

MASTER PLAN – A State Requirement

The State of Maryland Bridge to Excellence legislation mandates that each school system develop a comprehensive five-year plan to describe how the Board of Education intends to make improvements in achievement for every student. The plan must describe the goals, objectives, and strategies that will be used to improve student achievement and meet state and local performance standards for all students. While the Master Plan is a separate document in its own right, it must describe specifically how Harford County Public Schools will improve student achievement for Special Education students, students with limited English proficiency, prekindergarten students, kindergarten students, gifted and talented students, and students enrolled in career and technology courses.

Fundamental changes in funding for education at the federal and state levels have resulted in new requirements for HCPS. Fortunately, changes in educational standards mandated by the federal and state governments align well with the Board Goals. Harford County Public Schools has been proactive in developing the FY 2009 Operating Budget in conjunction with the Master Plan. The development of the Master Plan concurrently with the Operating Budget demonstrates the critical link between the budget and the Master Plan. The budget represents the operational plan, stated in financial terms, for carrying out the goals of the school system.

The Bridge to Excellence Act also requires that the budget be aligned with the Master Plan and show specifically how the use of resources will address the goals and objectives of the plan. This budget represents one aspect of compliance with the new regulations.

No Child Left Behind

In January 2002, the federal government enacted the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). This law reauthorized the former Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). The legislation significantly changed the role of the federal government in education, introducing more accountability and requiring schools to meet specific standards for student achievement. With standards put in place, states must test individual student progress toward meeting those standards. Since FY 2006, individual tests for reading and mathematics are administered annually in grades 3 through 8. Science is administered for grades 4 through 8.

As part of the NCLB, the U.S. Department of Education established, and the State of Maryland adopted, the following goals:

1. By 2013-2014, all students will reach high standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and mathematics.
2. All limited English proficient students will become proficient in English and reach high standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and mathematics.
3. By 2005-2006, all students will be taught by highly qualified teachers.
4. All students will be educated in learning environments that are safe, drug-free, and conducive to learning.
5. All students will graduate from high school.

As part of the Master Plan, HCPS must show how these goals will be reached.

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Foundation of Budget Development

Board Goals – The Master Plan Foundation

The vision, mission, and goals established by the Board of Education align well with the policies and objectives of the federal No Child Left Behind and the Maryland Bridge to Excellence. The broadest foundation for budget development is couched in the Mission and Vision of the Harford County Public Schools.

Vision

Harford County is a community of learners where educating everyone takes everyone. We empower all students to contribute to a diverse, democratic and change-oriented society. Our public schools, parents, public officials, businesses, community organizations and citizens actively commit to educate all students to become caring, respectful and responsible citizens.

Mission

The Mission of Harford County Public Schools is to foster a quality educational system that challenges students to develop knowledge and skills, and inspire them to become life-long learners and good citizens.

Executive Summary to the FY 2007 - 2008 Annual Update

The Mission of Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) is to foster a quality education system that challenges students to develop knowledge and skills and to inspire them to become life-long learners and good citizens. A culture has been established to support and nourish smaller learning communities, data driven decision making, and job-embedded professional development.

The five goals and the corresponding performance indicators of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 are the essential components and focus of the Harford County Public School 2007 Annual Update to the Bridge to Excellence Master Plan. Student achievement, safe schools, the graduation rate, and classes taught by highly qualified teachers are the key areas that are being monitored, evaluated and targeted for necessary support and assistance. To support the focus areas, HCPS has strived to hire, train, and retain a highly qualified workforce, allocate funds to ensure a safe school environment, increase the percentage of students who graduate from high school, and align curriculum, instruction, and assessment to support student achievement.

