



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

May 9, 2023

Sue Johnson, President
Frederick County Board of Education
191 South East Street
Frederick, Maryland 21701

Dr. Cheryl L. Dyson, Superintendent
Frederick County Public Schools
191 South East Street
Frederick, Maryland 21701

Dear President Johnson and Superintendent Dyson:

One of my most important responsibilities as County Executive is to develop a budget that invests in our community's priorities and is fiscally responsible. We received unprecedented community input as we developed the FY2024 budget, as more than 1,500 people participated in the process through our town halls, our Balancing Act survey, or by submitting comments.

Through that process, I heard loudly and clearly that our residents expect us to invest in our people, which is one reason why I proposed a record investment of \$405 million to support our public schools. That was \$35 million above the legally required maintenance of effort, with an additional \$2.9 million in in-kind support. In my budget address, I recognized that this funding still does not meet the Board of Education's full request, and I pledged to work with you and other stakeholders to develop a sustainable approach to implement the Blueprint for Maryland's Future so our schools are places where every student can succeed.

Since introducing the budget, I heard concerns from Board members, FCPS officials, educators, and families that it does not do enough to offset the impact of a 2022 state law which required a one-year adjustment to the maintenance of effort calculation for FY2024.

In response to those concerns, I am proposing a supplemental budget which – if adopted – will provide an additional \$14.07 million for public education. The supplemental budget will take FY2023 actual income that exceeded projections to provide \$9.07 million to offset the 2022 state action and will transfer \$5 million from our revenue stabilization fund to the Board's self-insurance fund to replenish reserves which were depleted by higher than anticipated post-pandemic health claims. These appropriations will be incorporated into the FY2025 maintenance of effort calculation.

If adopted, these proposals will increase the County's total investment in our public schools to \$419 million, which is \$49 million above maintenance of effort, with an additional \$2.9 million in in-kind support. This is a 15% increase over the total FY2023 appropriation, which is a substantial – if not historic – year-over-year percentage increase.

Like every government and school system, we are dealing with the effects of the pandemic – including its effects on our budgets. With this supplemental budget, I am proposing to hold FCPS harmless from a state decision and to mitigate the effects of a massive premium increase on your employees and retirees. Together, these actions will help FCPS deal with the unprecedented challenges currently facing our school system.

Thank you for maintaining an open line of communication throughout this process. Working together, we have developed a fiscally sound solution that provides more for our students, educators, and schools.

I look forward to working with you as we develop a long-term strategy for ensuring a bright future for every student in Frederick County.

Sincerely,



Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

CC: Frederick County Council Members
Frederick County Board of Education Members