

Oakland Mills Community Forum Responses to Questions

How was the cluster decided? Why wasn't Guilford Elementary School included in the cluster as a portion of those students that feed to Lake Elkhorn Middle School, then on to Oakland Mills High School? If it's truly an open community meeting, those parents and administrators should be included.

- Clusters are chosen based on the feeder school model. The clusters include elementary and middle schools that feed into the high school. Guilford Elementary has a small number of students that feed into Lake Elkhorn Middle School and then into Oakland Mills High School so we did not include Guilford in this community forum. We will include Guilford in the appropriate forum at a later date.

Howard County Schools have some terrific programs for advanced learners. My concerns are for the average/on-grade level learners. In middle school, an average learner is placed in mostly on-grade level classes, not challenged or pushed to work at a higher level. When they get to high school, they are often placed in several honors classes. This is difficult since they haven't been challenged up to this point.

- It is imperative that every student has access to a rigorous curriculum. HCPSS guidance counselors and teachers continuously monitor individual student's progress, and work with students and their families to ensure that course schedules reflect rigor. In addition, students are able to participate in projects that provide opportunities to showcase their skills and talents.

There seems to be a disconnect between the middle and high school teachers and/or programs. Can adjustments be made at the middle school level to challenge the average learner? Can the high schools provide some extra guidance so these students can stay in honors classes and be successful?

- HCPSS is committed to developing an alignment in course offerings for all schools. There is an articulation process at the end of the school year in which 8th grade students meet and interact with high school staff to prepare for the new school year. In addition, parents and their children are invited to an orientation session during the summer or at the beginning of the school year so they can become acclimated to their new school.

It is great to hear about elementary and middle school foreign language efforts. Why are expectations in HS language so low, lots of goofing off in English and in G/T language classes?

- Creating a safe, engaging and supportive environment has been shown to help decrease inappropriate student behavior. HCPSS has implemented multiple strategies that support regular attendance and work toward reducing inappropriate behaviors in the classroom.

The scope of the World Language Program is expanding well beyond the traditional model. Our goal is for all students to reach an intermediate or higher level of language proficiency that can be applied in real world situations.

Individual concerns should be brought to the principal's attention.

How can we enforce a learning environment in Lake Elkhorn MS (because it does not exist)? They need teachers that can give homework, quizzes and make the rigor the same, like other schools.

- As outlined in the HCPSS strategic plan, Vision 2018, students have equitable access to the same rigorous curriculum throughout the school system. The HCPSS instructional program is rigorous, globally relevant and aligned with international and/or nationally recognized college and career readiness standards. It is designed to ensure consistency in teaching and learning expectations for all students.
HCPSS provides professional development for teachers to enhance interpersonal and leadership skills, deepen job-specific knowledge and grow in their professional practice. Teachers are held accountable for and supported in meeting standards-based performance expectations. HCPSS has a robust evaluation system in place that aligns performance expectations to system goals for all employees.
Families and the community are engaged and supported as partners in education. Parents should continue to share concerns with their student's teachers and school administrators.

Why do the schools not leverage code.org and such tools during school technology period, but instead, have an after school paid class? In fact, the class is taught by the staff member.

- At the elementary level, coding is part of the Instructional Technology essential curriculum. Middle school teachers introduce students to Scratch programming and Sketch-up. We are continually expanding our use of and access to these and other resources.
Computer science courses in high school include AP computer science, advanced data structures, and an advanced object oriented design capstone course. Successful completion of a technology education course, which includes computer programming, is a graduation requirement.

Can you adopt a zero tolerance to principals and teachers that frustrate students academically and their parents when the parents try to be involved in their children's education?

- Parents are our partners in education. We continually encourage our parents to be involved in their child's education. Parents are the child's first teacher and we respect and encourage their continued involvement.
We are developing enhanced technology tools to better allow parents to monitor their child's progress, maintain communication with teachers and take an active role in their child's education. This technology will be available in the coming months.

Can you enforce a disciplinary action with teachers who do not return their emails within the specified time stated by the HCPSS policy and the principals that do nothing about it?

