



**Board of Education of Howard County
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland Senate,
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
March 8, 2022**

**Board of Education
of Howard County**

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**SB0756: FAVORABLE With AMENDMENTS
University System of Maryland - County School Technology Pilot Program –
Established**

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) supports SB0756 **University System of Maryland - County School Technology Pilot Program - Established** with amendments that would meet the intent to provide resources and analytical tools for school redistricting.

The school boundary review process, as last completed by the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) in November 2019, concluded with more than 5,000 students attending a new school during the 2020-2021 school year. In addition to overcrowding, the process aimed to advance equity by addressing the distribution of students affected by poverty across schools, and plan ahead for the impact of a new high school, scheduled to open in fall 2023.

Through the ten-month-long process, parents, students, community members and elected officials in Howard County expressed their supports and concerns alike. Opportunities for public discussion and stakeholder input included an online survey, community meetings and seven public hearings following the presentation of the Superintendent's recommendation to the Board. Extensive consideration by the Board throughout the process involved nine public work sessions and the receipt of approximately 8,500 pieces of testimony.

Redistricting can be a difficult process where no one solution will satisfy everyone. In the time since the 2019 redistricting, the Board instituted a thorough review of HCPSS Policy 6010 School Attendance Areas to incorporate community, staff and Board feedback, with changes adopted just last month.

The Board appreciates the PTA Council of Howard County's (PTACHC) stated intent to provide analytical support from the University System of Maryland to the HCPSS Office of School Planning for future redistricting efforts. As written, SB0756 falls short of setting up a collaborative effort and has the potential to remove the process from local control, however staff is hopeful through recent discussions with stakeholders and the sponsor that the original intent can be realized.

For these reasons, we urge a FAVORABLE report of SB0756 with amendments from this Committee.