

PTA Waverly Elementary School

General Membership Meeting

~~February 10 6:30pm~~ **Cancelled due to HCPSS closure**

VIRTUAL via Google Meet

Meeting Agenda

Update from Jennifer Bagdasarian (President)

- PTA has sponsored Valentine's Day craft and cookies for all students

Update from Heather DePriest (Treasurer)

Savings \$20198.59

Checking \$29265.61

Update from Amy Crouch/Erin Miller (VP Fundraising)

- Oscars Restaurant Night: Sunday 2/23 all day

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Backpack Buddies Update—Thank you for sending in your food drive items during conferences!

Yearbook--Yearbook cover competition-Submissions due March 7 to Homeroom teachers.

Please email WAVESYearbook@gmail.com with questions.

Teacher Appreciation Week-Please email wavespta@gmail.com if you are interested in helping plan and spoil our amazing teachers!! Teacher Appreciation Week is May 5-9

5th Grade Committee—Please email wavespta@gmail.com if you are interested in helping to plan the 5th grade end of year activities (Simulated Congressional Hearing, 5th Grade Pool party, 5th Grade celebrations etc.)

SECAC Meeting Summary – Yi Han

1. Presentations:

- **Extended School Year (ESY) Services:** The Department of Special Education presented on ESY services.
- **Capital Budget & Special Education Needs:** The HCPSS Planning Office (Capital Budget Team) sought parental input on special education needs and student safety.

2. Capital Budget Priorities:

- A **priority survey** is available for input: [Survey Link](#).

- Advocacy efforts for capital budget proposals typically begin at the PTA level; early engagement is encouraged.
- 3. **HCPSS FY26 Budget Advocacy:**
 - Testimonies were provided at the **FY26 budget public hearings** (Jan 30 & Feb 10). Key topics:
 - **Special education staff shortages**
 - **Teacher compensation** (cost-of-living salaries, long-term contracts, paraeducator pay)
 - **Funding for FTE high school athletic trainers**
 - **Middle school security staffing concerns (33 FTE positions)**
 - Testimony on special education is available upon request.
- 4. **Upcoming Budget Discussions:**
 - Two **Board of Education working sessions** will be held before the revised FY26 HCPSS budget is available online.
 - Howard County **FY26 budget hearings** begin in April: [Budget Calendar](#).
 - Collaboration with **HCEA, BOE, AUSOM, and SECAC** continues to advocate for equitable school funding.
- 5. **County Budget Insights:**
 - Howard County's **FY24 Financial Audit** revealed:
 - Revenues were **underestimated by \$58.4M**; expenditures were **overestimated by \$24.7M**.
 - The county earned **\$43.2M in investment interest**, exceeding projections by **\$39M**.
 - The **Spending Affordability Advisory Committee** has historically underestimated revenues and overestimated expenses.

For those interested in advocacy or providing testimony, additional budget resources and talking points are available.

Talking Points by Topic

Topic: Valuing the work of all educators and staff at every stage of their career	Topic: Investing in educators who work in areas of critical need.	Topic: Addresses the high rate of vacancies and heavy workloads
Testimony Points <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Howard County competes with Baltimore, Carroll, Montgomery, and Anne Arundel counties for a 	Testimony Points <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are facing a critical shortage of special education teachers, paraeducators, and student 	Testimony Points <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacancies and increased class sizes have meant higher workloads for everyone.

shrinking pool of new educators, which means we have to offer higher starting salaries. Montgomery just agreed to a 2-year, 3.25% agreement with their educators. HCPSS, the #1 school system in Maryland, can do better.

- But hiring new educators alone won't be enough to address the teacher shortage. We also have to keep educators who are most likely to leave within the first 7 years, and retain veteran educators so that they will stay and mentor the next generation.
- Support professionals work in some of the most challenging roles in our schools, but continue to be the lowest paid. Meanwhile, the cost of living in Howard County is one of the highest in the State.

assistants, and it is impossible for the current staffing levels to deliver all of the services our students need.

- The high vacancy rate means that some classrooms have no permanent teacher at all. Although special educators comprise 10% of HCEA's bargaining unit, they are 50% of all vacancies. In 2023, they comprised 41% of all resignations within the first year.
- Before we add new positions to the budget, we must do everything we can to stabilize the workforce, support new special educators and fill existing vacancies.

- Staff are constantly working beyond their own jobs to cover for vacancies and long term absences, which is leading to increased stress among our members.
- Likewise, caseloads for school counselors and related service providers continue to rise.

<p>What we're asking for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A budget increases compensation for all educators from the top to the bottom of the scale with no changes to benefits. • A budget that lifts up support professionals to a living wage. 	<p>What we're asking for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A budget for HCPSS that allows for differentiated compensation for staff who serve students with disabilities. • Increasingly, these factors are a contributing factor in resignations and retirements. 	<p>What we're asking for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for proposed new positions for School Counselors, Psychologists, and Support Personnel
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<p>Topic: Lowering, not increasing class size</p>	<p>Topic: Protecting our schools from program cuts and from federal cuts that serve low-income families and kids with disabilities</p>	<p>Topic: addresses the mental health needs of our students</p>
<p>Testimony Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class sizes have continued to creep up in Howard County Schools, with some classes ballooning beyond 34 students. • Additionally, many of the smaller elective classes at high school level have been cut altogether, which means students won't have the experience of learning in a 	<p>Testimony Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The incoming federal administration and congress have threatened to take away funding from agencies and programs that support low income families and kids with disabilities. • Elimination or impoundment of these funds would be devastating to Howard County kids with 	<p>Testimony Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our community was rocked by concerns over school safety after a loaded handgun was found in a student's backpack at Howard High School. • Instead of investing in questionable technology and artificial intelligence to detect weapons, we should be investing in mental health

<p>smaller environment at the secondary level.</p>	<p>disabilities, and kids from low income families. Howard County should set the example for our</p>	<p>resources for our kids.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caseloads for school counselors are double the level recommended by the American School Counselors Association. What if we made sure every student could see a counselor when they needed one?
<p>What we're asking for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need a budget that allows HCPSS to meet its obligations without increasing class size. 	<p>What we're asking for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The County should maintain existing service levels in the event of a decrease or impoundment of federal funding. 	<p>What we're asking for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase funding for school counselors and support staff.