

The First 90 Days

Strategic Planning and Priority Setting for the 2024–2025 School Year



LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



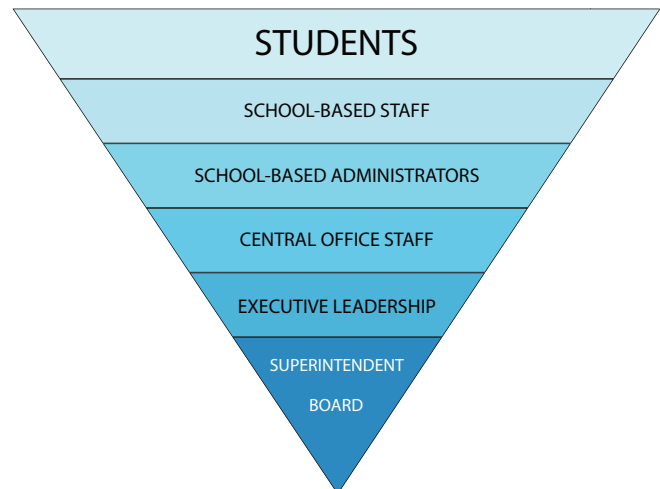
On the first day of my four-year term as Superintendent of the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS), I submit this plan to our students, staff, Board of Education members, and all stakeholders to illuminate my initial priorities that serve to set our district on the path to being great for every student. There will be extensive work done to prepare for the 2024–2025 school year, but the priorities in this plan place our student outcomes above all else and drive the collaborative focus of my leadership team and our partner stakeholders.

In less than two months, students and staff will walk through the doors of their schools and we need to have a plan in place to ensure that we are ready. I am sharing this publicly to set forth a plan of widespread collaboration and accountability. I will spend time during these 90 days gathering and analyzing data to determine whether additional action steps are necessary, or if current practices are effective in reaching outcomes. I will also establish focus groups and mechanisms for input and feedback that are designed to ensure valued stakeholder feedback is part of planning and decision-making. Not all outcomes and activities in this plan will be completed by the end of the first 90 days. The first 90 days serve to rapidly accelerate efforts toward improvement in prioritized areas and will conclude with a publicly provided comprehensive update. This plan marks the beginning of a series of 90-day plans throughout the year.

I spent my 173 days as Acting Superintendent listening to and learning from stakeholders and the feedback they provided is reflected in these priorities.

If we aspire to be a school system that is great for all students, it will take each and every one of us working together. I am excited for what we will accomplish.

William J. Barnes



Priority: Strategic Vision

What measurable outcomes will serve as indicators that HCPSS is on a path that leads to exemplary outcomes for every student? What goals and strategies will be developed to ensure that we are partnering with families to achieve those outcomes?

Action Steps

- Develop a diverse strategic planning advisory committee.
- Involve stakeholders in planning and improvement.
- Align the organizational structure to support students and school-based staff.
- Advance school and office improvement plans focused on strategic initiatives.
- Communicate progress updates to the public.
- Establish, track and publicize measurable goals and outcomes.

Priority: Blueprint

How will we leverage the Blueprint for Maryland's Future to best serve our students? What is our clearly defined 8-year implementation and funding plan that will enable us to maximize student outcomes?

Action Steps

- Hire Pre-K staffing to expand full day programming.
- Advance collaborative career ladder planning and development.
- Complete a comprehensive Literacy Plan, Career Counseling Impact Report, and PreK-5 Comprehensive Math Plan.
- Add Community School Coordinators.
- Begin school-level financial reporting across key Blueprint areas.
- Develop a comprehensive communication and community education plan on Blueprint implementation and impact.



Priority: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

How will student experiences and outcomes be improved by more equitable practices and inclusive experiences across all levels of the organization?

Action Steps

- Develop division-level strategic plans aligned with the Equity Framework.
- Convene an advisory group to assess efforts to diversify staff, reduce gaps among students, and enhance equitable practices.
- Establish and track accountability measures for staff performance, professional learning, and system progress.
- Assess system culture and staff morale and implement improvement strategies.



HCPSS Equity Framework

Equity provides the access, opportunities, and supports needed to help students, families, and staff reach their full potential by removing the barriers to success that individuals face. It does not mean equality or giving everyone the same thing. Resource: HCPSS Policy 1080 Educational Equity