- All staff are expected to respond within 24 hours to parents and the community. It is our intent to be responsive to parents and the community in a timely manner as we recognize them as partners in education.

What are the Oakland Mills Community schools doing to provide leadership opportunities for our students at the middle school level?

- Students in the Oakland Mills school cluster have various opportunities for students to get involved in leadership. For example, students can participate in Falcon News at Oakland Mills Middle School. Students can be video recorded and share news stories in the studio. The students announce birthdays, lead their peers in the Pledge of Allegiance and share the lunch menu for the day. Students also participate in meetings with the administrators to stay in touch with students' viewpoints. Other opportunities include the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Emerging Young Leaders initiative, the Black Student Achievement Program, student council and the Student Ambassadors Program.

How can we provide opportunities for students to have the same experience for outdoor education as our peers from other communities who have 3–5 days?

- As of the 2015–2016 school year, Outdoor Education will be a 3-day, 2-night program for students at all HCPSS middle schools.

In order to close the achievement gap, you must reach and engage parents. This room shows HCPSS falls short in this regard. This cluster should be filled with more Black and Latino parents. How can this be addressed?

- The school system continues to provide outreach to our diverse parent population. The HCPSS has worked to form stronger partnerships to better meet the needs of our diverse population. The Office of Community Outreach has worked with our diverse families to offer parent forums, parent academies and other programs to encourage participation.

HCPSS works with the African American Community Roundtable to increase awareness and participation among African-American students in the variety of educational opportunities available and shares information about resources and events that help increase academic and personal achievement.

HCPSS created the Black Student Achievement Program as part of a larger effort to close the achievement gap and help black students excel as leaders, conquer challenges of the 21st century, and become college and career ready upon high school graduation.

Many feel unwelcomed. Oakland Mills High School has become a very dangerous environment. Constant fights and disrupted classrooms. Many cite lack of administration presence. Can this be helped?

- Oakland Mills High School (OMHS) has an active Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports program that continues to reduce behaviors that lead to out of school suspensions. This year, OMHS has again had fewer suspensions than in previous years. If the perception is that there is a lack of presence, it is often helpful to share this with the principal.

You have highlighted tremendous achievements of your schools, students, faculty and administration this evening and I am so appreciative of that. Those house hunting or without students in your schools need to know this information. What are your plans for broadcasting your fantastic achievements to the broader community?

- Dr. Foose and the director of community outreach and engagement have met with a variety of community organizations to share information about the school system and its strategic plan, Vision 2018.

The school system website, www.hcpss.org, regularly highlights achievements and events that are taking place in our schools.

Major achievements by schools, students, staff, administrators, parent and community volunteers, etc. are recognized by the Superintendent during Board of Education meetings. HCPSS issues a press release to the local media every month detailing recent recognitions. This information also is posted on the HCPSS website. Dr. Foose uses her Twitter account to congratulate each person being recognized, including a photo of the person at the BOE meeting. Recognitions highlighted on the website and/or press releases often are shared on the HCPSS Facebook page or Twitter account.

Every HCPSS school has a Twitter account from which they often share school and student achievements. A small number of schools also have Facebook pages or Instagram accounts, from which they do the same.

Equity in school improvements/renovations: it seems older schools (Lake Elkhorn and Oakland Mills middle schools) are lacking in updates on critical spaces such as bathrooms, locker rooms, cafeterias and outdoor spaces. How does the school system decide on structural improvements to school buildings?

- Capital improvement priorities are based on several factors that include the age and condition of the existing facilities, student enrollment at each school, changes in instructional needs, and available funding. Parents are invited to share their priorities and concerns during the annual capital budget public hearings or at the public forums held during Board of Education meetings.

More information about the capital budget is provided at <http://www.hcpss.org/about-us/budgets/capital-budget>.

Would Lake Elkhorn Middle School and Oakland Mills Middle School consider developing a sports program such as basketball, wrestling, etc. to keep students engaged and to help feed scholar athletes into Oakland Mills High School?

- Lake Elkhorn Middle School currently offers athletic intramurals in lacrosse, basketball, flag football and soccer.

