



Blueprint for Maryland's Future: 2024 Implementation Plan

Harford County Public Schools

March 2024; Part 1 Systemwide

BLUEPRINT
for our students' future 



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BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN

MISSION

- Each student will attain academic and personal success in a safe and caring environment that honors the diversity of our students and staff.

VISION

- We will inspire and prepare each student to achieve success in college and career.

CORE VALUES

- We empower each student to achieve academic excellence.
- We create reciprocal relationships with families and members of the community.
- We attract and retain highly skilled personnel.
- We assure an efficient and effective organization.
- We provide a safe and secure environment.



LONG-TERM GOALS

GOAL 1 Prepare every student for success in postsecondary education and career.

GOAL 2 Engage families and the community to be partners in the education of our students.

GOAL 3 Hire and support highly effective staff who are committed to building their own professional capacity in order to increase student achievement.

GOAL 4 Provide safe, secure, and healthy learning environments that are conducive to effective teaching and learning, creativity and innovation.

Director of Strategic Initiatives & Blueprint Implementation Coordinator

Katie M. Ridgway

Systemwide Blueprint Response Guidance

*The following are the instructions from the Accountability & Implementation Board (AIB) and the Maryland State Department of Education to Maryland Local Education Agencies, including Harford County Public Schools (HCPS), for submission of **Part 1: Systemwide** for the 2024 Blueprint Implementation Plan submissions.*

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future will improve the quality and equity of Maryland's education system so that ALL Maryland students, regardless of where they live, their household income, race, ethnicity, gender, language spoken at home, disability, and any other unique characteristic, can leave high school globally competitive and prepared for success in postsecondary education, work, and life.

To reach this outcome, Maryland public schools must transform by rethinking and redesigning existing policies and practices to create a system that equitably serves all students and prepares them for success. This is your opportunity to share how your district has been approaching this change and its plans for the future.

Be sure to include or address the following points in your response:

- How are your district's vision, goals, strategic plan, and other system and school-level plans aligned to the Blueprint?
 - consider the connections across pillars and how the expected outcomes of the Blueprint intersect with and align with district programming.
- How your district is communicating its goals and plans with those implementing the Blueprint in the district, including
 - principals and educators;
 - soliciting feedback; and
 - adapting its communication strategies to improve stakeholder understanding of the Blueprint's purpose.
- How your district is making systemic changes to support ongoing Blueprint implementation;
 - consider the strategies that have and have not been successful in your approach to reaching the Blueprint's expected outcomes.
- Your district's three greatest challenges to Blueprint implementation, including
 - the rationale for selecting them,
 - the specific initiatives/programs/strategies the district will implement to address them, and
 - how your district will transform to implement these strategies effectively.
- How the district will monitor progress towards addressing its three greatest challenges to reaching the Blueprint's expected outcome.

Criteria for Success

- Describes how the district is creating a system that equitably serves all students and prepares them for success in alignment with the Blueprint's expected outcome
- Addresses all of the bullets in its response clearly, concisely, and comprehensively

I. Alignment within HCPS

HCPS has strategically aligned districtwide initiatives through several key mechanisms. First, the HCPS guidance document *Advancing the Strategic Plan* serves as a bridge between the Board of Education's (BOE) strategic plan and district priorities, integrating performance targets aligned with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. Second, a revamped HCPS *annual report* on performance targets provides a comprehensive overview of progress towards these goals. Third, HCPS ensures clarity through a learning continuum by delineating *student milestones* and achievements from Kindergarten Readiness Assessment to graduate outcomes, incorporating the HCPS *learner attributes* and Blueprint milestones such as college and career readiness. Fourth, live *data dashboards* cater to administrators, counselors, school performance and improvement specialists, teachers, and district leaders, facilitating real-time monitoring and support to schools in their pursuit of aligned goals.

HCPS has debuted a new 'Advancing the Strategic Plan' & 'Annual Report.'

