

**Open Work Session**  
**Board of Education Quarterly Work Session**  
**April 17, 2018**

Dr. Donna Hanlin, Superintendent of Schools, Mrs. Kimberly Miles, Assistant Superintendent for Student and Family Services, Bruce Ford, Chief Finance and Operations Officer, and Gene Malone, Board Vice President, came before Council.

Dr. Hanlin presented an Agenda, and said it consists of the items Council forwarded to the Board of Education, and they did not add anything to it. She said the first item has to do with safety in the schools, which they talked about the previous time they visited with Council. She said, specifically, she thinks Council has some questions about the Maryland Safe to Learn Act of 2018, and Mrs. Miles is with them, and she will tell Council that, generally, there is not anything in the Act that took them by surprise, and she thinks they are in really good shape. She said she is going to ask Mrs. Miles to go through the items with Council, and she will add anything when she is finished. Mrs. Miles said, as Dr. Hanlin referenced, they are very confident and comfortable in what is in the new regulations. She said, taking Council through a few of the highlights from a summary, one of the parts that stands out to most people is the requirement of a School Resource Officer (SRO) or appropriate law enforcement coverage for every school. She said, as Council knows, they have SROs in their middle and high schools, and have had so for a number of years. She said Wicomico County has been in compliance with this even before there was a regulation to be in compliance because all of their schools, from elementary starting with their Early Learning Center, all the way through to evening high school, have assigned SROs for times outside of and during the school day. She said, for example, and she is just speaking in generalities, the SRO for Wicomico Middle School may be assigned to East Salisbury and/or Beaver Run, so there is an immediate point of contact should there ever arise the need for such. She said they have actually had this in place with the Wicomico County Sheriff's Office for the past number of years. She clarified, she will not insert a number to be false, but she would say at least the past six to seven years, and it probably predated that, but she does not have knowledge prior to that. She said another requirement within the regulation is that it focuses on professional development for the SROs. She said she is very proud to sit before Council and say something she has said in the past, which is that Wicomico County was actually one of three pilot systems with the Maryland Center for School Safety as a lead agent working with a curriculum developed and supported by the Department of Justice. She said, two summers ago, all of their SROs trained with all of their secondary administrators and, again, they were one of three pilot Counties. She said they were actually the first pilot County accepted, so they have had a good stronghold in that. She said they have actually been a part of the group that looks at that curriculum, and all of their SROs are currently, and, moving forward, will continue to be trained in this curriculum. She clarified, when she says curriculum, the focus is on adolescent mental health, the development of the adolescent brain, working with a community school, and working with community agencies. She said it really focuses on knowing with whom they are working, and with having their administrators work side by side with their SROs so they are all learning along the same lines, and it has been very beneficial with that regard. She said there is also a requirement that, by 2019, all schools in the State of Maryland will have a safety audit completed. She said she is pleased to sit before Council and say they already have that process started, and they anticipate possibly having all of those done by September 2018. She said they have a team that includes law enforcement officers, their own Safe Schools Coordinator, and persons from their own Facilities Department, some of whom have background in safety and security as well as what they currently do, and they will be working together with their Risk Management Coordinator on these on-site audits. She said they are working under the

guidance of the Maryland Center for School Safety, which is a limited in scope staff of two persons, but she thinks it will be expanding. She said they have provided what they have used in audits in the past, and that is what the Wicomico County's team will be using as they move forward. She said their process will include the involvement of an expanded group once the actual physical audits are completed, and then they will be looking at their areas of need, their areas of stronghold, and looking to move forward in terms of what additionally they could do to further enhance the safety of their school environments. She said there is also a reference to a School Safety Coordinator, which they currently already have that position, and have had in the past. She said Mr. Andrew Turner serves as their Coordinator for Safe Schools, and works in direct partnership with the Wicomico County Sheriff's Office for anything that involves the safety of their students and staff. She said, this year, the County has also implemented a risk threat assessment process, which is noted in the legislation as a requirement moving forward. She said, again, there is a lot to look to Wicomico County for in terms of what they are doing. She said, obviously, they will continue to grow and continue to expand what they already have in place, and will always keep the safety of their students, staff, schools, and community at the forefront, but they feel like they are on a very strong standing in terms of moving forward, and will continue to do so.