HCPSS has developed a partnership with the Columbia Association's Youth and Teen Center (YTC) at The Barn to offer after-school activities free of charge. YTC provides opportunities for students to participate in a variety of programs available at YTC that promote leadership skills, self-esteem and encourage community service. YTC also collaborates with Oakland Mills middle and high schools to support positive behavior programs at each school.

HCPSS also partners with Howard County Recreation and Parks (HCRP) to expand opportunities for students to participate in tee ball and baseball. HCRP will collaborate with HCPSS staff to identify school areas that would benefit from developmental baseball programs and will provide opportunities for students to play tee ball and baseball through the Columbia Baseball League.

Please develop a web page for schools and PTA to promote their events to the entire HCPSS community.

- Each school has its own webpage, which provides school news, event announcements, and other information for parents and the community. Find your school webpage at <http://www.hcpss.org/schools>.

HCPSS recently modernized all school websites. The new sites are mobile friendly and have streamlined navigation across levels. Visitors to the sites will notice a focus on publishing timely news and events that can be easily shared on social media.

Additionally, parents and community members can use the HCPSS mobile app to conveniently follow news and events for all of their children's schools, as well as district-wide announcements. Each school site links to essential applications, county-wide resources and ways to get involved with the school community including the PTA and Boosters websites.

HCPSS also uses Twitter, Facebook and other communication channels to keep students, staff, parents and the community informed.

Why would you make so many changes to key administrators in our cluster so close together?

- The comprehensive needs of the system are assessed and plans are developed to address the needs of our students. Placement of administrators is considered based on the school needs.

How are teachers monitored and what are expectations where the online grading system is concerned and what training do they get?

- HCPSS provides professional development for teachers to enhance interpersonal and leadership skills, deepen job-specific knowledge and grow in their professional practice. Teachers are held accountable for and supported in meeting standards-based performance expectations. HCPSS has a robust evaluation system in place that aligns performance expectations to system goals for all employees. (See www.hcpss.org/about-us/teacher-evaluation-model)

As administrators and teachers, how do you feel about Common Core because most parents I know are not seeing the positive on how it prepares for college readiness?

- Standards certainly play a critical role in education; they set consistent expectations for the minimum level of knowledge that students at each level must master. The Common Core standards are unique because they are the first set of standards to be developed and adapted by the majority of states.

Far more important factors influence a positive and successful learning experience. The curriculum must be high quality, easily accessible and understood, and accompanied by a rich library of resources. Teachers must have access to relevant and timely professional learning opportunities. School systems must set clear expectations, and even more importantly, must provide supportive environments where administrators and teachers have the latitude to innovate.

How can a child report a threat to guidance and then be viciously attacked the next day, as soon as she enters the school? Why wasn't the student who made the threat being monitored upon entering the school?

- HCPSS is committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment for all students. Preventing bullying is an important part of this goal. Our schools provide a variety of initiatives to teach students, families and staff about bully prevention. Through character education programs, such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and Developmental Assets, students learn conflict resolution and assertiveness skills while further developing empathy and respect. Professional development for staff and information provided for families also assist us in our efforts to keep students safe from bullying and harassment.

If you believe your child is being bullied, please refer to the Student/Parent Handbook available on the HCPSS website or at your child's school. In addition, please be sure to complete a Bullying, Harassment or Intimidation form, available on our website or in schools.

Also see Board Policies:

- Policy 1060, Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment, or Intimidation
- Policy 1040, Safe School Environment
- Policy 1000, Civility

According to my son, there are a lot of drugs at Oakland Mills High School. What is the school doing about this? Cameras everywhere should be able to see what my son can see.

- HCPSS, including Oakland Mills HS, is committed to providing a drug-free academic environment for all students. We encourage all students with knowledge of violations of Board Policy 9230, Alcohol, Other Drugs, Prescription Medication and Over-the-Counter Products, to inform staff members or the school resource officer assigned to the school. The source of the information will be kept confidential.

What is the plan regarding increased behavior issues in the schools: violence and fighting, disrespectful language and bullying?

