



Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 21, 2023

Board of Education of Harford County Public Schools Announces Final FY24 Budget

Board of Education reconciles FY24 budget requests to FY24 budget funding

Following the Harford County Council approval of the County Executive's proposed fiscal year 2024 (FY24) Harford County Budget on Tuesday, June 13, 2023, the Board of Education (Board) of Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) met Tuesday, June 20, 2023, to reconcile the FY24 HCPS budget prior to the July 1, 2023, deadline.

The Board was faced with reconciling a deficit of approximately \$9.3 million in local funding. The Board is pleased to share that the wage package for staff remains intact. Staff who wish to remain employed by HCPS will be able to do so. This was possible through multiple actions. The Board increased the amount of funds to be used from the HCPS fund balance by \$10 million, bringing total use of fund balance to \$15 million. The Board also cut items that were introduced in the FY24 HCPS proposed operating budget from the final budget. Cuts to these "new" items allow the Board to ensure there are no direct cuts to services for students. However, the impact of not including these positions and supports in the FY24 operating budget is anticipated to have long-term impacts on the school system.

Positions that were removed from the FY24 budget include, but are not limited to facilities, technology, human resources, business services, and school safety positions. Teaching positions removed from the proposed FY24 budget were previously funded through grants. For the FY24 budget, these positions have been moved back to appropriate grants for FY24 funding. This allows the Board to keep these teacher positions, without funding them through the operating budget for one more year. While the community may see reductions in certain schools' positions, that is part of the annual process to properly align enrollment with staffing needs. No other teaching positions have been cut.

In addition to adjusting funds within grants and eliminating requests for new positions, the Board approved eliminating budget item requests. Some of these items were moved back to grants for an additional year. These include software subscriptions and additional substitute costs. Requests for departmental inflationary increases were also removed from the budget. This is of particular importance to our facilities and transportation departments where rising costs continue to challenge our budget.

"We are fortunate that we can balance the budget and minimize the impact on our students and staff. However, we know the implications and how future budgets will feel the repercussions of not receiving full funding this year. I implore our community to continue educating themselves on the costs associated with the state mandated Blueprint. I encourage our families to understand how education has changed and what that means in terms of budgeting for resources that are key to our students personal and educational success," said Board President Dr. Carol Mueller.

"The Board of Education was faced with a herculean task. It is never easy to refuse school staff the funding for a request. We know that anything staff ask for is to support our students. Our students' futures and the future of the school system are at stake each time we discuss the budget. Please continue to advocate for our students at the local and state level. Your involvement is key to ensuring Harford County

Public Schools continues to be the exemplary education system and workplace our staff have created,” said Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Sean Bulson.

Budget documents and all versions of the FY24 budget, including the Superintendent’s recommended budget and the Board of Education’s recommended budget are available on the Board Budget webpage, <https://www.hcps.org/Boe/budget.aspx>. The final, reconciled FY24 HCPS operating budget will be available on the budget webpage as soon as possible once FY23 actual results can be incorporated into the document. We anticipate that will occur this summer.

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