Mr. Hall asked if they also have a training program for students as far as threat assessments go, to which Mrs. Miles responded, threat assessments, by the term that is referenced in the legislation, refers to evaluating a threat that is made, evaluating the person making that threat, and also leveling of a threat to determine if it is a serious threat, impending threat, or false threat, and things of that nature. She said they have a team that works in that evaluation process, and, based on that determination, it then moves on to their mental health professionals, including their school psychologists. She clarified, students are not persons who conduct threat assessments, as those are conducted by law enforcement, their Coordinator for Safe Schools, and their mental health staff. Mr. Hall said he is thinking more of shooter safety types of things, to which Mrs. Miles responded, they have that as well. She said they have a requirement for a particular number of drills and particular types of drills, and this is actually a requirement by the Maryland State Department of Education, and all of their schools have to complete these on an annual basis, as well as work with their SROs and expanded law enforcement in this area for what she calls tabletop drills. She said, traditionally, that would be staff sitting together and looking at something. She said they are expanding that, and it is much broader now and much more detailed, as well as working on plans for larger scale drills in the future. Mr. Hall asked if the SROs are allowed to carry guns, or if they are mandatory, to which Mrs. Miles responded, their SROs have always been fully uniformed in accordance with the Wicomico County Sheriff's Office uniform detail. Mr. Hall said he does not understand the answer, to which Mrs. Miles responded, that means yes, they do, and they always have. Mr. Hall asked if that means some of them can and some of them cannot, to which Mrs. Miles responded, no. She clarified, all of the SROs work under the Wicomico County Sheriff's Office guidelines, and always have their weapons. Mrs. Miles said she is glad that was not known because that means that is not something that is used.

Mr. Cannon asked if Mrs. Miles is meeting with President Mary Ashanti. He then said Ms. Ashanti was at the Council Meeting earlier today, and talked about how they were going to have a meeting in reference to the Department of Justice. He then asked if Mrs. Miles will be at that meeting, to which Mrs. Miles responded, absolutely. She said she talks with President Ashanti on a regular basis.

Mr. Dodd said he has had the opportunity to get to know many of the SROs for the last seven years since his kids have been in the school system, and he would say they have some quality deputies. He said their interaction with the students he has seen is wonderful. He said there was an article recently talking about some of the police officers and deputies coaching in the schools and doing a great job, so their

interaction with the students in the schools has been tremendous. Mrs. Miles said their deputies remain as employees of the Wicomico County Sheriff's Office, but they are truly team members in Wicomico County Public Schools, and she does not say that in any trite manner. She said it is true that they are very much a part of their students' and staff's daily lives. Mr. Cannon said he witnessed that when he was at Parkside doing a presentation for the Teacher of the Year, and the Deputy was with the kids, and he was amazed. He said he was like the big brother to the kids, and he talked to every kid who walked through. Mr. Bruce Ford said that is Thomas Funk, who is a Parkside graduate. Mr. Cannon said it was amazing how these kids reacted to him, and they just loved it and have a great relationship.

Dr. Hanlin said Council wanted to know a little bit more about the Food and Nutrition Services. She said everyone may or may not know Mr. Eric Goslee, who is the Director of Food Services. She said Council was specifically asking questions about the recent articles in the Daily times about their kitchen inspections. She said the Daily Times raised some questions with the Board of Education, and they answered those. Mr. Ford then said the Board of Education was sent a list of five questions, they sent back their responses to the Daily Times, and then all of a sudden the article was presented as it was published. He said they had no idea from the questions they were asked that a spin was going to be placed on the article. Dr. Hanlin said it raised her level of concern, and she does not know if Council saw her letter to the editor, but it was the first letter to the editor she has ever written because she felt that strongly about it, and it needed to be addressed and they needed to set the record straight. She said she was really prompted to do that, not just from her own feelings, but from the unsolicited communication she had received from Lori Brewster, the Director of the Health Department, who was equally concerned about the slant of the article in the paper. She continued, not only was there her letter to the editor, which had some information in it from Ms. Brewster and some corrections from herself, but also the Daily Times then came back and did a follow up story by being in their schools with Mr. Butler and going to North Salisbury as a follow up to what is happening in their schools. She said, in fact, there was a Maryland Inspector in their kitchen after hearing about this story who said he does not know where that is coming from because one could eat off the floors in the kitchens. She said it was concerning, and, hopefully, the community knows they take great pride in the safety of their food preparation, kitchen facilities, and cleanliness. She said she does not know whether Council has any specific questions, but Mr. Goslee is here, and he can try to answer them. Mr. Joe Holloway said he read the article, and he has had a number of years in the food service business and dealing with the Health Department, and he knows they always show up at lunchtime, unfortunately. He then said the one thing he had a concern about was where they were talking about the cooler that was not keeping proper temperature, and that had never been fixed. He then asked why that had not been taken care of, to which Mr. Goslee responded, it was on their radar to replace over the summer. He said it did not get replaced over the summer, but it was replaced when the school year started back up. Mr. Joe Holloway asked if when the Health Department came back to do their next inspection whether it had been fixed, to which Mr. Goslee responded, they had replaced it with a different unit, and that unit was not working correctly. He said, basically, in this situation, in the meantime while they were getting the funds together to purchase the equipment, they had a spare piece of equipment they tested, and it worked fine in the shop. He said they then put it in the school, and it probably did not keep up because it was lunchtime and they were opening and closing it, and those types of things.