- See above response.
Each school is responsible for implementing a plan in which students who display positive behavior are reinforced for those behaviors. Many of our schools utilize positive behavior intervention supports.
A revised Student Code of Conduct was recently approved by the Board of Education.

I want to first applaud the faculty and staff at Oakland Mills High School making an excellent learning environment for my kids. My concern lies with the percent of children that receive/free and reduce lunches. Families in my neighborhood move out of our neighborhood because they see the numbers. I was one of these parents until I asked parents of students currently attending OMHS. I'm glad I did.

- It is our job as a school system to ensure the resources are in place to support the needs of all families. HCPSS participates in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. Students from households that meet federal income guidelines are eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals.

What are the statistics of Howard County students that enter college requiring developmental math? What are we doing to improve this?

- HCPSS graduates attend many different colleges, which have individual requirements for college readiness, so specific data is not available. Many community colleges use an SAT score of 1650 as a benchmark indicating that incoming students will not need remedial coursework. The average SAT score for recent HCPSS graduates was 1657 points, 219 points greater than the average for all Maryland public schools and 186 points greater than the average for all public schools nationwide.

HCPSS is:

- Strengthening high school course offerings and course content
- Working to ensure that more students enter high school enrolled in advanced courses
- Working to ensure that every student access GT or AP courses prior to graduation
- Aligning course content to new, redesigned SAT
- Providing family support at the HCPSS Family Math Support Center
- Working with families to strengthen advocacy
- Designing summer courses and intervention to help students accelerate to advanced courses

What are you doing to increase student physical activity? One semester all through high school is not enough and when students' grades make it impossible to participate in athletics you are alienating these students.

- There are many courses offered at the high school level in which students can enroll that support them in increasing their activity level in addition to sports. This includes dance education and physical education electives.

Our partnerships with the Columbia Association and the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks, as well as activities offered in our after school Bridges Programs, give students many opportunities to engage in physical activities after the regular school day has ended.

We are encouraging teachers, through Wellness Policy 9090, to work with students to increase physical activity throughout the school day, for example, by providing movement breaks.

The school system is spending an inordinate amount of time preparing for and administering a useless test that will provide no measure of how my children are doing. Have you quantified the amount of time lost from actual instruction that is dedicated to the PARCC?

- The PARCC assessment is directly aligned with the new Maryland College and Career Standards. Because of this alignment, preparation for the assessment does not take away from regular instruction.

The PARCC test takes approximately 4–5 hours per subject area. Parents and schools will be provided detailed results that showcase their student's knowledge and skills. It also provides valuable information for the teachers and parents.

The Maryland State Department of Education is making a number of changes to the PARCC test for the 2015–2016 school year that will shorten testing duration, make it easier to administer and take less time away from instruction.

Any plans to expand world languages? When will it expand beyond Title 1 schools?

- The scope of the World Language Program is expanding well beyond the traditional model. Our goal is for all students to reach an intermediate or higher level of language proficiency that can be applied in real world situations.
World languages are offered at all middle and high schools. Spanish and French language instruction is available in Grades 7–8 at all 19 middle schools. Chinese, Spanish and French are offered in Grades 6–8 at Mt. View and Murray Hill middle schools as a continuation of the elementary world language pilot program in which many students at these schools participate. Language choices vary widely at the high school level based on student interest.
The expansion of the Elementary School Model program includes World Languages at the elementary school level from pre-kindergarten through Grade 5. This program has been implemented at six schools and will be expanded this year to two additional schools.

What is rigor?

- Rigor is a quality of instruction that requires each student to construct meaning, impose structure on information, integrate individual skills into processes, operate within but at the outer edge of current ability, and apply what is learned to more than one context and to unpredictable situations.

Universal Pre-K was a hot topic during the 2014 election. What are your plans to expand Universal Pre-K to the Oakland Mills schools? Give us a 10-year, 5-year, and 1-year plan for Oakland Mills.

- We have full Pre-K programs at Bryant Woods, Laurel Woods, Phelps Luck, Running Brook, Stevens Forest and Talbott Spring elementary schools. HCPSS is working toward universal Pre-K at all schools, budget pending.

