



## ROBERT G. CASSILLY

Harford County Executive

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August 25, 2023

Harford County Council of PTA  
P.O. Box 435  
Bel Air, MD 21014

Dear HCCPTA President DeBiase,

Thank you for your July 22 letter about my administration's contribution to the budget for Harford County Public Schools.

Thank you for your kind words regarding the additional \$10 million we provided to HCPS. This funding, in addition to the \$305 million I originally proposed, was the result of respectful negotiations with school system leaders. As a result, HCPS also agreed to contribute \$15 million of their substantial fund balance toward operations in the fiscal year 2024 and to collaborate with us on budget discussions year-round.

Collaboration has already begun through regular meetings between our respective budget teams. Our focus will be on understanding the dollar impact of Blueprint mandates and opportunities to work together for more efficient use of taxpayer dollars.

You are correct that gaps will continue between the demands of the Blueprint legislation and available funding, and not only in Harford County. My fellow county executives across the state are deeply concerned about how they will pay for this sweeping \$32 billion mandate without significant tax increases on working families. Some of the larger counties have already begun raising taxes – smaller counties say that their population simply cannot fund these requirements.

Furthermore, the \$32 billion estimated cost over ten years does not include major expenses, such as additional space for full-day pre-K for 3- and 4-year-olds, and increased teacher salaries across the pay scale when starting teacher salaries are raised to \$60K.

I support raising teacher salaries; however, this massive, untested education reform will mainly direct funds to expand education bureaucracies.

School leaders have informed me that class sizes may increase dramatically, and programs may be cut to fund Blueprint requirements that have the force of law. In

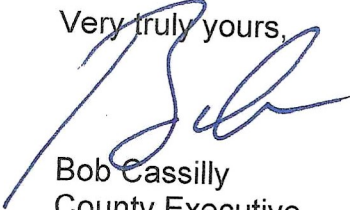
HCCPTA President DeBiase  
August 25, 2023  
Page 2

response, I am working with my counterparts across the state and with HCPS to identify challenges in the Blueprint and potential solutions, including legislative amendments.

I look forward to working with Board President Dr. Aaron Poynton and the rest of the board to more effectively resolve these important issues. Harford County Council of PTA can assist by staying informed of all the facts and informing your members. We will also need support for our efforts to improve education by directing funds to teachers in the classroom.

Please feel free to reach out to me at any time, either directly or through Cindy Mumby, if you have questions or if we may be of further assistance.

Very truly yours,



Bob Cassilly  
County Executive