<p>GOAL 1</p> <p>Prepare every student for success in postsecondary education and career.</p>	<p>➤➤➤</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Career Driven B Graduate Outcomes C Learner Attributes D Personalization for Academic Needs E Behavioral Support
<p>GOAL 2</p> <p>Engage families and the community to be partners in the education of our students.</p>	<p>➤➤➤</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Transparency B Customer Service C Collaborative Governance
<p>GOAL 3</p> <p>Hire and support highly effective staff who are committed to building their own professional capacity in order to increase student achievement.</p>	<p>➤➤➤</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Elevating Educators B Culture of Gratitude C Talent Pathways
<p>GOAL 4</p> <p>Provide safe, secure, and healthy learning environments that are conducive to effective teaching and learning, creativity, and innovation.</p>	<p>➤➤➤</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Safety and Security B Resource Stewardship C Operational Efficiency

Released on March 6, 2024, *Advancing the Strategic Plan* plan provides direct connections across Blueprint pillars with the BOE Strategic Plan. Pillars 1, 3, and 4 are woven into the priorities and targets outlined within BOE Goal 1, which focuses on enhancing student achievement. This goal encompasses priorities such as individualized student support, post College and Career Readiness (CCR) pathways, graduate outcomes (including college and career readiness), and comprehensive behavioral support. Pillar 5 aligns with BOE Goal 2, which emphasizes family engagement and collaborative governance, as well as with Goal 4, which underscores stewardship for our learning environments and resources. Furthermore, Pillar 2 directly aligns with BOE Goal 3, which centers on the recruitment and support of highly effective staff. This alignment with Pillar 2 is evident through initiatives like the career ladder, the cultivation of a positive organizational culture, and the Talent Pathways project aimed at creating grow-your-own initiatives within the district. Ultimately, all priorities are working together to achieve our district vision:

“We will inspire and prepare each student to achieve success in college and career.”

The following **performance targets** are included in [Advancing the Strategic Plan](#) and in baseline data published March 6, 2024, in a newly released [HCPS Annual Report](#).

Pillar 1: Early Childhood

- Increase the number of 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in full day PreK each year.
- Increase percentage of students served by PreK programs who demonstrate Kindergarten readiness.

Pillar 2: Elevating Educators

- Increase number of teachers opting to participate in the career ladder after negotiated and implemented.
- Increase the percentage of teachers of color to more closely align with student population and to improve student outcomes.
- Increase the percentage of conditionally certified teachers who obtain their standard professional certificate.
- Increase number of current HCPS employees not currently in a teaching position working towards teacher certification each year.
- Increase the number of HCPS alumni hired as HCPS employees each year in all positions.
- Increase the number of students in future teacher programs including Teacher Academy of Maryland (TAM), EdRising, or peer-tutoring.
- Increase number of interns serving in HCPS classrooms each year.

Pillar 3: North Star / College & Career Readiness

- Increase the percentage of HCPS graduates who meet the criteria for at least one of the three North Star outcomes.
- Increase the percentage of students considered CCR ready by the Blueprint.
- Increase the percentage of 9th grade students considered on-track by the Blueprint.
- Increase number of students completing apprenticeships.
- Match HCPS development of magnet programs with local and global economies.
- For career pathway planning, increase percentage of students completing designated career modules through the Naviance College and Career Platform.
- Increase the percentage of students each year who achieve a grade level proficiency or equivalent on designated HCPS reading, writing, and math assessment tools or MCAP.

Pillar 4: Student Supports

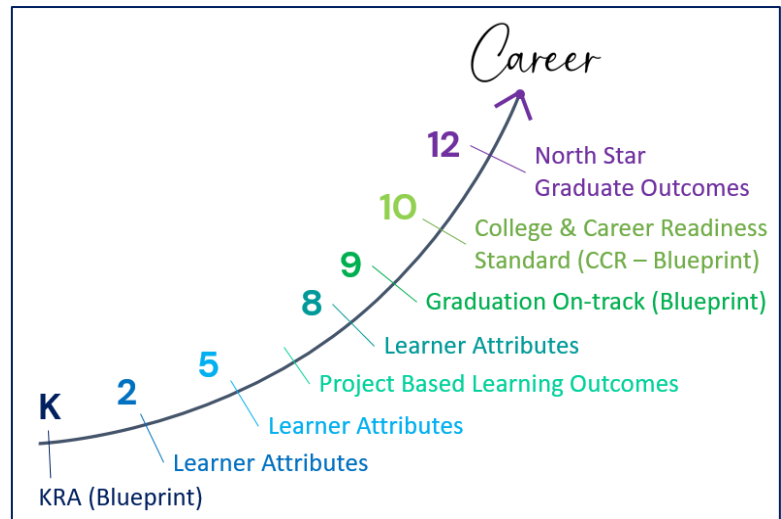
- Provide every student/family seeking mental and behavioral health support with appropriate resource(s).
- Increase participation in the student Wellness Needs Assessment for students grades 3-12.
- Increase positive childhood experience score for students using the HOPE framework.
- Improve learner outcomes in reading and math for all unique school designation categories.
- Reduce achievement gaps in all unique school designation categories for reading and math based on state and county averages.

