

## Linton Springs Elementary School PTA



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375 Ronsdale Road  
Sykesville, Maryland 21784

March 15, 2023

Subject: School Funding for FY24

Dear Carroll County Commissioners,

We previously wrote in July 2022 detailing the financial challenges facing our schools and the need for increased funding to adequately address those needs. After understanding the budget process, we also wrote to the BOE in November encouraging them to seek additional funding from the County to address CCPS' various needs. Within that letter we committed to supporting the Superintendent and the BOE in any request for additional funding, and we do so now. We fully support the Superintendent and BOE in their request for additional funding to keep CCPS successfully operating.

Since that time, the need for additional funding has become more urgent as inflationary increases continue and costly Blueprint requirements are looming. Our Advocacy Committee members have followed these developments closely, by attending Commissioner town hall meetings and viewing video streams of various meetings, including the November 30 meeting with the State delegation and the January 11 meeting wherein Superintendent McCabe and the Board of Education (BOE) detailed for the Commissioners the financial challenges facing Carroll County Public Schools (CCPS) and laid the foundation for the request of an additional \$13.4 million to support our schools.

As you know, Carroll County schools are deserving of praise and pride – finishing at, or near, the top of all other school districts in the recently released 2021-2022 Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) scores. It is important to uphold this reputation and continue to meet the expectations of the County's families. In addition, because school quality affects property values, having high-quality schools in Carroll County will attract homebuyers and add to the appeal of the county.

Due to the aforementioned financial impact of Blueprint requirements and rising costs, the Superintendent and BOE have been clear that **without additional funding CCPS will not look the same in the near future**. Class sizes will be larger and the quality of our children's education will be compromised. We implore you to evaluate the Superintendent's request for additional funding fairly and carefully and endeavor to grant the sum being requested. We understand that allocating more money to the schools may impact funds allocated to other services. However, we trust that the data regarding CCPS population growth and mounting school expenses will persuade you that funds to the

schools are needed. There is no more essential service that government can provide, no higher moral imperative, and no greater responsibility than the education of our children.

We appreciate that the County Commissioners are concerned about responsible use of county funds, and CCPS has likewise taken a fiscally responsible approach over the years. In her presentation, Superintendent McCabe noted that the school system has consistently trimmed expenses over the years, rather than add unnecessary costs to artificially inflate their budget. The school system's sensible fiscal management should be taken into consideration when evaluating the current request for additional funding – the Superintendent would not seek the funding if it wasn't necessary. We can look to our neighboring counties' responses to the Blueprint's requirements to see how hard the CCPS BOE is trying to maintain our quality of education frugally. Howard County Public Schools is requesting an increase of \$109 million to the school's budget for next fiscal year, which is an approximately 13% increase; CCPS requested an increase of less than 5% to its budget. Even controlling for the difference in enrollment numbers (Howard County school enrollment is a little more than double Carroll County's), CCPS' request is well within reason.

The requirements imposed by the Blueprint come from the State legislature, and our Advocacy Committee intends to communicate with State representatives regarding leniency in how expenses are evaluated and approved by the AIB to allow CCPS flexibility in meeting the achievement benchmarks required by the Blueprint. We are here to support you, our County government, as well as our school system. Again, please grant the Superintendent's and BOE's request for the additional funding required to keep our schools operating at the level of excellence we have enjoyed and continue to expect.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Linton Springs Elementary School PTA