Mr. Hall asked, when they do their Food and Nutrition Services, and he assumes they have been doing it the same way for a number of years, or forever, is there ever an opportunity to look outside the box, and maybe try contracting or subcontracting, or, as seen on television, the kids in different Countries actually prepare the food, and it absolutely looks wonderful. He said, again, these are progressive things, but do they ever take those initiatives to do that themselves, to which Mr. Ford responded, yes. He said

they have actually looked at contracting that service, and it is a matter of evaluating priorities relative to contract versus in-house. He said, thus far, they have determined, based upon their analysis, the staff they have, and the resources they are contributing and continuing to reduce, their goal is to make their food service operation 100 percent self-sufficient. Mr. Hall said there are employees who have been there 25 to 30 or 40 years, and that is a good testament.

Mr. Ford said he would like to introduce Jesse Reid, CPA, MBA. He said he is the new Comptroller taking his old position, and he wanted to introduce him. He said he has been with the Board for several years working his way up through the ranks, and is now the Comptroller, which, as he said, is his previous position, and they are excited to have him in this position. He then said they are going to address some of the questions that were raised by Councilmembers relative to various financial and statistical pieces of information. He said, to answer those questions, he will take Council to their website because there is a plethora of information that is available, not only to Council, but to the public, right on their website. He said they are going to take Council to their Transparency Portal, which is something they rolled out about three years ago, and they are going to look, and, hopefully, answer almost all the questions, if not all of the questions, that were raised right from the information on the Transparency Portal. Mrs. Hurley asked if that is available to the public, to which Mr. Ford responded, yes, this is available to the public, and it is a button right on the front of their webpage. He said one of the first questions raised was about gift cards, and what Mr. Reid is going to do is take Council to Business Operations, and then to Procurement. He said under Procurement they will go to Documents, and all of their documents relative to policies and procedures are on the webpage under Policies and Procurement Procedures. He said, back after the 2014 legislative audit, which Council will remember the Board went through, one of the responses in the audit report had to do with gift cards. He said, after that legislative audit, the Board adopted new procedures relative to gift cards. He said, on page 11 within their Procurement Procedures, Council will see that shortly after the release of that audit report in 2014, the Board adopted paragraph 8-a: "Gift cards or gift certificates cannot be purchased as a gift, award, or incentive for employees and appointed officials of the Wicomico County Board of Education." He then said general funds are no longer to be used to purchase gift cards for any employees or officials of the Board of Education. Mr. Joe Holloway asked if they can be purchased for students or non-employees, to which Mr. Ford responded, yes. He said gift cards or gift certificates can be purchased when used as awards or incentives for students or non-employees, but only after the gift card validation document web-form has been approved by the appropriate authorities, and that is the only time. Mr. Joe Holloway asked if there is a place on the portal to show how many gift cards were purchased, and who they were given to, to which Mr. Ford responded, no, not that specific from the portal. Mr. Joe Holloway said that was what he was asking for. He clarified, he wants to know how many gift cards they gave, who received them, and why they were given. Mr. Ford asked, for students, to which Mr. Joe Holloway responded, anybody. Mr. Ford said they cannot be bought for employees, so he is asking for students. Mr. Joe Holloway said it does not just say students, to which Mr. Ford responded, it says students and non-employees. Mr. Joe Holloway then clarified, it says students and non-employees, to which Mr. Ford responded, yes. He then asked if Mr. Joe Holloway wants to know how many were bought for students and non-employees. Dr. Hanlin then asked if there is a concern about their using gift cards for students and non-employees, to which Mr. Joe Holloway responded, there always has been. Mr. Joe Holloway said it states non-employees, and does not just say students. He said he would like to know the total because he has heard complaints about gift cards being handed out, to which Mr. Ford responded, they will get that total for him. Mr. Joe Holloway said, when he asked for this a few years ago, everybody said it was too much trouble to tell him until one of the Board Members happened to say that all they have to do is hit a button, and it is that easy. Mr. Ford said they will definitely get that for him. He said they thought what

Mr. Joe Holloway was asking was only relative to employees. Mr. Dodd asked if there is a cap or maximum per card, to which Mr. Ford responded, yes, \$100 is the maximum that is allowed.