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School System Successes:

1. No elementary school is currently in school improvement. Two of the 32 elementary schools failed to make AYP in 2007 and have been identified for Local Attention.
2. Fewer than one in five students in the elementary grades scored at Basic in mathematics.
3. The percent of students scoring at Proficient or better in reading and math exceeded 80 percent in every elementary grade (3, 4, and 5).
4. The percent of students scoring at Advanced in reading increased in grades 3 through 8. The percent of students scoring at Advanced in mathematics increased in grades 6, 7, and 8.
5. Approximately 80 percent of Harford County juniors (Class of 2009) have passed all of the High School Assessments they have taken, and approximately 70 percent have met the High School Assessment graduation requirement by passing all four tests or achieving the minimum score on one or more tests but achieving the Combined Score.
6. The 2007 pass rates for the Algebra, Biology, and Government High School Assessments exceeded the 2006 pass rates for “all” students.
7. The pass rates for the Algebra, Biology, English, and Government High School Assessments for African American students, Hispanic students, Special Education students, and FaRMS students increased in 2007. The pass rates for African American students increased by more than 10 points on every HSA except Government. More than 60 percent of FaRMS students passed each HSA. The pass rate for ELL students increased on every test except the English 2 HSA. At least 50 percent of the Special Education students tested passed the Algebra and Biology tests.
8. Harford County students scored above the state and at the national average on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). The Harford County Critical Reading SAT average score is 2 points above the state average and at the national average. The Harford County Math SAT average score is 13 points above the state average and at the national average. The Harford County Critical Reading SAT average for African American students exceeded the state average by 2 points. The Harford County Math SAT average score for African American students exceeded the state average by 7 points. The number of students taking the SAT increased by 8 percent in 2007.
9. The number of Advanced Placement (AP) exams administered and the number of students participating increased by approximately 7 percent. At the same time, about 65 percent of tests were scored high enough for college standing. Over the past five years, the number of students participating in AP has increased by 20 percent. In 2007, every Harford County high school (except the Alternative Education School) offered at least one AP exam. Although participation by African American students remained stable in 2007, the participation rate for these students has increased by 40 percent over the past five years.

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10. Harford County's dropout rate declined slightly for all students, and the greatest decline occurred among African Americans.
11. There continues to be no persistently dangerous schools in Harford County.
12. The number of incidents of suspensions/expulsions for sexual harassment, harassment, and bullying has decreased steadily each year from 2002-2003 through 2006-2007.
13. The final phase of the implementation plan for full day kindergarten was completed.
14. The Phase I installation of video cameras in the high schools was accomplished.
15. Phases I and II of the implementation of INFORM, a student data management system, were completed.
16. HCPS has implemented an electronic registration and monitoring system via INFORM for system-wide professional development initiatives.
17. HCPS has successfully established its first charter school.
18. The Alternative Education School at the Center for Educational Opportunity has expanded to include a middle school program.
19. The Harford County Board of Education has successfully developed and approved a Strategic Plan for 2007-2011 and accompanying benchmarks.
20. HCPS implemented the first full year of the Comprehensive Secondary School Reform program at the high school level.
21. The Science and Math Academy magnet program completed its third year of implementation. An additional magnet program, the International Baccalaureate Program, has been selected for implementation in 2008-2009.
22. Harford County Public Schools has implemented two CTE career completer programs at designated high schools: Biomedical Sciences, in the piloting phase, and Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness.
23. The technology refresh program replaced over 2500 computers, 65 network components, and 57 servers to maintain high quality computing resources.
24. The installation of 599 LCD projectors was completed to maintain the project of placing a mounted projector in every classroom by the end of FY 2011.

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25. HCPS successfully launched several new emerging technology initiatives including a review and pilot for interactive whiteboard technologies involving Elementary/Middle/High classrooms and a review and pilot for podcasting in the content areas.
26. Parent access to pertinent student information has been increased through the use of Edline, an electronic grade-reporting system, for all secondary school students in Harford County Public Schools.

School System Challenges:

1. Prevent two elementary schools, three middle schools, and one high school from moving from “local attention” into school improvement.
2. Prevent three high schools and one middle school from advancing in the school improvement process.
3. Reduce the “standards gap” in performance for African American students.
4. Increase the high school graduation rate, with special attention to Special Education students.
5. Decrease the number of students who drop out of high school.
6. Increase the number of classes taught by teachers who are highly qualified.
7. Plan for the impact of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) decisions.

