school buildings.
Operational Objectives:
 - a. Establish clear expectations for safe and secure school buildings to maximize student learning.
 - b. Ensure that employees are trained and programs are developed so that all aspects of food safety are implemented.
 - c. Reduce risk exposures and losses.
3. Modernize and renovate school facilities/physical plants.
Operational Objectives:
 - a) Develop a Capital Improvements Program to balance enrollments with capacities in overcrowded schools.
 - b) Develop a Capital Improvements Program to modernize and renovate school facilities to ensure a state-of-the-art learning environment for all students.
 - c) Develop and implement a Comprehensive Maintenance Plan to ensure maintenance of buildings and facilities.

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Goal 2. Accelerate student learning and eliminate the achievement gaps.

The Board of Education of Harford County recognizes that, while the establishment of student achievement standards at the national or state level for local public school systems might be viewed as establishing ceilings for student performance, the Harford County Public School System has long been vested in programs to move all students to high levels. The Board of Education of Harford County supports not only raising the achievement of all students to federal and state standards and beyond, but, also maximizing the opportunity for all students, including those who are challenged or disadvantaged in any regard.

Current practices that are ongoing pertaining to student achievement which support Board Goal 2 and include the local School Improvement Planning processes, the design of local curriculum and assessment in alignment with state and national content and performance standards, the development and implementation of such strategic plans as the Education That Is Multicultural five-year plan, the Instructional Technology long-range plan, and the Safety and Security plan. Additional ongoing initiatives include: Character Education and Student Service Learning curriculum-embedded strategies, implementation of the Gifted Education guidelines, and strategies to address Class Size, Prekindergarten, Full Day Kindergarten, student performance on the PSAT/SAT, and Middle School Intervention.

Alignment

Board Goal 2 is aligned with significant portions of the Bridge to Excellence legislation and the Visionary Panel for Better Schools report. The strategies linked to the outcome goals and operational objectives for HCPS Board Goal 2 are updated annually.

The following HCPS 2010 BOE Strategic Plan goals have some alignment to the original HCPS Master Plan Goal 2 outcome goals and operational objectives:

- Goal 2: Every child achieves personal and academic growth.
- Goal 3: Every child benefits from accountable adults.
- Goal 4: Every child connects with great employees.

The following Elementary and Secondary Education Act goals are included within Goal 2 of the Harford County Public School system:

ESEA Goal 1: By 2013- 2014. all students will reach high standards. At a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and mathematics.

ESEA Goal 2: All limited English proficient students will become proficient in English and reach high academic standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and mathematics.

ESEA Goal 5: All students will graduate from high school.

Objectives: The following Harford County Public School System Objectives for Fiscal Year 2009 address identified needs in the school system pertaining to Board Goal 2:

Outcome Goals:

1. Eliminate the achievement gaps.

Operational Objectives:

- a. The Harford County Public School system and each school and each subgroup therein will make adequate yearly progress toward meeting federal standards.
 - b. Design and implement programs and initiate strategies to support the elimination of the achievement gap for students who are economically disadvantaged, with disabilities, from major racial and ethnic groups, and with LEP.
2. Ensure academic rigor and challenging course work for all students.
Operational Objectives:
 - a. Align curriculum, instruction, and assessment with Maryland Content Standards and the Voluntary State Curriculum, to ensure academic rigor for all students.
 - b. Design and implement program evaluation models and procedures to assess instructional and program strengths and to determine guidelines for revising, refining, or removing programs.
 - c. Align the existing organizational structure to more effectively and efficiently deliver services to schools to support student achievement.
 - d. Develop the technical competencies of all secondary students.

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- e. Provide challenging course work, comprehensive completer programs, and rigorous academic requirements for all secondary students.
 - f. Enhance the post-high school preparation of all secondary students.
3. Increase parent and community involvement to support student achievement.
- Operational Objectives:
- a. Introduce School Improvement Teams to the integrated management process, Classroom Learning System (CLS), for continuously improving student achievement.

Goal 3: Ensure the effective use of all resources focusing on the areas of technology, fiscal and budgetary management, and community partnerships.

In order to move maximum funding to achievement of the school system's critical mission, the Board of Education of Harford County believes that it is important to know in a business sense that the school system is operating at peak performance. To ensure efficient and effective utilization of resources, excellent fiscal management is critical, as are technological and administrative supports within the system.

The Board of Education of Harford County recognizes further that the significant contributions of parents and families in support of student academic achievement are essential to the desired long-term outcome of students. Partnerships with parents are further enhanced through numerous rich and rewarding associations with businesses, colleges and universities, government, civic and other volunteer organizations.