Mr. Ford said the next question raised was relative to training, meetings, and conferences, and, again, a lot of this information is on their Transparency Portal. He said, if they go down to the Monthly Financial Reports, those reports are posted on their Transparency Portal. He said there are summary transactions, so, for example, he will pull up the month of March and look under each category. He said, as Council knows, there are 15 categories they must report to the State, and the first category is Administration. He said trainings, meetings, and conferences are under the object code "other charges," and this just gives them an idea in summary form of what the total is for Administration. He said there is a budget that was approved for \$53,000 for trainings, meetings, and conferences for Administration, the current working budget is \$50,780, the current month expenditure is \$2,200, and then year-to-date is \$28,000. He showed Council how many years of Detail Reports they have on the website, starting when they first went live back in 2015 through the current year 2018, of all of their transactions. He said, if they look at March 2018, they can find each transaction by the date the transaction happened, and what Department. He said, in this case, for March 2, Management Information Services had a training, meetings, and conferences session, and M&T tells him that it was a procurement card that was used for \$151.20. He said, if they look at the next item on March 8, Business Support Services had a training, which is employee reimbursement for \$4.98. He said, from this webpage, they can see every transaction by date, and what Department it was. Mr. Joe Holloway asked if it tells what it was for, to which Mr. Ford responded, no. Dr. Hanlin said it is under a category. Mr. Joe Holloway then said, it is under a category, but it does not tell what the reimbursement was for, to which Mr. Ford responded, it does not tell them whether it was a mileage employer reimbursement, or who it was to. Mr. Ford said, to summarize, in 2016 they spent \$271,077 on trainings, meetings and conferences, in FY17 they spent \$284,035, and year-to-date they have spent \$222,947 for training. He said, to give Council some perspective, that represents 0.15 percent of their total budget, and, typically, when looking at industry averages, companies spend between 1 to 2 percent on trainings, meetings, and conferences, so they are well below that, as Council can see. Dr. Hanlin clarified, that is all of the training, not specifically meals and travel. She said meals and travel would be a fraction of that. Mr. Joe Holloway said he knows they have some heartburn with him asking these questions, but, when he talks to teachers, they talk about salaries and such, and then they tell him to ask about all the gift cards they are handing out, or some of the meals they are having out. He clarified, that is why he is asking, because he is hearing from their employees. Dr. Hanlin said the information is available, to which Mr. Joe Holloway responded, it really is not available. He clarified, it is there, but it does not say exactly what it is for, as with the gift cards where it did not say who received them and how much each person got. He said they have seen enough examples on the other side of the Bay where gift cards have been abused, and he hopes that is not happening with the Board of Education, to which Dr. Hanlin responded, she can tell him it is not. Mr. Ford also said that is not happening.

Mr. Ford said there are a couple more items relative to financial system questions that were raised. He said there was a question raised by one of the Councilmembers relative to revenue, and their sources of revenue by type. He said, again, using the Transparency Portal as their kickoff place, they will go to Selected Financial Statistics, which takes them to the MSD Website, and under Selected Financial Data there is a report called the Selected Financial Data Maryland Public Schools for ten years ending in 2016. He then asked Mr. Reid if 2017 will soon be posted, to which Mr. Reid responded, yes, this week. Mr. Ford said, if they look at Table 2 within this publication, this shows revenue by school system for the ten-year period FY2007 through FY2016. He said, if they look at FY2007, Wicomico's total revenue was \$160 million, and that is the total revenue from all sources for current expenses. He said that would include