Pillar 5: Foundation & Accountability

- All advisory committees have at least 25% representation outside of central office staff to include teachers, parents/guardians, administrators, and community partners.
- Increase the number of community and businesses identified as partners.
- Meet Blueprint state requirements, Md. Education Article, §5-234, for allocation of resources directly to schools by 2024-2025.
- Allocate resources based on data supported needs of students, staff, and schools.

HCPS has created comprehensive learning milestones & data dashboards.

HCPS employs a **comprehensive milestone continuum** to guide school performance and achievement plans, ESSSA consolidated plans, Title I initiatives, Community School plans, and performance monitoring for both the Blueprint and the BOE strategic plan. This continuum begins with the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment and progresses through various stages, including specific benchmarks in 2nd, 5th, and 8th grades focused on essential **learner attributes** (readers, writers, problem-solvers, healthy, employable). In middle school, HCPS is currently introducing benchmarks oriented towards project-based learning, slated to be implemented in the next two years, enhancing student engagement and skill development for future careers. All of these measures lead to benchmarks within the Blueprint for 9th grade on-track to graduation and college and career readiness by the end of 10th grade. The milestone continuum culminates in HCPS's systemwide North Star outcomes, where students demonstrate their preparedness for success after high school. These outcomes encompass two primary areas: readiness for college, signified by proficiency in college-level coursework or the attainment of college credit, and readiness for a career, indicated by the acquisition of an industry-recognized credential or completion of an apprenticeship, ensuring students are well-equipped for post-high school endeavors.



Data dashboards play a pivotal role in aligning various stakeholders within the district, including teachers, administrators, and central support teams, in monitoring real-time student achievement and related metrics. All benefit from data dashboards by gaining a comprehensive overview of school-wide or district-wide performance trends. By providing insights into specific areas of strength and areas requiring improvement, schools can make data-informed decisions to personalize learning experiences and interventions, ultimately fostering student success. By aggregating data from various sources, including assessments, attendance records, and demographic information, HCPS teams can analyze trends, identify patterns, and assess the effectiveness of system-wide initiatives. HCPS Data Dashboards enables all to align practices and priorities, allocate staff and resources strategically, and provide targeted support to further the outcomes targeted by the Blueprint and by the BOE's strategic plan. Dashboards include but are not limited to: 6th and 9th Grade Early Warning Indicators, CCR Student Support Pathway, Graduate Outcomes, Wellness Needs Assessment, Attendance Trends, Dual Enrollment, Reading Inventory and Math Inventory (all levels), School Accountability Profiles, and more. In development are dashboards dedicated to each learner attribute (readers, writers, problem-solvers, healthy, employable). There is also valuable goal and progress data publicly available on the [HCPS State of the District](#) website.

II. Systemwide Communication

Navigating effective communication for the expansive initiatives outlined in the Blueprint presents a formidable yet crucial challenge. **The HCPS Blueprint committee structure, leadership forums and digital engagement initiatives, and comprehensive survey analysis** stand as a multifaceted strategy aimed at fostering system-wide communication and collaboration for the successful implementation of the Blueprint. By leveraging multiple approaches, our goal is to ensure that all stakeholders are not only kept informed but are actively engaged and empowered to contribute meaningfully.

HCPS has an inclusive and comprehensive committee structure.

The HCPS committee structure is a central component of the HCPS communication, vetting, problem-solving, brainstorming, and accountability for implementation of the Blueprint. With each of the four pillars having its own dedicated committee co-chaired by a representative from the HCPS and a community leader, there's a balanced perspective that incorporates both educational expertise and community insight. These committees serve as channels for dialogue and collaboration, ensuring that various stakeholders, including parents, teachers, business partners, community organizations, administrators, central leaders, county partners, and students, are all actively engaged in the decision-making process and can serve as liaisons to professional learning communities, parent groups, student organizations, and community partners. With more than 160 individuals contributing across these committees, including 68 community members, there's a wealth of diverse perspectives and expertise driving forward effective communication at every level of the system. **Reference:** [HCPS Committee and Implementation Structure](#)

The Blueprint is shared in diverse forums and through digital engagement.