Thunder Hill Elementary School student population has exploded. Any plans to expand?

- HCPSS planned for growth with a full renovation and expansion in 2012. Relocatable classrooms have been installed to provide additional swing space at the school. The school ended this past school year with an enrollment of 536 and has a capacity of 509. This translates into 104 percent utilization of capacity, which is within the target utilization range of 90-110 percent identified in Board of Education Policy 6010 School Attendance Areas. New capital projects or redistricting are not planned for this school.

Will there be any changes to the high school start time?

- A School Start and Dismissal Time Charter Committee was established under the direction of the Superintendent to gather input from a broad base of stakeholders regarding the possibility of adjusting the start and dismissal times of schools. The committee examined research related to school start times; developed a survey to identify considerations related to impact on student well-being, student activities, community activities, and safety; and developed future tasks.
The committee will implement Phase III of the charter, which includes the development of implementation models for elementary, middle and high schools. Staff will develop costs associated with each model. The Board of Education will review the proposed

models before they are presented to community forums. Information gathered through the community forums will be used to recommend action to the Board of Education. For the 2015–2016 school year, HCPSS start times will remain the same.

Has any consideration been given to uniforms to allow for equitable enforcement of the dress code?

- Uniforms are not being considered at this time.

How are teachers mentored and given feedback on their classroom skills?

- HCPSS has adopted the 2013 Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching as the foundation for the professional practice component of the teacher evaluation model. The Howard County evaluation model is customized to satisfy the Maryland State Department of Education requirements. The model was developed by a team of 120 HCPSS educators, school administrators, central office leaders and union representatives. Teachers are either observed by an administrator or by their peers each school year. Teachers set goals at the beginning of the school year with their administrators then hold mid-year and end-of-year conferences, as well as monitoring sessions during the school year. Elementary and Secondary Curricular Programs staff mentor teachers and provide professional development for teachers.

Are these schools not ranked because there are no comparable categories as we've been told and which is no longer the case? (Contact Greatschools.org) Or are these schools actually lagging behind and/or lacking something other HCPSS schools have and/or show?

- Greatschools.org rankings are based on parent reviews. This is not a true reflection of any of our schools, as the rankings are not based on academics, student achievement, testing and other factors.

If so, what is being done to ensure all HCPSS schools benefit from and are examples of all that HCPSS schools claim to be and are proud to be?

- The HCPSS Strategic Plan, Vision 2018, projects a vision for the kind of educational program that every child deserves: one where students are inspired to learn, challenged to grow and empowered to reach for their goals. It is organized into four goals that define the targeted future state in relation to students, staff, families and the community, and the organization as a whole. Specific strategies are identified under each goal area, and specific performance measures track success over the five-year implementation period.

We have wonderful students and teachers. It would be nice to receive deserved recognition. On the other hand if we do need to improve to meet certain parameters, please make sure we get the resources to achieve them.

- Dr. Foose and the director of community outreach and engagement have met with a variety of community organizations to share information about the school system and its strategic plan, Vision 2018.

The school system website, www.hcpss.org, regularly highlights achievements and events that are taking place in our schools.

Major achievements by schools, students, staff, administrators, parent and community volunteers, etc. are recognized by the Superintendent during Board of Education meetings. HCPSS issues a press release to the local media every month detailing recent recognitions. This information also is posted on the HCPSS website. Dr. Foose uses her Twitter account to congratulate each person being recognized, including a photo of the person at the BOE meeting. Recognitions highlighted on the website and/or press releases often are shared on the HCPSS Facebook page or Twitter account. Every HCPSS school has a Twitter account, from which they often share school and student achievements. A small number of schools also have Facebook pages or Instagram accounts, from which they do the same.

What is the anticipated time for the implementation of the World Language Program/curriculum at Thunder Hill Elementary School to additional schools in the county?

- The scope of the World Language Program is expanding well beyond the traditional model. Our goal is for all students to reach an intermediate or higher level of language proficiency that can be applied in real world situations.