State, local and Federal dollars for current expenses. He said, all the way to 2016, they can see it is over \$202 million, and then it gives them a one-year increase and a ten-year increase. He said, on the succeeding three tables, Tables 3, 4 and 5, it gives the component parts of that total revenue. He said Table 3 gives them the total State component, and, looking at Wicomico County, they can see from FY2007 there was \$97 million, and in 2016 they can see total State was over \$145 million, so, again, State aid has grown increasingly. He said the next table shows the local appropriation and, again, the lion's share of this is the actual County appropriation to education. He said in 2007 Wicomico County contributed \$48 million dollars, and in 2016 they contributed \$41 million dollars. He said they can see there has been a decrease in the amount of County appropriation for education over that ten-year period of time. He said the largest point, in terms of total local revenue, was in FY2010 where it reached a little over \$50 million dollars, and then the recession hit and they experienced those major reductions in County aid for public education in FY11 and FY12. He said, again, in 2016 it was \$41 million. He said Table 5 shows the Federal Aid by County for that same ten-year period, and, actually, Federal Aid has not grown significantly over that period of time. He said they gave \$14 million for Wicomico County versus \$18 million. Mr. Hall asked if the total from all sources was \$148 million, to which Mr. Ford responded, \$202 million from all sources. Mr. Hall then asked if Mr. Ford knows how much they receive from the County after they give the Board their portion. He then said it is about \$52 million, and asked if they can lend the County some, to which Mr. Ford responded, education is a people-person business. Mr. Hall said he understands.

Mr. Ford said the last question that was asked relative to financial matters had to do with cost per pupil. He said, again, going back to Maryland Selective Financial Statistics from the webpage, Table 15 from that same publication shows the cost per pupil for that ten-year period of time FY2007 through FY2016, and for Wicomico County in 2007 it was \$10,609, and now it is \$13,320. He said, again, it shows the one-year growth and the cost per pupil. He said, again, cost per pupil takes in the total expenditures for Federal, State and local dollars, divides it by the full-time equivalent enrollment to come up with the expenditures per pupil, and Council can see over that period of time the growth for Wicomico was a little over 25.5 percent over that ten-year period. He said their sister Counties, Somerset and Worcester, were 31 and 32 percent to give Council some comparison. Mr. Cannon said they have had the conversation before that it should be considered a commitment on the County's part of capital expenses because that adds probably 20 to 25 percent on the total cost, but it depends on the year and the investment they have had. Mr. Joe Holloway said, in the past ten years they have built three new schools, and have done major renovations to two. He then asked if any other Counties have done the same thing, to which Mr. Ford responded, yes, many have. He said the best way to measure a County's contribution toward capital for a school system, because the County does this as part of their budget presentation, is to show their debt service that is specifically for school construction. He said they went back and looked at how much the debt service was right out of the County's budget, and what was the total amount and what was the percent of that to the County's total budget. He said, in 2008, as Council can see, the total P&I payment, or debt service requirement, for school construction was \$7,465,163, which was 5.66 percent of the total. He said then it got as high as 10.3 percent of the County's total budget in 2012, and that, actually, was the year they saw a sizeable reduction in their operating budget. He said, if Council remembers, the Board lost \$7 million in one year and \$7.5 million in another year in terms of operating budget. He said, in 2012, that happened to be the year they increased the total for debt service for construction to 10.3 percent of their budget, or \$11.2 million. He said, now, in 2018, the current year, the total debt service P&I payment for school construction is \$11.6 million, or represents 8.12 percent, so, over that period of time, it has been hovering between 6, has been about as high as 10, and around 8 percent. Mr. Cannon asked if that is 8 percent of the operating budget, to which Mr. Ford responded, of the County's total budget. Mr. Cannon said his question is how that 11.6 percent reflects

in the cost per student. He said he believes that may be a larger number if they break that down and include that in the total cost per student, and it is even greater than that. Mr. Ford said it would be, but, again, trying to compare apples to apples, they would have to factor that same thing in with the other Counties in order to be able to do that, and they do not have access to that number from the other Counties. He clarified, there is no publication they can find that gives that information. Mr. Cannon said they have had a really great track record in Wicomico County of putting some really great new schools out there over the last few years, and he hates to see that overlooked. Mr. Ford said the Board appreciates that, and hope that continues. He said they try to stay a step ahead. Mr. Ford said that was all of the specific financial and statistical information they have, and he is going to step aside and let Mr. Briggs step up.