Weekly Senior Leadership meetings, biweekly Administrative Leadership team, and biweekly Instructional Leadership Team meetings serve as foundational platforms for updates and ensuring alignment across various tiers of leadership and disseminating critical information throughout the organization. As a monthly event, the Superintendent of Schools provides systemic updates for Administrative & Instructional Leadership, including principals, supervisors, and system leaders, to remain informed and engaged, extending communication to those directly involved in day-to-day planning. Board of Education presentations offer a governance-level platform for publicly communicating key initiatives and decisions, ensuring transparency and accountability to the broader community.

In addition to these meetings and presentations, the HCPS public facing [website](#) is a centralized repository for comprehensive Blueprint information for the broader Harford County community. We provide consistent dissemination of digital news through various channels such as the Annual Live Teams All-staff Event, Blueprint Newsletter, Superintendent's Bulletin, HCPS 411 Update to all staff, Board of Education Weekly Update, and other digital outlets which ensures that stakeholders are regularly informed and connected. We are committed to thoughtful and varied communication with highlights including milestone reports, videos, and targeted updates tailored to specific groups such as PreK teachers, school counselors, instructional coaches, and curriculum leaders. These tailored communication strategies not only ensure that information is disseminated effectively but also demonstrate a proactive approach to engaging various stakeholders in the implementation process. There is progress data (example: number of apprentices) publicly available and updated weekly on the [HCPS State of the District](#) website.

Collectively, these forums and digital communication methods contribute to fostering a culture of transparency, collaboration, and informed decision-making across the entire Harford County community.

HCPS conducts systemic surveys and analysis.

Conducting a district-wide survey of the 2023 Initial Blueprint Plan and subsequent research report is an essential engagement activity for program evaluation and taking a pulse on the wider community's perceptions about Blueprint implementation. By soliciting feedback through a survey (advertised in

[HCPS Blueprint Website](#)

Includes videos, quick guides, required reports, and more.

[January 2023 Comprehensive Board Presentation](#)

[All-Staff Live Teams Event February 2023](#)
Next one is set for March 26, 2024.

[Milestone Report](#)

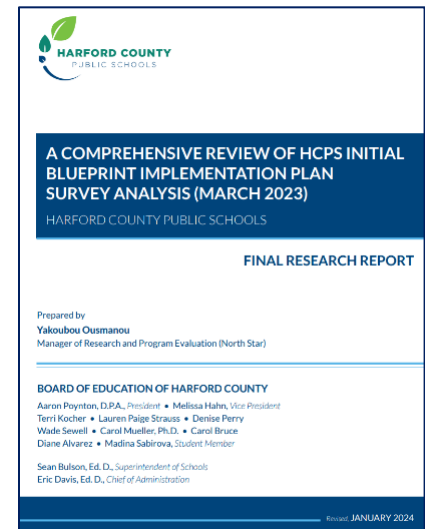
[Newsletter Archive](#)
Sent to all staff, committee members, partners, Board, & elected officials.

[Implementation Plan Survey Analysis](#)

[HCPS State of the District](#)

newsletters, the web, and social media), the district allows wide ranging stakeholders, including parents, teachers, administrators, and community members, to voice their opinions, concerns, and celebrations regarding the Blueprint plan. Moreover, the subsequent [research analytical report](#) serves as a comprehensive analysis of the survey data, providing valuable insights and recommendations for refining and improving the blueprint plan based on the feedback received. By actively involving stakeholders in this iterative feedback loop, the district promotes a sense of ownership and buy-in, ultimately leading to more effective and sustainable Blueprint initiatives that meet the needs of the entire community. Through these efforts, we strive to ensure that all voices are heard, and that decisions are made in the best interest of our students, educators, and the community at large.

For this survey process, HCPS administered a multi-stakeholder survey in February and March of 2023 on the initial Blueprint Implementation Plan. Respondents were first presented with the complete written draft implementation plan, a short video about the implementation plan, then asked to complete the feedback providing guidance about the implementation plan. Finally, respondents were given an opportunity to write comments regarding which aspects of Blueprint implementation HCPS demonstrates exemplary progress and which aspects of Blueprint implementation HCPS demonstrates a need to improve planning for better progress. The Office of Research and Program Evaluation partnered with Hanover Research to analyze the responses to the survey's open-ended questions. The results of this analysis are used by Blueprint Committees, subject-matter experts, and leadership teams to inform Blueprint implementation efforts and ensure that feedback is acted upon meaningfully. **Reference:** [A Comprehensive Review of HCPS Blueprint Implementation Plan Survey Analysis](#)