School System Priorities:

Student learning through high quality instruction is the number one priority for Harford County Public Schools. Through the support of the Harford County Government and the Maryland State Government, Harford County Public Schools has received a total increase of \$30.97 million or 8.3 percent from the previous year in the Unrestricted Fund. The increase in the operating budget allowed the school system to attract and retain a highly qualified work force, as well as provide ongoing training and professional development.

All students with identified needs should receive the necessary interventions. A total of \$1.2 million is now budgeted for interventions and remedial course work. Additionally, HCPS received \$87.7 million in the capital budget to support 37 capital projects. For the third year in a row, the County Government has provided a major infusion of new textbook funding for the students.

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Resources have been aligned to support the following school system priorities:

1. Maintain a highly qualified workforce and provide all students with instruction of the highest quality.
2. Ensure a safe, positive learning environment for students and staff.
3. Accelerate student learning and eliminate achievement gaps.
4. Implement the components of the High School Reform Plan.
5. Develop a middle school reform plan.

Changes in Demographics:

The U.S. Bureau of Census is predicting that the population of Harford County will increase by approximately 30,000 individuals during the next six years. Additionally, the population and economy of the county will be impacted over the next five - eight years as a result of the 2005 Defense Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission's decisions. As a result of the Commission's actions there is the possibility that 8,000 to 15,000 residents could move to the region to support the base realignment activities at Aberdeen Proving Ground. The Harford County Board of Education is systematically working collaboratively with local, state, and federal governments and agencies to address BRAC developments which will impact the school system.

Harford County Public Schools is in the process of completing a major construction initiative of providing capacity for enrollment and for providing capacity for the school buildings to support instructional programs. Between 2003 and 2007, two high schools have been totally replaced or renovated, a middle/high school has been built, and a full day kindergarten program has been added to all 32 elementary schools. Two additional high schools will be replaced and two additional elementary schools will be built in the next three to five years.

Another changing demographic is the profile of the teacher and administrator population. Forty two percent of all teachers have five or less years of experience. Similarly, there has been an increase in the number of current administrative and supervisory personnel who have five or less years of experience. The presence of a less experienced workforce reinforces and supports the need for a strong professional development program.

Board of Education Goals for the Master Plan

- 1. Ensure a safe, positive learning environment for students and staff in our schools.**
- 2. Accelerate student learning and eliminate the achievement gaps.**
- 3. Ensure the effective use of all resources focusing on the areas of technology, fiscal and budgetary management, and community partnerships.**
- 4. Understanding that all employees contribute to the learning environment, we will maintain a highly qualified workforce.**

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Before describing the changes in expenditures contained in the Operating Budget, a brief overview of each goal, its objectives, and how the goal aligns with the No Child Left Behind goals, is provided from the Master Plan Draft document.

1. Ensure a safe, positive learning environment for students and staff in our schools.

The Board of Education of Harford County recognizes that the quality and adequacy of the facilities housing the school system's staff and students contribute in significant ways to the life - safety aspects of educating youth, and to the effective delivery of all instructional programs. Well-maintained facilities, structured in ways to promote the integration of modern programs, require carefully planned and executed designs, capacities, and procedures. Research suggests that modern well-maintained buildings and supporting services contribute to how well instruction is presented and how much students learn.

Current practices which are ongoing in the area of learning environment and which support this goal include implementation and administration of such local strategic documents as the Safe Schools Action Plan, the Safety and Security Action Plan, the Comprehensive Maintenance Plan, and the Capital Improvements Program Priorities for Fiscal Year 2004 through Fiscal Year 2012. These local plans, updated annually, provide systemwide and comprehensive views of new and ongoing needs relative to these major areas of school system operations.

Alignment:

The portion of the Elementary and Secondary Education No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act which aligns to Board Goal 1 is as follows:

(NCLB) Goal 4. All students will be educated in learning environments that are safe, drug free, and conducive to learning.