World languages are offered at all middle and high schools. Spanish and French language instruction is available in Grades 7–8 at all 19 middle schools. Chinese, Spanish and French are offered in Grades 6–8 at Mt. View and Murray Hill middle schools as a continuation of the elementary world language pilot program in which many students at these schools participate. Language choices vary widely at the high school level based on student interest.

The expansion of the Elementary School Model program includes World Languages at the elementary school level from pre-kindergarten through Grade 5. This program has been implemented at six schools and will be expanded this year to two additional schools.

My concern is about the PARCC assessments. Can I opt my child out?

- PARCC, High School Assessments and Maryland School Assessments are part of the state instructional program and students are required to participate.

MSDE provides the following formal guidance on opting out of instructional and assessment programs:

- State law requires that all children attend public school, a nonpublic school or be educated at home. For students who attend public school, state regulations permit parents to have their children opt out of only a few specific aspects of the public school curriculum. See COMAR 1A.04.18.01F(5)(a) and I (2) (a) (“Family Life and Human Sexuality”) and “HIV/AIDS Instruction”).
- Students who refuse to participate in state mandated testing would negatively impact federal accountability ratings for their home school and district.

Any thoughts about video cameras regularly recording classroom activities? Benefits are: Evidence for classroom disputes; Occasional review by teacher for performance improvement; Research into unintended or unconscious bias.

- We are not considering the use of cameras in classrooms at this time.

Why are female students at OMMS being made to change for petty and even inadvertent violations of the dress code? For example, if a girl is wearing a top that just happens to expose an inch of stomach while reaching up to get something from a locker? The male students are asked to pull their pants up but are not told to change while exposing their underwear on purpose. It is reported by girls that as soon as the staff moves on, the boys pull their pants back down.

- The Board recognizes the right of students to express themselves through their choice of personal attire. While student dress and appearance are the responsibility of students and their parents, the Board believes that dress and appearance should not interfere with any aspect of the educational process and expects that dress and appearance are consistent with Policy 9210, Student Dress Code, which indicates that students will wear attire that contributes to a safe school environment conducive to learning. Additional information can be found in the Student and Parent Handbook.

How is this fair? And does that not send a message that boys education is more important than girls?

- Students (boys and girls) will not wear attire that is disruptive to the school environment, that promotes illegal or harmful activities, or that could endanger the health or safety of that student or others during school hours and school-related activities.

What are you doing to help teachers be able to afford to live in Howard County?

- The Board of Education has approved the Operating Budget for the 2015–2016 school year. The budget totals \$776.3 million, which is \$3 million above the Board’s budget proposed in March, and includes \$11.5 million for salary increases. Both Howard County and Maryland have faced serious financial challenges for several years, and many county agencies have experienced budget cuts and layoffs. The Board of Education and Dr. Foose remain committed to providing the best possible salary and benefits package for all employees.

Do you feel that, what seems like an excessive amount of testing (MAP, PARCC, GALLUP), takes away from valuable time in the classroom?

- HCPSS curriculum and assessments define the critical skills that students must master in each grade to stay on track to succeed in college and careers in the global economy and throughout life. Consequently, MAP, PARCC, as well Gallup, gives teachers, parents and administrators the information to inform our progress in preparing students for college and careers.

I would like to learn more about the Blessings in a Backpack program and see how this program can be started at Stevens Forest Elementary School.

- The mission of Blessings in a Backpack is to ensure impoverished elementary school children are fed on the weekends throughout the school year. The school’s role is to identify the students in need, contact the parents and distribute backpacks filled with perishable food items. The students return the backpacks on Monday to be filled again on the upcoming Friday.

Schools can work with the Partnerships Office to develop new educational partnerships.

I understand that Thunder Hill Elementary School is slated for a new principal in 2015–2016 school year. Can you tell me what the selection process will be?

- The job announcement is posted, applicants apply, screening takes place with the applications and interviews are held. From this process, a principal is then selected.

I have the utmost respect for all educators due to the challenges that you face everyday. I notice that the school calendar seems fragmented. It seems that the full five-day week of school is not as numerous as it should be during the year. There are partial weeks with professional days and holidays that would interrupt the continuity of flow of the subject being presented.