III. Key Decisions and Transformations

Three pivotal decisions have initiated transformative changes within HCPS, propelling the district towards meeting Blueprint requirements and serving every student within this community. First, a strategic shift towards a **career-driven** approach has gained dividends, aligning curriculum and initiatives with the evolving demands of the workforce, thus equipping students with the skills and knowledge needed for success in the modern job market. Second, significant investments in stabilizing staffing and **elevating educators** have started the work needed for long-term stability and quality in our workforce, nurturing a supportive and empowered environment where educators can thrive, and students can flourish. Finally, a commitment to **proactive resource allocation** has ensured that the building blocks are in place to ensure that funding follows the needs of the individual student, that we have usable and accurate data to analyze our resource allocations, and that funds are spent in ways that best benefit student outcomes.

HCPS is career-driven.

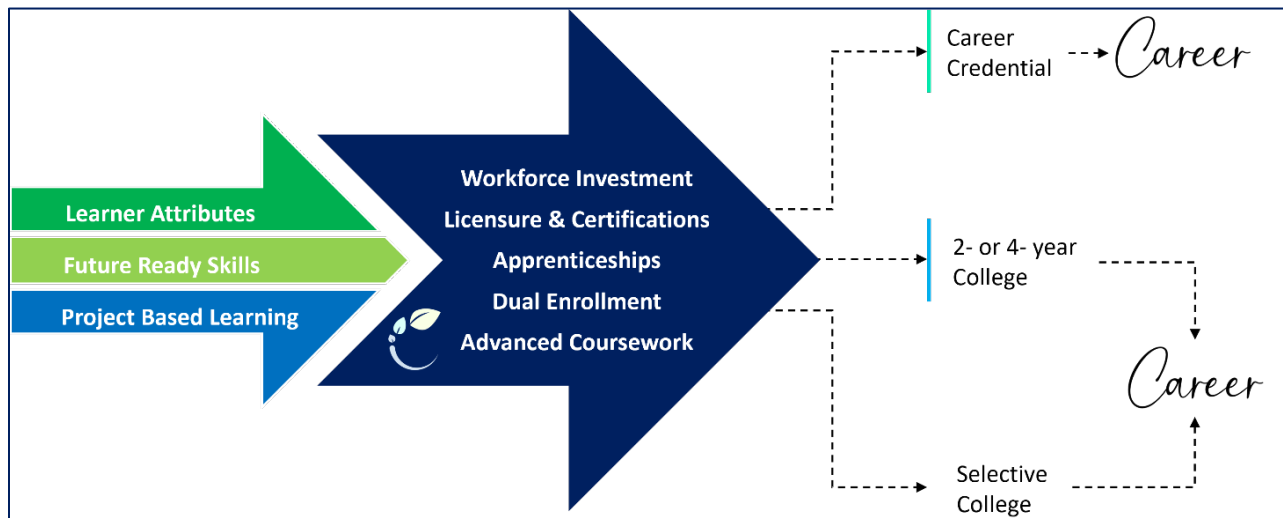
HCPS's focus on being career-driven has been a transformative decision that has reshaped the work of the school system, expanded opportunities for students, promoted educational equity, and enhanced long-term outcomes. Central to this paradigm shift is the North Star Initiative, developed in 2019, which marked a pivotal stride towards equitably valuing career pathways alongside traditional college preparatory coursework. By ensuring that all students complete at least one of the specified goals before graduation (completing college-level work, earning college credits, or obtaining a career credential), HCPS has diversified pathways for students, improving the likelihood of degree attainment and enhancing earning potential. **Reference:** [Beacon Study of 2021](#)

One of the most promising aspects of the North Star Blueprint initiative is the HCPS Apprenticeship Maryland Program (AMP). Students are matched with employers who provide mentorship, on-the-job training, and educational support, allowing them to gain invaluable industry experience while still in high school. The results of the AMP program have been rapid. In its inaugural year, last year, 15 students completed their apprenticeships. As of today, over 125 students are participating in the registered apprenticeships.

Integral to our career-driven efforts, HCPS's innovative workforce investment program, a non-credit partnership with Harford Community College (HCC), offers students free opportunities to attain industry-recognized certifications, making them attractive candidates for employment post-graduation and providing a seamless transition into credit and noncredit degree programs. Examples include Certified Logistics Associate, Microsoft Office Certification, Windows Computer Support Technician, Help Desk (Security+), and Certified Nursing Assistant.