ESEA Performance Indicator:

- The number of persistently dangerous schools as defined by the State.

Objectives: The following Harford County Public School System Objectives are intended to address needs in the school system pertaining to Board Goal 1, and NCLB for Fiscal Year 2007:

Goal 1: Ensure a safe, positive learning environment for students and staff in our schools.

Outcome Goals:

1. Ensure a positive school climate.

Operational Objectives:

- a) Ensure a positive school climate that will foster an environment wherein teachers can teach and students can learn.
- b) Provide ongoing support activities and programs for students to supplement the curriculum, and encourage students to become actively involved in school/community projects to combat drug abuse.
- c) Abolish harassment and discrimination.
- d) Respect and appreciate diversity in the Harford County Public School System's work and school environment.

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- e) Provide all students with services and programs to support their physical, personal, social, and emotional development.
- 2. Establish safe and secure school buildings.
Operational Objectives:
 - a. Establish clear expectations for safe and secure school buildings to maximize student learning.
 - b. Ensure that employees are trained and programs are developed so that all aspects of food safety are implemented.
 - c. Reduce risk exposures and losses.
- 3. Modernize and renovate school facilities/physical plants.
Operational Objectives:
 - a) Develop a Capital Improvements Program to balance enrollments with capacities in overcrowded schools.
 - b) Develop a Capital Improvements Program to modernize and renovate school facilities to ensure a state-of-the-art learning environment for all students.
 - c) Promote awareness of occupant contributions to Indoor Air Quality.
 - d) Ensure that environmental programs are in place for all sites.
 - e) Provide accessibility to spaces and programs.

2. Accelerate student learning and eliminate the achievement gaps.

The Board of Education of Harford County recognizes that, while the establishment of student achievement standards at the national or state level for local public school systems might be viewed as establishing ceilings for student performance, the Harford County Public School System has long been vested in programs to move all students to high levels. The Board of Education of Harford County supports not only raising the achievement of all students to federal and state standards and beyond, but, also, maximizing the opportunity for all students, including those who are challenged or disadvantaged in any regard.

Current practices that are ongoing pertaining to student achievement which support Board Goal 2 and include the local School Improvement Planning processes, the design of local curriculum and assessment in alignment with state and national content and performance standards, the development and implementation of such strategic plans as the *Education That Is Multicultural* five-year plan, the Instructional Technology long-range plan, and the Safety and Security plan. Additional ongoing initiatives include: Character Education and Student Service Learning curriculum-embedded strategies, implementation of the Gifted Education guidelines, and strategies to address Class Size, Prekindergarten, Full Day Kindergarten, student performance on the PSAT/SAT, and Middle School Intervention.

Alignment:

Board Goal 2 is aligned with significant portions of the Bridge to Excellence legislation and the Visionary Panel for Better Schools report. The following Elementary and Secondary Education Act goals are included within Goal 2 of the Harford County Public School System:

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(NCLB) Goal 1. By 2013-2014, all students will reach high standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and mathematics.

ESEA Performance Indicators:

- The percentage of students, in the aggregate and for each subgroup, who are at or above the proficient level in reading/language arts on the state's assessment.
- The percentage of students, in the aggregate and for each subgroup, who are at or above the proficient level in mathematics on the state's assessment.
- The percentage of Title I schools that make adequate yearly progress.

(NCLB) Goal 2. All limited English proficient students will become proficient in English and reach high academic standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and mathematics.

ESEA Performance Indicators:

- The percentage of limited English proficient students, determined by cohort, who have attained English proficiency by the end of the school year.
- The percentage of limited English proficient students who are at or above the proficient level in reading/language arts on the state's assessment.
- The percentage of limited English proficient students who are at or above the proficient level in mathematics on the state's assessment.

(NCLB) Goal 5. All students will graduate from high school.

