



## Harford County Public Schools

102 S. Hickory Avenue, Bel Air, Maryland 21014 ● Teri D. Kranefeld ● Manager of Communications  
office: 410-588-5203 ● cell: 443-752-2062 ● [teri.kranefeld@hcps.org](mailto:teri.kranefeld@hcps.org) ● [www.hcps.org](http://www.hcps.org) ● fax: 410-893-2478

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### HCPS adopts fresh look

*New logo represents Harford County generations growing and achieving together*



Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) has officially launched its new logo as part of an overall branding campaign. The Board of Education of Harford County voted on the design, at the recommendation of Superintendent of Schools Robert M. Tomback, during its scheduled business meeting Monday night. The new logo, designed by the Bel Air-based marketing and public relations firm A. Bright Idea, features an inclusive, unified circular structure representative of one system and one community

working together. Three leaves symbolize the generations that have progressed through the system and also represent elementary, middle and high school. The implied motion in the circle, coupled with the growth represented in the leaves, demonstrates the progressive nature of the school system's commitment to student achievement.

HCPS facilitated a collaborative, community-focused approach to the branding process. Several focus groups with various internal and external participants – including HCPS administrators, teachers, retired educators, support staff, students and parents and community business leaders – were conducted to gather research and develop initial concepts. In addition, the final logo concepts were posted on the school system's website and announced on the HCPS Facebook and Twitter pages. The public was encouraged to offer feedback and cast their vote for one of two possible logos.

The new logo for HCPS is just one piece of the school system's brand strategy, which was set in motion following a communications audit report commissioned by the Board of Education and conducted by the National Schools Public Relations Association (NSPRA) in 2007. As a result of the audit, NSPRA provided HCPS with 13 recommendations to achieve the goal of improving the school system's overall communications efforts. Audit recommendation #13 was to "develop a comprehensive branding/marketing strategy" for the school system.

Ultimately, the strategic marketing and branding campaign is designed to assist in producing higher student performance. The campaign will be used to recruit and retain quality staff and increase parental involvement, volunteerism and community partnerships. In addition, a consistent branding campaign will increase communication efficiency and effectiveness at the school and system levels and increase pride, trust and support of HCPS.

"We are excited about starting this new chapter in HCPS history," said Superintendent of Schools Robert M. Tomback. "Even more important than the new logo is the process that we worked through together – as a school system and community – for this rebranding effort. The collaboration invited meaningful discussion relative to our stakeholders' perceptions and expectations of the Harford County Public Schools. We appreciate the efforts of so many who made significant contributions to this initiative."

The HCPS Communications Office will use a phased-in approach to incorporating the new logo and brand identity on school system materials as supplies are depleted. This strategy allows the natural course of work to determine the rate at which the logo is integrated and ensures the branding is completely budget-neutral.

The previous book and ruler design had been used for more than 50 years. The logo was developed in 1958 by then HCPS Director of Human Resources Clark Jones. Originally, the logo was created as a marketing tool used to recruit new teachers and staff to the school system.

**\*\*The new, high-resolution logo files are included for your use. Official masthead is currently under development.**

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