When North Star began, HCPS's first transformational decision was immediate and critical work of partnership with HCC. This commitment laid the foundation that was greatly accelerated with Blueprint's open access requirements for dual enrollment courses. Our students' access to courses, our ease of interaction with HCC as a partner, and our shared vision have significantly been improved over the last two years, with a framework now allowing students to have up to an entire year of college credit by the time they graduate high school.

These concerted endeavors towards career-driven principles have not only refined the school system's priorities but have also empowered students with expanded opportunities, cultivated equity, and propelled them towards brighter futures. Looking ahead, HCPS is poised to embark on a strategic roadmap through the provided AIB Strategic Facilitator, integrate project-based learning, expand career exploration curriculum and coaching, refine support pathways, and embed future-ready skills, thus ensuring continued progress in our career-driven approach to student and Blueprint outcomes.



HCPS is elevating educators.

HCPS has demonstrated strategic and transformative leadership in elevating educators and advancing the intended outcomes of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future through a series of deliberate decisions and initiatives. First, the implementation of differentiated staffing at Priority Schools starting in 2019 represents a targeted effort to address disparities by adjusting class sizes or ratios at schools based on Free and Reduced Meals (FARMs) rates. This approach aims to provide additional support to students in need, stabilize staffing in high-need schools, and narrow achievement gaps. The HCPS theory of action

regarding elevating educators who serve students in high concentration of poverty is to increase instructional staff, provide additional staffing support, and to work towards differentiated pay, similar to the theory behind the low-performing schools incentive of the Blueprint Career Ladder and minimum school funding model.

Second, an HCPS 7% salary increase enacted in FY2023 was a critical catalyst towards achieving competitive starting salaries and reaching the targeted 10% salary increase goal. This investment not only recognized the value of educators but also enhanced recruitment and retention efforts.

Third, the establishment of the overarching committee "Elevating Educators" was an important step towards HCPS's Blueprint objectives, focusing on diversity recruitment and retention, growing our own talent, and supporting educators pursuing National Board Certification. This holistic approach ensures alignment with broader goals beyond the Career Ladder. Additionally, the formation of a specialty career ladder multi-disciplinary subgroup provided a forum for collaborative efforts to design a model ladder and negotiation parameters that promote professional growth and recognition.

Lastly, the creation of a support system for educators pursuing National Board Certification, facilitated through the Maryland LEADs grant, provides systemic support and resources to enhance educator effectiveness and student outcomes. This year, HCPS was able to use LEADs funding to offer fee support to educators not meeting the definition of teacher to pursue NBC alongside a teacher in a low-performing school. Through these strategic decisions and initiatives, HCPS is actively investing in its educators, fostering a culture of continuous growth and excellence, and ultimately driving progress towards the overarching goals of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.



HCPS is committed to resource stewardship.

HCPS has demonstrated thoughtful and purposeful decision-making around resource allocations to effectively meet the intended outcomes of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. At the forefront of these strategic decisions is the investment in the new Enterprise system, Oracle, initiated in 2023. This significant financial and time investment is critical for HCPS to develop a robust financial modeling and reporting system, enabling informed decision-making and optimizing resource allocation in alignment with the Blueprint's objectives. Above all else, this decision will transform HCPS financial tracking across categories, programs, and schools, ability to analyze exactly how all funding reaches students, and support models of reallocation or transformation.

Also, HCPS has made targeted decisions regarding resource stewardship impacting specific aspects of the Blueprint. Major examples include:

- 1) HCPS has systemically addressed PreK capacity by transitioning half-day programs to full-day and started the process of converting early childhood classrooms in high schools to PreK programs. Also to support Pillar 1, HCPS has hired a technical specialist to support private providers.
- 2) In addressing mental and behavioral support, HCPS has leveraged partner resources from private mental health providers and the Harford County Health Department. This strategic partnership-building approach maximizes the impact of resources and services, effectively meeting the diverse needs of students and promoting overall well-being.
- 3) HCPS has effectively leveraged the Maryland LEADs grant to kickstart various Blueprint initiatives, including Middle School innovation, Workforce Investment with HCC, National Board Support, Talent Pathways (grow-your-own), and Community Schools. This proactive approach to leveraging federal COVID funding demonstrates HCPS's commitment to advancing the Blueprint's objectives through strategic investments.

