

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**NOVEMBER 16, 2021**

## **THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND TWO EMPLOYEE UNIONS JOINTLY ANNOUNCE AGREEMENTS HAVE BEEN REACHED FOR SALARY INCREASES**

On November 12, 2021, the Board of Education of Harford County (the Board) reached agreements with both the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) and the Harford County Education Association Education Support Professionals (HCEA-ESP) related to compensation for specific Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) employees the two unions represent.

During the Board business meeting held on November 15, 2021, the Board ratified the Memorandums of Understanding (MOU).

### **The Board and AFSCME Agreement**

The Board and AFSCME have agreed that HCPS will provide a one-time eight percent (8%) market adjustment to the Bus Driver, Bus Attendants, and Food & Nutrition salary scales effective December 26, 2021, that will be reflected in the January 7, 2022, payroll payment.

This MOU does not affect the scheduled negotiations set to begin December of 2021 for the FY23 contract year.

### **The Board and HCEA-ESP Association Agreement**

The Board and the Association agree that HCPS will accelerate the previously negotiated salary increases as a market adjustment for paraprofessionals, inclusion helpers, and specified technicians. The negotiated seven percent (7%) increase for July 1, 2022, and seven percent (7%) increase for July of 2023, will be provided to these job classes as follows:

- An eight percent (8%) increase to all salary steps effective December 26, 2021, to be reflected in the January 7, 2022, payroll, and
- A six percent (6%) increase to all salary steps effective July 1, 2022.

This MOU does not preclude any future FY22 and FY23 negotiations regarding compensation or language items.

During a joint press conference held today, November 16, 2021, between the school system and Harford County, the two MOUs were ceremoniously signed into effect by Ms. Sharon Moxley, President of AFSCME, and Ms. Chrystie Crawford-Smick, President of HCEA-ESP. In addition to school system and Harford County leaders, others present at the announcement included: Mr. Steve Nelson, owner of Nelson Bus Company and President of the Harford County Bus Contractor's Association; Mr. Jay Edwards, Owner of J. Edwards Transportation and Vice President of the Harford County Bus Contractor's Association; Mr. Joseph Baker, Bel Air

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Middle School Production Center Assistant and Maryland School Nutrition Association 2021 Employee of the Year; and Ms. Janet Fagans, Edgewood Elementary School Satellite Kitchen Assistant.

Harford's Superintendent of Schools Sean W. Bulson, Ed. D. shared, "These agreements are a step forward by offering an incentive to retain and attract employees who provide critical services to our students, including reliable transportation to school, extra support in the classroom, and meals."

In addition, Harford County Executive Barry Glassman announced a \$2,000 retention payment for all school bus drivers, bus attendants, and food service workers. The one-time payment will apply to school system and bus contractor employees, and it will also serve as a signing bonus to help fill vacancies. The total payment of \$2.3 million is over and above the Glassman administration's full funding of the school board's operating request for the fiscal year 2022. Funds will come from Harford County government's portion of the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant.

"Like our fellow 'Big 8' counties in Maryland, Harford is facing worker shortages in these areas," County Executive Glassman said. "This funding will help recruit and retain the dedicated staff of bus drivers, attendants and food service workers who take care of our children in school."

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