



NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Felix Facchine, 410-313-2001

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Councilmembers Mercer Rigby, Jones, and Jung Call on Howard County Public School System to Develop Integration Plan

Ellicott City, MD (August 13, 2019) – Howard County Councilmembers Christiana Mercer Rigby, Dr. Opel Jones, and Deb Jung will introduce a council resolution in September calling on the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) to develop a county-wide integration plan to desegregate its schools. Currently, school district boundaries in Howard County are drawn in a manner that concentrate students participating in the Free and Reduced Meals program (FARMS) into certain elementary, middle, and high schools.

This socioeconomic and racial segregation in the school system is contributing to increasing achievement gaps and decreasing graduation rates for low-income students and students of color. Historic systems have created these achievements gaps and it is incumbent on the County to introduce new systems that foster necessary change.

"I'm extremely proud of this resolution because it recognizes the past and promotes a fair and balanced future for our Howard County Public School System students," said Dr. Jones. "We are working together to resolve the problematic and systematic inconsistencies that lower-income students face every day. This resolution helps to enhance, promote, and encourage a unified and socioeconomic blended education system for all."

"While we often claim to prioritize diversity and inclusion in Howard County, our school districts do not reflect the values of integration and community that we have built our county on," said Councilwoman Mercer Rigby. "For decades, Howard County public schools have become increasingly segregated by race and socioeconomic status. Redistricting is a civil rights issue here in Howard County, and it's time to take meaningful strides toward integration in our education system."

In the last three years alone, graduation rates for students participating in the FARM program have dropped from 83% to 78%, which is 17% lower than the graduation rates for non-FARM students. During the same time frame, FARM program students have become increasingly concentrated in the same elementary, middle, and high schools in Howard County. These disparities in student outcomes can be found in the Howard County Public School System's [2019 Feasibility Study](#) and [2019 Equity Report](#) presented to the Board of Education.

"As Chair of the Howard County Board of Education, capable of casting only one vote, I support this resolution that focuses on the socioeconomic and racial desegregation of Howard County Public Schools," said Mavis Ellis. "Many have called for equity, and it's the Board of Education's hard decisions that will make equity happen for all students in Howard County."

"There's a strength in diversity that benefits our community. Legislation and resolutions alone cannot solve socioeconomic challenges or promote true racial integration; however, they can provide platforms that allow us to correct past errors," said Candace Dodson-Reed, founder of the African American Community Roundtable of Howard County and education advocate. "I applaud Councilwoman Mercer Rigby's and Councilman Jones'

leadership and effort as they work with the community to ensure that each child in our public school system has everything they need to be successful.”

“Let’s reclaim Columbia’s dream of equal opportunity for all by rebalancing the socioeconomic and racial profiles of Howard County’s public schools,” said Councilwoman Jung. “We know what we have to do, and we know the time is now.”

Numerous academic studies indicate that diverse, integrated classrooms lead to better academic outcomes for all students, while increased segregation leads to greater achievement gaps for low-income students and students of color. While the school system undergoes its School Boundary Review Process, Councilmembers Mercer Rigby, Jones, and Jung call on HCPSS to comprehensively address the socioeconomic and racial segregation in Howard County Public Schools through a meaningful redistricting process.

The proposed resolution will be pre-filed on August 23, 2019 and will be introduced at the Council’s legislative session on Tuesday, September 3, 2019. Testimony will be accepted at the legislative public hearing on Monday, September 16, 2019. To sign up to testify, visit <https://apps.howardcountymd.gov/otestimony/>. If you would like to submit your testimony electronically, email councilmail@howardcountymd.gov.

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NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL

PTA Council of HoCo is re-affirming its position among the delegates

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Councilmembers Mercer Rigby and Jung to Introduce Legislation Raising the School Facilities Surcharge on Developers

Ellicott City, MD (August 23, 2019) – Howard County Councilmembers Christiana Mercer Rigby and Deb Jung will introduce legislation in September that would raise the School Facilities Surcharge on newly-constructed residential units in Howard County. This authority was enabled by the Maryland General Assembly earlier this year through legislation introduced by Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary.