- 4) Lastly, HCPS's dedication of district funding to the Talent Pathways project exemplifies its commitment to the recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers, aligning with the goals of Pillar 2 of the Blueprint. This targeted allocation of resources towards talent development further strengthens HCPS's capacity to attract and retain exceptional and diverse educators, ultimately benefiting students and the broader community.

Overall, HCPS's decisions around resource allocations reflect a strategic commitment to meeting the intended outcomes of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. In the upcoming resource allocation decisions for HCPS, a strategic focus will be placed on reallocating funds to guarantee that at-risk students have access to the necessary support for academic success. Efforts will be intensified to enhance resources for English Language Learners (ELL). Moreover, ensuring the sustainability of post-CCR pathways, workforce investment, and apprenticeships will remain a priority. Through these strategic allocations, HCPS aims to address equity gaps, support diverse learner needs, and prepare all students for success.

IV. Challenges & Monitoring

Implementing the Blueprint presents significant challenges, with the top three challenges identified as: **Resource Allocation**; **Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement**; and **Realizing Equitable Outcomes**.

HCPS will continue its commitment to resource stewardship.

The challenge of resource stewardship is two-fold, one is systemically ensuring that funding adequately and effectively follows the student, and the other is alleviating stakeholder concerns and perceptions.

Starting with stakeholder concerns, [Survey Analysis](#) revealed unease among stakeholders about resource allocation. Specifically, respondents highlighted challenges and areas for improvement related to funding, staffing, and accountability within the plan's implementation. One of the primary concerns expressed by stakeholders was whether HCPS would have adequate resources to carry out all aspects of the plan and hold staff and leaders accountable for the proposed changes. The ambitious scope of the Blueprint raised doubts among respondents about the sufficiency of funding, staffing, and physical space to support various initiatives, such as the introduction of new Early Childhood Education (ECE) programming. Furthermore, stakeholders expressed apprehension about teacher compensation, emphasizing its importance in recruiting and retaining high-quality educators. This concern underscored the broader issue of resource allocation within the HCPS.

Although steps have already been taken to ensure funding serves intended students through the HCPS priority school model and new software tools for budgeting, getting to the finish line of meeting the Blueprint allocation requirements will take strategic changes that also honor important and cost-intensive aspects of the Blueprint (like the career ladder, post-college and career readiness pathways), providing supports for all students. HCPS will view this challenge as an opportunity to make structural and significant changes to improve outcomes for students in historically low-performing schools. As such HCPS is looking at models for further differentiated pay for all staff at schools with high concentrations of poverty, shifting coaches and instructional specialists' positions to serve classrooms through co-teaching, working with our local workforce investment board to align workforce investment programs for students' career credentials, building HCPS special education programs to reduce non-public placement, and making strategic adjustments to our services for English Learners.



HCPS will monitor progress for this challenge by:

HCPS has established published targets to meet Maryland Education Article, §5-234 minimum school funding requirements, which will be reported on in the Annual Report starting in 2025. In addition to audits, financial reporting mechanisms, and new analytical budget capabilities, the true measure of success in overcoming this challenge lies in observing tangible improvements in student achievement across schools historically facing lower academic performance. This entails closely monitoring academic indicators such as standardized test scores, graduation rates, and proficiency levels in core subjects. By focusing on these outcomes, HCPS can gauge the effectiveness of its resource allocation strategies and ensure that every student has the opportunity to thrive academically, regardless of their background.

HCPS will continue its commitment to meaningful stakeholder engagement.

Despite concerted efforts and engagement with stakeholders, HCPS faces challenges in achieving meaningful engagement, especially when competing with other demands for the community's attention. Discussing topics that may not directly impact a family's student can be particularly challenging. While having more than 160 committee members is commendable, it represents only a fraction of HCPS's broader community, which includes 38,000 students and 5,500 employees. Methods such as providing newsletters and presentations to diverse groups are valuable but require the time and attention of families, adding to the challenge of meaningful engagement. As HCPS strives for inclusivity and transparency, Blueprint implementation committees will continue to seek innovative ways to capture the interest and involvement of diverse stakeholders, ensuring that all voices are heard and considered in the decision-making process.