Mr. Rick Briggs, Chief Academic Officer, and Mr. Micah Stauffer, Director of Secondary Education, came before Council. Dr. Hanlin said they will jointly answer Council's questions about graduation rates and college preparedness. Mr. Briggs said, before they talk specifically about that, they did want to emphasize or point out the change in their student demographic over the last several years. He referred to the Transparency Portal on the Board of Education Website, and showed student population makeup. He said that shows their at-risk population has greatly increased since 2005, so they are looking at a 13-year span. He said, specifically, their ELL population has more than tripled, and they have close to 1,000 ELL students in their district right now, and also their Free and Reduced Meal (FARM) students based upon their economic family situation has increased by more than 2,000. He said, again, with that change in demographic, they are still able to highlight some things about their graduation rate. He said, on the portal, he will go to Maryland Report Card where there is a vast amount of statistical data, and he will point to one thing since Council asked about graduation rates. He said he will go to the four-year adjusted cohort. Mr. Stauffer said, as Mr. Briggs was sharing, despite their changes in demographics over the last ten to thirteen years, they are excited to share that from 2011 to 2017 their graduation rate, the four-year adjusted cohort rate, which is the rate that Maryland uses with all of the Counties in Maryland to determine that graduation rate, went from 78 percent in 2011 to almost 84 percent in 2017. He said their dropout rate, which is indicative of the students who typically do not graduate, has gone from almost 17 percent in 2011 to around 10 percent in 2017. Mr. Joe Holloway said they raised the limit to 18 during that time, to which Mr. Stauffer responded, just this past year, which was not a factor during those six years, however. He said this is important to understand because the four-year adjusted cohort rate does not take into account students that may take longer than four years to graduate high school, and they do have a number of students that graduate through nontraditional methods after four years, or does not take into account students who are special needs students and may be certification of completion students, and not diploma earning students as well. He said the dropout rate decreasing from 17 percent to 10 percent really is indicative of what they are doing in Wicomico County, and, again, is despite the change in demographics Mr. Briggs had shared earlier.

Mr. Stauffer said, when looking at college readiness, which was another question that was asked, the SAT changed a couple of years ago to be more aligned with common core and what the standards were as it relates to that. He said, if they look at 2016 SAT results and 2017 SAT results, they went from an aggregate score of 956 to 961. He said Wicomico County is higher than the national average, and also slightly higher than the Maryland average. He said, also, looking at their AP data, which is their Advanced Placement courses they have in all four of their high schools, in 2008 they had approximately 361 students who were taking at least one or more AP courses, and this past year they had 583. He said that translates to having a mean average of 2.6 in 2008, and now this past year 2.7. He said, both in 2008 all the way through to 2017, about 51 percent of their students who take an AP exam are scoring 3 or higher, and the total number of exams they have given has increased from 578 exams in 2008 to

almost 1,000 exams in 2017. Mr. Briggs said that 3 or higher is important to recognize, especially from a parent's standpoint for their pocketbook because, by scoring a 3 or higher on the AP exams, most colleges and universities accept college credit for those courses, so by passing the test with a score of 3 or more, that is one less college course the parents will need to pay in the future. Mr. Stauffer said, in the State of Maryland, that is also a good indicator of if students are ready for college.

Mr. Stauffer said another point they want to make that relates to college and career readiness, and what they do to prepare is that they know students are being prepared by the amount of scholarship money they are earning. He said, in 2015, they had over \$10 million in scholarship monies awarded to their seniors. He said this past year that went up to \$16.5 million dollars in scholarship monies that their students were being awarded. He said those are all indicators of the amount of preparation and the amount of work that is going on behind the scenes to prepare their students to be college ready. He said also one thing they want to make sure they mention is there is another piece to that which is career readiness, and that is something they hold to be very important in Wicomico County because of their outstanding Parkside Career and Technology Education Center. He said they are expanding that program, and have been continuing to expand that by offering more programs in recent years that are in the technology field, which are programs such as Project Lead the Way Pre-Engineering, business, computer science, and next year they will be adding interactive media as well to, again, not only prepare their students for a career, but also their goals in post-secondary education. Mr. Joe Holloway asked if they cut some programs too, to which Mr. Stauffer responded, they did phase their plumbing program in with their HVAC program, so, while they are still teaching the skills that are important in their plumbing program, they have combined that with their HVAC program just to ensure, again, that they are being prudent with the money that is allotted for their CTE programs, and they were trending that plumbing was low enrollment for a number of years. Mr. Joe Holloway asked if there were any other programs cut, to which Mr. Stauffer responded, no. Mr. Cannon asked if they just had State medalists who won, to which Mr. Stauffer responded, absolutely, they had six. He said they have State medalists and National winners every year in Skills USA competitions, which is a direct result of the more than 20 outstanding programs they can offer, as well as the instructors in those programs, and what they are able to do with their students. Mr. Cannon said he got to meet them one-on-one at the Ward Museum at a Chamber event. He said it was great, and it was really interesting to hear them. He said there were students handing out business cards for HVAC work.