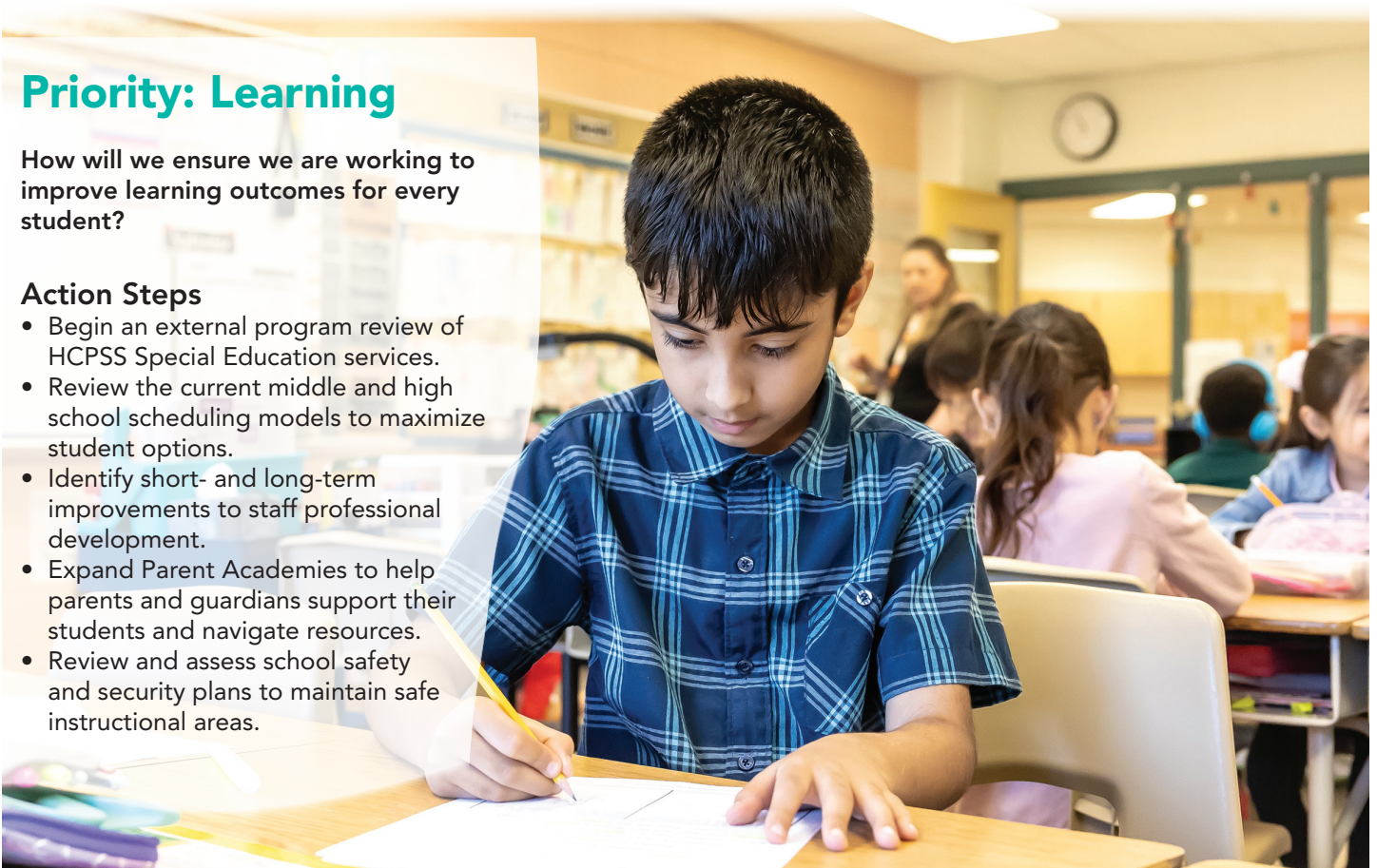
Belonging	Opportunity & Access	Instructional Excellence	Engaged & Inspired Learners
All students, staff and families experience belonging; and each person's physical, social, and emotional needs are met.	All students, staff, and families can access pathways that expose them to high-quality learning experiences.	All students and staff are provided with the resources necessary to deliver and experience high quality instruction.	All students and staff are empowered to shape their teaching and learning experiences

Priority: Learning

How will we ensure we are working to improve learning outcomes for every student?

Action Steps

- Begin an external program review of HCPSS Special Education services.
- Review the current middle and high school scheduling models to maximize student options.
- Identify short- and long-term improvements to staff professional development.
- Expand Parent Academies to help parents and guardians support their students and navigate resources.
- Review and assess school safety and security plans to maintain safe instructional areas.



Priority: Budget

How will the FY 2026 Operating Budget process be informed by stakeholders and reflect the district's values and priorities?

Action Steps

- Implement a communication and education action plan to enhance understanding and participation in the budget development process.
- Establish a FY 2026 Budget Development Timeline that supports meeting key priorities and includes necessary process changes.
- Refine the existing budget processes by gathering input from the Board of Education, the County Executive, County Council, Delegation, the Operating Budget Review Committee, and other stakeholder and advisory partners.
- Develop long range funding schedules that align to strategic planning.
- Embed Diversity, Equity and Inclusion practices in budgeting decision making.





Priority: Transportation

How will we ensure that students are transported to their destination safely and on time?

Action Steps

- Ensure contracts are in place to support our transportation model beginning on the first day of school.
- Test routes to ensure viability and accuracy.
- Engage contractors in planning and route testing.
- Assess and evaluate driver availability to account for any shortages.
- Communicate timely transportation information to families.



Priority: Human Resources

How will our system recruit, hire, and retain exceptional staff who reflect the diversity of our students and families?

Action Steps

- Conduct a full and collaborative review of Human Resources processes informed by experiential data from a diverse and broad set of stakeholders.
- Develop a strategic improvement plan that results in attracting and retaining highly qualified and diverse employees.
- Implement expanded staff well-being and recognition initiatives.
- Fill all school-based vacancies.

Measuring Progress

The school system currently deploys 125 data dashboards available for staff to monitor progress and identify areas for improvement. The dashboards are fed by comprehensive data that is provided publicly through reports, the State's report card, and on the HCPSS website.

New public dashboards will be developed and deployed to enhance transparency and accountability to be sure all stakeholders are informed partners in progress.