Within our [Survey Analysis](#), stakeholders perceive several challenges in engagement within our Blueprint plans. Despite widespread endorsement of the plan's goals and vision, there are concerns about community involvement. Respondents acknowledge the positive impact of current initiatives, such as the Community School model, but emphasize the importance of seeking buy-in from different groups, including diverse families, community and business partners, and staff. As another example, there is excitement about expanding PreK programs, but stakeholders feel they lack information about the logistics of implementation.

To tackle this obstacle, each Blueprint committee has been assigned the responsibility of bridging communication gaps within their respective pillars. Take, for instance, the Elevating Educators Committee, where the co-chairs undertook focused efforts to understand teachers' awareness of the Blueprint. Through conducting focus groups, they discovered that National Board Certification was the only aspect consistently understood by teachers as part of the Blueprint. In response, the committee is actively developing a network of teacher ambassadors to effectively disseminate information about all facets of Pillar 2 directly from teachers to their peers. This initiative is an example of the committee's initiatives aimed at enhancing communication and ensuring that all are engaged.

HCPS will monitor progress for this challenge by:

With valuable feedback from the 2023 System-wide survey, this process will be repeated with the 2024 Implementation Plan. Additional questions will include improvement measures for stakeholder engagement. Each pillar has outcomes that can also provide valuable information about effective communications, such as PreK enrollment, private provider participation, number of teachers pursuing national board certification, number of students accessing free post-CCR pathways, number of students accessing resources through Community Schools and mental health partners, and through customer service inquiries about the Blueprint to AskHCPS@hcps.org.

HCPS will continue its commitment to equity.

HCPS faces challenges in achieving equity, particularly concerning the Blueprint goals of diversity, recruitment, and retention of teachers, as well as addressing opportunity and achievement gaps among students based on socioeconomics, race, and community.

The district acknowledges the urgent need to diversify its educator workforce to reflect the local community's demographics and provide equal opportunities for all students. A comprehensive [Needs Assessment Report](#) for the years 2022-2023 has been commissioned to identify areas for improvement in cultivating a more diverse teacher candidate pool. Despite nearly 40% of its student population being persons of color, HCPS has seen less than 10% of its teachers being persons of color over the past five years. The report's synthesized findings highlight key action areas, including strengthening talent pathways, developing data-guided recruitment plans focused on diversity, and fully committing to increasing educator diversity as a priority strategy. Additionally related to staff and efforts towards equitable outcomes, HCPS faces challenges in incentivizing teachers to transfer to Blueprint low-performing schools (zero NBCT have transferred to date for the \$7,000 increase), necessitating strategic efforts like supporting NBC cohorts and offering fee support for instructional coaches partnering with teachers in these schools.

Regarding students, while the Blueprint has made strides in reducing opportunity gaps through initiatives like free dual enrollment and community schools, ensuring equitable access to resources remains a challenge. HCPS data shows that although dual enrollment has increased, it primarily benefits students already engaged in higher-level coursework, highlighting the need to reach students who may not have considered such opportunities. Academic data also demonstrates persistent gaps in student achievement across demographics, but we have started seeing growth in schools benefiting from the HCPS priority schools model.

[Survey Analysis](#) underscores concern about equity, with stakeholders expressing frustration about disparities in student support and the disparate impacts of the Blueprint on various groups. HCPS is committed to addressing these challenges through targeted efforts to support all students and educators and to ensure that the Blueprint's initiatives benefit everyone equitably.

HCPS will monitor progress for this challenge by:

For diversity of staff, to monitor progress HCPS has established a set of key data points for continuous evaluation. HCPS is tracking the increase in the percentage of teachers of color to better reflect the student population diversity, aiming to positively impact student outcomes. Additionally, the district is monitoring the percentage of conditionally certified teachers who successfully obtain their standard professional certificate, as our conditional teachers often represent the most diversity in our staff.

For student equity, HCPS is conducting thorough data analysis to identify areas where certain student populations may not be benefiting from expanded Blueprint opportunities and is implementing targeted outreach strategies. Similar to the challenge of resource allocation, the true measure of success in overcoming this equity challenge lies in observing tangible improvements in student achievement data across schools with historically lower academic performance. HCPS is committed to reducing achievement gaps across all [unique school designation](#) categories in reading and math, aligning with or exceeding state and county averages. By continuously monitoring these key data points and making data-driven decisions, HCPS aims to effectively address equity gaps and ensure sustainable, equitable outcomes for all students.



Reference: [Advancing the Strategic Plan](#); [HCPS Annual Report](#).