Mr. Kilmer said, in terms of college readiness, they have talked about Wor-Wic a lot in the recent years. He said roughly 70 percent of the students who go into Wor-Wic are deemed not college ready, and he thinks a lot of those, not all, but a lot come from Wicomico County high schools. He said they graduate school and maybe go directly to Wor-Wic, or maybe they wait a few years, but with the education they have received at the schools and received upon graduation, for whatever reason, they are not deemed college ready to go into Wor-Wic, and that seems to be a big disconnect. He said it is not just Wicomico County, but, if they look around, every other school system and every other community college has those sort of numbers. He said that is a big disconnect when they are graduating students who then go to Wor-Wic and are told they are not ready to come there, and have to take remedial classes at Wor-Wic. He then asked what is being done to address that sort of thing, to which Mr. Stauffer responded, that is a great question. He said one thing to note is that the standards that Wor-Wic is using are apart from the standards that Maryland State dictates they present to all of their students in high school, and Wor-Wic determines that through what they call an Accuplacer Assessment, which puts students at a certain level when they are testing to go and enter into Wor-Wic. He said one thing they have also done to address that is they are looking at how important dual enrollment is with their students at the high school level, and, over the course of the last five years, they have expanded that greatly. He said, in fact,



currently they have 230 students who are enrolled at Wor-Wic while still being enrolled at high school who are taking over 400 courses at Wor-Wic, and their hope is that, by the students' experience off campus at a college level in that curriculum, they are going to be more successful. He said they have also looked at expanding dual enrollment and college opportunities through something they are calling early college where students will take classes during the ninth and tenth grade years at their home high school, but then transfer to Wor-Wic during their junior and senior years, so they will be taking courses at Wor-Wic that can be put on the high school transcript, and the courses they are taking during their ninth and tenth grade years can be articulated into the credit-bearing program that Wor-Wic offers so, by the end of the four years, they will graduate with a high school diploma and an Associate of Arts Degree as well. Mr. Kilmer said he thinks those are all positive steps, but his concern is that Council has gotten on Wor-Wic because their completion rates are not very high, and, again, that is not necessarily all up to Wor-Wic, but some of the students who come into the school just are not ready for it. He said it seems to him that if the standards are not aligned, they could be given a high school diploma, and if they are not ready to go to Wor-Wic, that can show up elsewhere and show that maybe they are not ready for a job, or maybe if they go to other colleges. He said the high school diploma and graduation rates are good, but if that means they have a high school diploma but when they get into college they are not ready for it, that seems like a high graduation rate may not mean anything if that skill does not translate to being ready to take classes at Wor-Wic, or take classes at Salisbury University. He said he does not know how they fix that, but that, to him, seems like a big problem that they have graduates who the community college says need to take remedial classes as soon as they get into community college, and that should not be happening. Dr. Hanlin said she is going to make a comment on this that is not a reflection at all on Wor-Wic because she has not studied this issue, and she can only tell Council about a previous experience she has had. She said, when Mr. Kilmer said it is not just Wicomico, she was really pleased to hear him say that because it is happening in other areas, and it does have everything to do with the assessment that the community college is using to determine whether they are ready. She said what she has found has happened in other areas, and, again, not necessarily here, is that students then are enrolled in remedial courses, and never assessed again but pronounced well and that they are now ready to go into college ready courses. She said this is definitely an area she wants to talk with Mr. Stauffer and Mr. Briggs about as they move forward to see what is really happening, but, to her, it is a lot about communication between the community college and the public school system about the alignment of those standards, and what it means to be ready for Wor-Wic. Mr. Kilmer said there may be that, but, if they look at those students who are assessed as not college ready, that does seem to indicate that they do have more problems persisting through community college, and is not just a misalignment of standards. He said it seems, when they are assessed at community college, that indicates there is an issue going forward, and so it seems their assessment at community college is telling them something that is useful in terms of what it takes to persist, to which Dr. Hanlin responded, she would hope so because she has not seen that everywhere. Mr. Kilmer said that does seem to be the standard when they look at Maryland Community College data that students who get remedial help tend to do better, and those who are assessed not ready do not get that help and tend to do a lot worse, so it seems that assessment does tell them something. He said it seems that, if that assessment is telling them something, and the students still have high school diplomas, it seems that the problem may be with the high school diploma and not with the assessment. Dr. Hanlin said the other thing she will point out, and she is really, really pleased that their graduation rate is coming up to close to 84 percent, is that they are the second lowest in the State, but she is not happy with 84 percent, so they have a lot of room to grow. Mr. Stauffer said he would also say that college and career readiness is something that they are looking at very closely in their high schools, and also, really, throughout their pre-K through 12 continuum to make sure that what they are doing is aligned from one grade level to the next, and also, more importantly, as Mr. Kilmer pointed out, that when their students are ending with them, they are in

a good place and good opportunity to start where they will be beginning post-secondary education as well. He said it used to be that a number of years ago the end goal was to make sure they got as many students across the stage as possible, but now he would say their focus has really turned to not only making sure they graduate students, but they are prepared to go onto the area of choice they want to be. He said he thinks one of the areas he had mentioned earlier, programs like Advanced Placement, and getting more students exposed to those kinds of courses and curricula are very important in preparing them for the rigors they are going to face once they do graduate.