- A proposed calendar is drawn up by a Calendar committee, which includes representatives of the Howard County Education Association, support staff, principals, central office staff, students and parents. Input from stakeholder groups is solicited throughout the committee's deliberations.
Please let HCPSS know if you are interested in serving on the Calendar committee.

Could we as a school system provide a more consistent schedule that has fewer interruptions?

- Maryland law requires that all public schools be closed on the following days: Thanksgiving, the Friday following Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, President's Day, the Friday before Easter, the Monday after Easter and Memorial Day.
The Board of Education has determined that schools will be closed on the following days: Labor Day, primary and general election days (state law requires school for students), Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.
The Master Agreement between the Board of Education and HCEA provisions days during the school year for staff to participate in professional development and complete work related activities.

Oakland Mills HS – 3 known incidences

- How can a child with all E's in a marking period, never be approached with any concern or regard from an administrator or guidance counselor?
- What is their function?
- Who should reach out to the child at a critical time—sophomore year?
 - It is the responsibility of the administrator to ensure the teachers and guidance counselors meet with students and discuss course selection, monitor grades and attend to the academic needs of students in their building. If this is not being done, do not hesitate to communicate with the administrator and/or the administrator director who supervises the principal.

Suggestions for next session: less talking from the administrators re: each school; more time to allow parents to ask questions.

- Thank you for your suggestions. We will continue to plan community forums that give administrators the opportunity to share what is taking place in their schools while giving

parents and community members an opportunity to ask questions. We appreciate your attendance.

Why do you claim there is no money for para-educators when Dr. Foose travels with an entourage and gets a car and driver allowance? Shouldn't her excess be cut before educators?

- Some paraeducator positions were reallocated based on the need of the school system. No paraeducators lost their job.

What is being done to address the school to neighborhood violence currently ongoing in some of our schools?

- School resource officers are being assigned to middle and high schools to address the neighborhood violence that is in proximity of some of our schools. Schools without school resource officers assign staff to patrol the perimeters of the schools to ensure safety of all students.

Why has Dr. Foose cancelled all meetings with PTACHC (PTA Council of Howard County) and refused to reschedule?

- The superintendent values a collaborative working relationship with PTACHC. She and senior staff are in regular communication with PTACHC representatives and engage in multiple meetings throughout the year.

Why is spelling no longer taught?

- Spelling is taught in Howard County as outlined in the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards. Spelling Instruction is integrated into writing and word study instruction. All Howard County students participate in Building Vocabulary program that supports the development of spelling skills.

Why is the world language only Spanish? Why can't other languages be offered, other choices?

- Spanish is the language of choice for the elementary program for several reasons: the practicality of Spanish, the availability of high quality instructional resources and the availability of highly qualified teachers.

World languages are offered at all middle and high schools. Spanish and French language instruction is available in Grades 7–8 at all 19 middle schools. Chinese, Spanish and French are offered in Grades 6–8 at Mt. View and Murray Hill middle schools, as a continuation of the elementary world language pilot program in which many students at these schools participate.

Language choices vary widely at the high school level based on student interest.

Why is so much time and money being focused on standard testing than actual teaching methods? What is the federal mandate for this and where can it be viewed? Where is the money from following these standards as well as others going since we can't afford para-educators any more?

- The PARCC assessment is directly aligned with the new Maryland College and Career Standards and is implemented in all Maryland school systems. Because of this alignment, preparation for the assessed content does not take away from regular instruction.

The PARCC test takes approximately 4–5 hours per subject area. Parents and schools will be provided detailed results that showcase their students' knowledge and skills. It also provides valuable information for the teachers and parents.

The Maryland adoption of Common Core state standards have raised expectations for teachers to increase rigor in language arts, mathematics and all content areas in preparation for getting students prepared for college and careers.

Why have our school standards lowered so drastically over the last dozen or so years? And it has, I graduated from OMHS in 2000?

- The Maryland adoption of Common Core state standards have raised teachers' expectations to include more rigor in language arts, mathematics and all content areas, in preparation for getting students prepared for college and careers.