Board Goal 3 is aligned with significant portions of the Bridge to Excellence legislation and the Visionary Panel for Better School report.

The following HCPS Board of Education (BOE) 2009 Strategic Plan goals have some alignment to the original HCPS Master Plan Goal 3 outcomes goals an operational objectives.

- Goal 1: Every child feels comfortable going to school.
- Goal 2: Every child achieves personal and academic growth.
- Goal 3: Every child benefits from accountable adults.
- Goal 4: Every child connects with great employees.
- Goal 5: Every child graduates ready to succeed.

The strategies outlined in Goal 3 describe the support and assistance provided by the system to ensure the successful implementation of the five ESEA goals.

Outcome Goals:

Operational Objectives:

1. Make effective and efficient use of technology at all levels of HCPS.
 - a. Improve Student learning through technology.
 - b. Improve staff's knowledge and skills to integrate technology into instruction.
 - c. Improve decision making, productivity, and efficiency at all levels of the organization through the use of technology.
 - d. Improve equitable access to appropriate technologies among all stakeholders.
 - e. Improve the instructional uses of technology through research and evaluation.
2. Provide effective administration and fiscal management of resources.

Operational Objectives:

 - a. Enhance the fiscal credibility of the school system with the local Board, County and State authorities, and local taxpayers.
3. Maximize communication with all stakeholders.

Operational Objectives:

 - a. Provide the public with information on the successes of HCPS students, staff, programs, and schools.
 - b. Reach an ever-widening internal and external audience through internet and intranet web sites.

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- c. Expand relationships and collaborations within HCPS and the business community necessary to achieve meaningful academic partnerships.
- d. Promote meaningful involvement of family members in the educational process.
- e. Communicate internally to increase effective utilization of partnership activities as a viable curricular component.
- f. Seek opportunities for community engagement.

Goal 4: Understanding that all employees contribute to the learning environment, we will maintain a highly qualified workforce.

The Board of Education of Harford County recognizes the power of highly skilled employees in every position in the school system towards maximizing student achievement. The role of teachers is critical. Forty percent of what students gain in public education comes directly from the teacher. It is the responsibility of the school system to recruit, hire, and retain the best teachers available, and to provide all staff with high quality job-embedded professional development.

Current practices that are ongoing in the area of maintaining a highly-qualified workforce include the administration of employees' health benefits programs, the certification of professional staff, programs, employee negotiations processes, and employee compliance issues, such as the administration of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Family Medical Leave. Additional ongoing functions include employee internal investigations and criminal background checks; system wide substitute teacher's calling system, No Child Left Behind compliance reporting, annual staff reporting, and employee retirement coordination.

Alignment:

Board Goal 4 is aligned with significant portions of the Bridge to Excellence legislation and the Visionary Panel for Better Schools report. The following Elementary and Secondary Education Act goals are included within Goal 4 of the Harford County Public School System:

ESEA Goal 3. By 2005-2006, all students will be taught by "highly qualified staff."

ESEA Performance Indicators:

- The percentage of classes being taught by "highly qualified" teachers in the aggregate and in "high-poverty" schools.
- The percentage of teachers receiving "high quality professional development".
- The percentage of paraprofessionals (excluding those with sole duties as translators and parental involvement assistants) who are qualified.

The following HCPS 10 BOE Strategic Plan goals are aligned to the original HCPS Master Plan Goal 4 outcome goals and operational objectives:

- Goal 3: Every child benefits from accountable adults.
- Goal 4: Every child connects with great employees.

Objectives: The following Harford County Public School System Objectives for Fiscal Year 2010 address identified needs in the school system pertaining to Board Goal 4:

Outcome Goals:

1. Ensure recruitment and retention of highly qualified employees at all levels of HCPS in line with state and federal mandates.
Operational Objectives:
 - a. Increase the pool of qualified applicants for the Harford County Public School System.
 - b. Maintain a high rate of job acceptance among qualified candidates.
 - c. Maintain a high rate of employee retention.
 - d. Maintain a salary schedule that allows the system to be competitive with surrounding school system's relevant labor market in order to recruit and retain African-American employees.
2. Utilizing the Affirmative Action Plan, recruit and retain African-American employees at all levels of HCPS.
Operational Objectives:
 - a. Improve the recruitment of African-American education candidates through a variety of strategies.

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3. Design and implement programs to train a highly qualified workforce.
 - a. Introduce instructional and supervisory staff to the Classroom Learning System, integrated management process as a means to enhance continuous improvement in student learning.
 - b. Increase among all employees an understanding of diversity and cross proficiency.
 - c. Design and implement a staff development program to provide high-quality professional development opportunities for all teachers, supervisors, and administrators.