

**Education Committee Report by Jonathan Edelson
February 12, 2019**

- I delivered OMCA testimony on the FY 2020 HCPSS Operating Budget at the January 31 Board of Education Meeting. I also submitted an electronic copy to the BOE. A Reading Recovery teacher from Stevens Forest testified just before me, which was coincidental but also very convenient as it reinforced the equity message. OM residents have also posted the testimony on county-wide social media, where it has started conversations about equity in budgets and programs.
- At the last education committee meeting, we talked about collecting all data currently available on school equity, achievement gaps, and disparities to form a comprehensive message that might be used beyond Howard County (e.g. with state officials, social welfare and advocacy organizations, media, etc.) We are forming a small school equity subgroup comprised of people who have been working with a lot of data, to put together everything collected so far, analyze data, and request new data to fill gaps. The subcommittee will meet in the coming weeks to develop a plan. I will discuss with the education committee at our next meeting. Subcommittee results or findings that the education committee feels should have OMCA backing for action will be brought to the board.
- An OMHS parent alerted me to the capital budget work session where school system officials, when asked why they are emphasizing new capacity construction over deferred maintenance, compared school buildings to cars. In other words, instead of putting expensive and hard to find parts in a 30 year old car, one would buy a new one. This to me is a terrible analogy as cars (with a few very, very rare exceptions) depreciate no matter how well maintained and cannot be systemically renovated, while real estate tends to appreciate and can be kept functional and in good repair for decades or even centuries with proper investment. This is also the kind of thinking we need to combat to support our schools. We cannot wait for them to decline to the condition Talbott Springs was in, where the only logical solution is a rebuild. That would mean many more years of children learning in substandard environments.
- Grace's Closet, which was founded by Vicky Cutroneo and collects and stores clothing for children in need in HCPSS schools, delivered a large shipment of winter coats and accessories to me last week. I contacted all schools in the Village, and OMHS, OMMS, SFES, and TSES responded with needs. I delivered the coats and they have been distributed. I will secure more for OMMS and OMHS; SFES and TSES confirmed they have adequate supply for now.
- An OMHS student is going to be a candidate for student member of the Board of Education. The Education Committee has offered its support to her as she navigates the process.