



P. O. Box 435
Bel Air, MD 21014

October 29, 2023

Dr. Sean Bulson
HCPS Superintendent of Schools
A. A. Roberty Building
102 South Hickory Avenue
Bel Air, MD 21014

Dear Dr. Bulson,

The Harford County Council of PTA (HCCPTA) Board of Directors is looking forward to the 2023-2024 school year that is currently upon us! As we venture into this year, we are asking for your support.

As you know, the PTA is the largest and oldest child advocacy association in America. For more than 125 years, the PTA has partnered with school communities, decision makers and families to solve some of the most challenging problems affecting children in our nation's history. Among its historical accomplishments, the PTA was instrumental in the creation of kindergarten classes, reforming child labor laws, bringing hot and healthy lunch programs to schools, reforming the juvenile justice system, and adding arts programs to education.

In Harford County, the PTA has stood beside the Board of Education to fight for fair and equitable funding by our County decision makers as well as working with the State Board of Public Works to move much needed school construction projects forward. Many of the initiatives that you, as Superintendent of Schools, and a member of the Board of Education, promote requires a partnership within HCPS, the County Government, at home, and in the community.

All officers in PTA/PTSAs (up through the National PTA) are volunteers. In addition, the majority of those who volunteer are currently, or have been, career professionals in their fields. While all local unit members may not be educators, they are capable of being able to understand and support students while also educating other parents and guardians in the goals that connect us.

Sadly, in recent years, the HCCPTA Board has observed a lack of support for our local PTAs and its members within many of our school buildings. We are grateful for the recent inclusion of PTAs in the school system's newsletter, but we believe that the system could do more to support our PTAs and affirm the value of PTAs to school based administrators and staff.

We are asking for your support in sharing this message of partnership - as our children's success is dependent on all of us. Part of this effort includes:

- Encouraging principals and staff to join their local PTA/PTSA;
- Enhancing communication for family engagement and community PTA outreach;
- Having principals directly interface with the leaders of their local PTAs and PTSAs (if this is not currently done); and
- Strategizing ways in which we can work together to support all children.

PTA leader-to-parent/teacher/community engagement is challenging when the Administration does not advocate in favor of a PTA's value and the meaningful resources they may be able to provide.

HCCPTA is aware that some of these ideals require a culture shift and may take time. Inherently we believe that HCPS embraces the mission and values of PTA as they are used in the family and community engagement initiatives across the County. Integration is key.

PTA leaders across our County have volunteered to serve as a link in that chain. We believe you can help them with being regarded as partners on this journey.

HCCPTA is ready to support. Please let us know how we can help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Renee DeBiase". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A" and a stylized "DeBiase".

A. Renee DeBiase, President

// signed on behalf of the HCCPTA Board of Directors //

CC:

HCPS Board of Education
Harford County PTA Leaders