"Looking to the future, our public infrastructure projects must be adequately funded in Howard County," said Mercer Rigby. "We are taking the opportunity to raise the School Facilities Surcharge, bringing Howard County in line with neighboring jurisdictions and funding school construction at the level we need."

"We need to use every means available to fund school construction," said Jung. "Howard County has had one of the fastest growing school systems in the state for the past 10 years, and there is an anticipated shortfall of tens of millions of dollars in capital funding every year. An increase in the School Facilities Surcharge will help fill that gap and provide relief for our overcrowding crisis."

In Howard County, developers are currently charged \$1.32/square foot of occupiable area in new residential construction. While this fee has contributed to school construction funds in our county for 15 years, Howard County's school impact fees are significantly lower than neighboring jurisdictions, including Anne Arundel, Montgomery, and Frederick counties.

Mercer Rigby and Jung's legislation will increase the School Facilities Surcharge from its current rate of \$1.32/square foot to a new rate of \$6.80/square foot. This increase is expected to raise over \$150 million in new funding for school construction, renovation, and maintenance over the next 10 years. The proposed increase is based on a market-rate analysis of neighboring jurisdictions, as well as the projected capital funding needs of the Howard County Public School System.

"As an educator I understand the importance of a robust education system. I believe this legislation is a necessity for all of Howard County; addressing the increasing problem with overcrowding, deferred school maintenance, and strengthening continuous residential development would increase the school facilities assessed surcharge," said Dr. Jones. "Moreover, this legislation will provide sufficient assistance to stabilize, enhance, and promote our nationally ranked schools."

"It's time for developers to pay their fair share for public facilities, including new seats in schools," said Walsh. "I thank my colleagues Chair Mercer Rigby and Council Member Jung for their work on this long-overdue legislation."

As Howard County continues to experience increases in student enrollment each year, these additional capital dollars will address a much-needed deficit in school construction and renovation funding. This legislation will be co-sponsored by Councilmembers Dr. Opel Jones and Liz Walsh.

The proposed legislation was pre-filed on August 23, 2019 and will be introduced at the Council's legislative session on Tuesday, September 3, 2019. Testimony will be accepted at the legislative public hearing on Monday, September 16, 2019. Howard County residents can sign up to testify after September 3 by visiting <https://apps.howardcountymd.gov/otestimony/>. If you would like to submit your testimony electronically, please email councilmail@howardcountymd.gov.

- may be moved to 18th

To read the legislation, visit <https://cc.howardcountymd.gov/Legislation>

2:00 PM that day to sign up for Testimony

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(410) 313-2001 fax: (410) 313-3297
<http://cc.howardcountymd.gov>

Howard County SECAC



Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee

SEP 2
504

- Meeting dates**
September 11, 2019
October 7, 2019
November 13, 2019
December 11, 2019
End of the Year Social Event
January 8, 2020
February 12, 2020
2nd Annual Advocate Night
March 11, 2020
April 15, 2020
SECAC Awards planning.
May 13, 2020
June 10, 2020

Topics

- Post-high school education for students with disabilities with Think College.
- Bullying in HCPSS
- Special Education Town Hall with HCPSS Supt Dr. Martirano.
- HCPSS policies for restraint and seclusion.
- Results from the 2018-2019 Parent Engagement Survey.
- COPAA Training
- Decoding Dyslexia

- Who we are: Parents & Educators
- What we do: Under state law, our committee advises the school system on the needs of students with disabilities.
- Where we meet: Wilde Lake Middle School, 10481 Cross Fox Ln, Columbia, MD 21044 (in the cafeteria)
- When we meet: Generally, the 2nd Wednesday of the month from 7-9pm. (The October meeting will be Monday 10/7 due to the school closing on 10/9).
- Anyone involved in Special Education in Howard County is invited to attend and participate in our meetings including parents, students, caregivers, educators, community partners, service providers and school administrators. We welcome your contribution and meaningful input.
- We host HCPSS and community members to discuss specific special education topics.
- We sponsor events to help inform parents, caregivers, and staff.
- We serve on work groups and represent special education on policy committees for the school system.

For more information contact SECACChair@gmail.com
www.howardcountysecac.com



Ho Co SECAC



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This flyer is available in the following languages: Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Tegulu and Urdu.