ESEA Performance Indicators:

- The percentage of students who graduate from high school each year with a regular diploma,
 - a) disaggregated by race ethnicity, gender, disability status, migrant status, English Proficiency, and status as economically disadvantaged; and,
 - b) calculated in the same manner used in the National Center for Education Statistics reports on Common Core of Data.
- The percentage of students who drop out of school,
 - a) disaggregated by race ethnicity, gender, disability status, migrant status, English Proficiency, and status as economically disadvantaged; and,
 - b) calculated in the same manner used in the National Center for Education Statistics reports on Common Core of Data.

Objectives: The following Harford County Public School System Objectives for Fiscal Year 2006 address identified needs in the school system pertaining to Board Goal 2:

Goal 2: Accelerate student learning and eliminate the achievement gaps.

Outcome Goals:

1. Eliminate the achievement gaps.
Operational Objectives:

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- a. The Harford County Public School system and each school and each subgroup therein will make adequate yearly progress toward meeting federal standards.
 - b. Design and implement programs and initiate strategies to support the elimination of the achievement gap for students who are economically disadvantaged, with disabilities, from major racial and ethnic groups, and with LEP.
2. Ensure academic rigor and challenging course work for all students.
- Operational Objectives:
- a. Align curriculum, instruction, and assessment with Maryland Content Standards and the Voluntary State Curriculum, to ensure academic rigor for all students.
 - b. Design and implement program evaluation models and procedures to assess instructional and program strengths and to determine guidelines for revising, refining, or removing programs.
 - c. Align the existing organizational structure to more effectively and efficiently deliver services to schools to support student achievement.
 - d. Develop the technical competencies of all secondary students.
 - e. Provide challenging course work, comprehensive completer programs, and rigorous academic requirements for all secondary students.
 - f. Enhance the post-high school preparation of all secondary students.
3. Increase parent and community involvement to support student achievement.
- Operational Objectives:
- a. Introduce School Improvement Teams to the integrated management process for continuously improving student achievement.

Goal 3: Ensure the effective use of all resources focusing on the areas of technology, fiscal and budgetary management, and community partnerships.

In order to move maximum funding to achievement of the school system's critical mission, the Board of Education of Harford County believes that it is important to know, in a business sense, that the school system is operating at peak performance. To ensure efficient and effective utilization of resources, excellent fiscal management is critical, as are technological and administrative supports within the system.

The Board of Education of Harford County recognizes, further, that the significant contributions of parents and families in support of student academic achievement are essential to the desired long-term outcome for students. Partnerships with parents are further enhanced through numerous rich and rewarding associations with businesses, colleges and universities, government, civic and other volunteer organizations.

Current practices that are ongoing in the area of public engagement which support this goal include the publication of various initiatives such as "Harford Schools", "Inside Track", and a number of other printed materials. In addition, contacts are maintained with the media involving memos and news releases. Internal communication is maintained through e-mail systems and an emergency radio system as well as automated e-mail systems. Also, electronic media is used

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through “Your Public Schools” half hour show, TV sports, school concerts, academic tournaments and a variety of others. The public has immediate access to the superintendent and others on the HCPS senior staff through an Action Line telephone number and Internet-based e-mail.

Board Goal 3 is aligned with significant portions of the Bridge to Excellence legislation and the Visionary Panel for Better School report. The strategies outlined in Goal 3 describe the support and assistance provided by the system to ensure the successful implementation of the five ESEA goals.

Objectives: The following Harford County Public School System Objectives for Fiscal Year 2006 address identified needs in the school system pertaining to Board Goal 3:

3. Ensure the effective use of all resources focusing on the areas of technology, fiscal and budgetary management, and community partnerships.

Outcome Goals:

Operational Objectives:

1. Make effective and efficient use of technology at all levels of HCPS.
 - a. Provide universal access to technology.
 - b. Integrate technology seamlessly into instruction.
 - c. Use technology effectively to improve school and school system administrative functions and operational processes.
 - d. Integrate technology that engages students into all classrooms on a regular basis.
2. Provide effective administration and fiscal management of resources.

