



# Howard County Council

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December 21, 2016

Howard County Public School System  
10910 Clarksville Pike  
Ellicott City, MD 21042

Dear Dr. Foose and Esteemed Members of the Board of Education:

Thank you for your attendance at our Stand Up, Speak Up Howard event! As you heard, there is a great deal of work to be done. We commend the Howard County Public School System's (HCPSS) commitment to the success of every student in every school. We know we can agree that part of this commitment requires attention to the physical safety and emotional well-being of all children in HCPSS by ensuring that schools are safe, nurturing, and inviting for all students and their families. As one of our speaker's from last night's community conversation so eloquently said, "We must re-ignite the flame of hope."

We commend HCPSS for its commitment to providing quality education to children in Howard County regardless of citizenship or immigration status. You serve as a beacon of hope providing a pathway to their academic success. Considering the recent national political climate, increased incidents of hate speech and violence, and unfortunate statements made by our nation's President-elect, we encourage you to proactively reaffirm this commitment and communicate it clearly to HCPSS students and their families and to the entire Howard County community.

With the impending uncertainty of the incoming federal administration, we believe our students' school environment should remain a sanctuary and would be harmed by the presence of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents seeking to gain access to school property in an effort to remove students or their family members or to obtain information about a student's immigration status or that of their family.

During our event and afterward, we heard from numerous students, parents, and educators about their concerns regarding diversity, inclusion, and safety. At a time when many residents of Howard County, including HCPSS students and their families, fear for their personal safety and the loss of civil liberties, HCPSS's policies and procedures to protect vulnerable students become more important than ever and may be tested under the incoming federal administration.

Last night, we had a unique opportunity to hear from several students, both legal and undocumented. They shared how they have been victims of hate crimes, bullying and more. We cannot and should not tolerate this action. They are entrusting us as elected officials and community leaders with their future and have put out a call to action. We believe this requires all of us to collaborate to achieve our mutual goals, and our work together must begin immediately.

We emphatically believe we must make immediate progress on filling the Diversity Coordinator position, remain proactive by providing cultural proficiency training for HCPSS so that all of our educators are equipped to handle and address incidents as they arise, promote more diversity in AP classes, institute more restorative practices, initiate discrimination policy reform, promote diversity at all levels of HCPSS staff through recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion practices, and review HCPSS curriculum to ensure it reflects the diversity of our County, State, and nation. There are other potential practices related to becoming a sanctuary school system, which you may want to explore that would foster a safe and comfortable environment for all of our students.

If you have not already done so, we respectfully request that HCPSS review and update its policies and procedures as needed. Additionally, please consider accompanying training for all school system personnel to include the following best practices:

- HCPSS personnel shall not treat students differently for residency determination purposes on the basis of their actual or perceived immigration status and shall treat all students equitably in the receipt of all school services, including but, not limited to, the free and reduced lunch program, transportation and educational instruction.
- HCPSS personnel shall review the list of documents that are currently used to establish residency and shall ensure that any required documents would not unlawfully bar or discourage a student who is undocumented or whose parents are undocumented from enrolling in or attending school.
- HCPSS personnel shall not inquire about a student's immigration status, including requiring documentation of a student's legal status, such as asking for a green card or citizenship papers, at initial registration or at any other time.
- HCPSS personnel shall not make unreasonable inquiries from a student or parents for the purpose of exposing the immigration status of the student or the student's family.
- HCPSS personnel shall not require students to apply for Social Security numbers nor should HCPSS require students to supply a Social Security number.
- If parents and/or students have questions about their immigration status, HCPSS personnel shall not refer them to ICE but should instead refer them to community-

based and legal organizations that provide resources for immigrant families and families facing deportation, such as FIRN.

- Because it is the general policy of the HCPSS not to allow any individual or organization to enter a school site if the educational setting would be disrupted by that visit, any request by ICE to enter a school site must be forwarded to the Superintendent's Office for review as to whether access to the site is permitted by law, a judicial warrant is required, or any other legal considerations apply.
- All requests for information or documents by ICE should be forwarded to the Superintendent, who in consultation with legal counsel, shall determine if the information and/or documents can be released to ICE.
- HCPSS personnel should be trained and prepared to address the needs of students who have lost their parents or other caregivers as the result deportation or detention.

Thank you for your careful consideration and prompt action on this compelling matter of serious importance to our Howard County community. Again, we greatly appreciate your attendance last night at our Stand Up, Speak Up Howard event as well as our continued collaboration for the benefit of our children, families, and educators. After hearing from a broad spectrum of those impacted by these issues, we share the belief that the power truly is in the people. While we have much to do, we are hopeful that we will "DREAM" big, ensuring there is "Diversity Reaching Everyone Across Minds."

All the best,



Dr. Calvin Ball  
Councilmember



Jennifer Terrasa  
Councilwoman

Cc: County Council  
County Executive Allan Kittleman  
Howard County State Delegation