Operational Objectives:

 - a. Enhance the fiscal credibility of the school system with the local Board, County and State authorities, and local taxpayers.
 - b. Begin the utilization by all administrative and supervisory staff, of an identified integrated management process in the performance of duties and assignments.
 - c. Establish pilots of building/departmental level implementation of the identified integrated management process and evaluate and consider the pilots for replication at additional sites through the school system.
3. Maximize communication with all stakeholders.

Operational Objectives:

 - a. Provide the public with information on the successes of students, staff, and schools.
 - b. Reach an ever-widening internal and external audience through internet and intranet web sites.
 - c. Expand relationships and collaborations within the business community necessary to achieve meaningful academic partnerships.
 - d. Promote meaningful involvement of family members in the educational process.
 - e. Communicate internally to increase effective utilization of partnership activities as a viable curricular component.

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Goal 4: Understanding that all employees contribute to the learning environment, we will maintain a highly qualified workforce.

The Board of Education of Harford County recognizes the power of highly skilled employees in every position in the school system towards maximizing student achievement. The role of teachers is critical. Forty percent of what students gain in public education comes directly from the teacher. It is the responsibility of the school system to recruit, hire, and retain the best teachers available, and to provide all staff with high quality job-embedded professional development.

Current practices that are ongoing in the area of maintaining a highly-qualified workforce include the administration of employees' health benefits programs, the certification of professional staff, employee transfer programs, employee negotiations processes, and employee compliance issues, such as the administration of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Family Medical Leave. Additional ongoing functions include employee internal investigations and criminal background checks, system wide substitute teachers' calling system, No Child Left Behind compliance reporting, annual staff reporting, and employee retirement coordination.

Alignment:

Board Goal 4 is aligned with significant portions of the Bridge to Excellence legislation and the Visionary Panel for Better Schools report. The following Elementary and Secondary Education Act goals are included within Goal 4 of the Harford County Public School System:

(NCLB) Goal 3. By 2005-2006, all students will be taught by "highly qualified staff."

ESEA Performance Indicators:

- The percentage of classes being taught by "highly qualified" teachers in the aggregate and in "high-poverty" schools.
- The percentage of teachers receiving "high quality professional development".
- The percentage of paraprofessionals (excluding those with sole duties as translators and parental involvement assistants) who are qualified.

Objectives: The following Harford County Public School System Objectives for Fiscal Year 2006 address identified needs in the school system pertaining to Board Goal 4:

4. Understanding that all employees contribute to the learning environment, we will maintain a highly qualified workforce.

Outcome Goals:

1. Ensure recruitment and retention of highly qualified employees at all levels of HCPS in line with state and federal mandates.

Operational Objectives:

- a. Increase the pool of qualified applicants for the Harford County Public School System.
- b. Maintain a high rate of job acceptance among qualified candidates.

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- c. Maintain a high rate of employee retention.
 - d. Maintain a salary schedule that allows the system to be competitive with surrounding school system's relevant labor market in order to recruit and retain African-American employees.
2. Utilizing the Affirmative Action Plan, recruit and retain African-American employees at all levels of HCPS.
- Operational Objectives:
- a. Improve the recruitment of African-American education candidates through a variety of strategies.
 - b. Establish community support for recruitment and retention of African-American candidates.
 - c. Implement applicable retention strategies in the Affirmative Action Plan in all schools and offices.
 - d. Increase the number of African-American professionals at every echelon of central office leadership, including the superintendent's cabinet and senior staff.
 - e. Assure that promotional procedures are developed and executed in accordance with antidiscrimination laws.
3. Design and implement programs to train a highly qualified workforce.
- a. Introduce all staff to an integrated management process that will lead to continual improvement of organizational effectiveness.
 - b. Reduce the number of provisionally certified teachers and ensure that they meet Maryland certification requirements in a timely manner.
 - c. Ensure that all paraprofessionals meet the No Child Left Behind requirements for "highly qualified".
 - d. Increase among all employees an understanding of diversity and cross-cultural communication.
 - e. Design and implement a staff development program to provide high-quality professional development opportunities for all teachers, supervisors, and administrators.