Mr. Dodd said, as much as he would like to see everyone go to college, college is not for everyone, so the career readiness is an important factor, and he applauds the schools for doing that. He then asked if they can go back to the chart with the FARM on it. He asked what percent of that is the actual FARM, to which Dr. Hanlin responded, 61 percent. Mr. Dodd said that is pretty high. He said, with numbers like that, it is a wonder this County can afford anything.

Mr. Cannon asked Dr. Hanlin if she has budget highlights, to which Dr. Hanlin responded, yes. She said she was not really sure what Council was looking for, knowing they did get the County Executive's budget this morning, but she will just tell Council that their budget preparation was a little different this year. She said they looked at what their three strategic priorities are, and she thinks Council has heard her say them before, but she will say them again. She said they are the implementation of universal pre-kindergarten, which is really with the goal in mind of making sure students are reading on grade level by grade 3, and there is a lot of research behind that, as she has spoken about before, but getting that early start is so critically important. She said, in that area of the budget, very specifically, they are asking for \$1.3 million for Phase I of universal pre-kindergarten, and that, specifically, is 11 classrooms where they currently have the space. She said the second strategic priority is increasing the percentage of students who graduate, and they need to continue to work on that. She said those requests in that part of the budget are varied, but they are all very focused on increasing the graduation rate, and that is just over \$2.3 million dollars. She said the third area is to recruit and retain a high-performing workforce, which is just over \$3.6 million dollars, and that, basically, is just to carry out their bargaining agreements. She said they do have tentative bargaining agreements with all three bargaining units, pending budget, obviously, and healthcare. She said those are the highlights, but they also asked for one-time funding for two major areas, one of which also has to do with the implementation of universal pre-kindergarten, which is looking ahead to Phase II knowing they do not have space to fully implement universal pre-kindergarten. She said they are looking at two 10-classroom modular buildings on their current property, and that was \$3.2 million, and then some additional technology requests that were also in the one-time funding requests. Mr. Cannon said the long and short of it is that they are really looking for about a \$10.5 million-dollar increase, for the most part, to which Mr. Ford responded, that includes the State, so they are asking for a little over \$5 million for operating from the County, plus the one-time of \$3.9 million. Mr. Cannon asked, of the \$7.3 million, it is \$5 million from the County, and on the \$3.2 million one-time and \$7.25 million one-time, that is all County, to which Mr. Ford responded, yes. Mr. Cannon asked if the pre-kindergarten is about \$4.5 million total, to which Mr. Ford responded, that is correct, for Phase I and Phase II. Mr. Cannon asked if the \$1.3 million for pre-kindergarten is all County, to which Mr. Ford responded, yes. He said they say it is all County, but that is the total request. He said, remember, the total budget includes State and local dollars. He said the total request is over \$7 million, and they are getting about \$2.5 million additional State aid, and the balance would have to come from the County. Mr. Cannon said they are actually looking at about \$5 million above maintenance of effort, and then, in addition to that, they are asking for another \$4 million one-time, to which Mr. Ford responded, that is correct. Mr. Cannon asked if the pre-kindergarten costs are in the range of \$3.5 million to \$4 million, to which Mr. Ford responded, for Phase I and the start of Phase II. Mr. Cannon

asked if Phase II comes in the same fiscal year, to which Dr. Hanlin responded, no. She said, in order for them to be prepared to begin Phase II in Fall 2019, their Facilities and Planning Department needs to have the funding in this year's budget to purchase those modulars in order to get them in place and open in the Fall of 2019.

Mr. Hall said he has a question, and he thinks it is a relatively simple question. He then asked why it takes four years to evaluate a student when they are putting in \$1.3 million dollars, and next year they cannot evaluate that student and find out whether any progress is being made? He clarified, in other words, they are going to assess these students four years down the road based on this pre-kindergarten program, but, if he gave them \$1.3 million dollars, they should be able to tell him if that student is making any headway next year, to which Dr. Hanlin responded, of course. She said they do not wait until third grade. She asked if that is what he is asking, to which Mr. Hall responded, yes. Mr. Hall said he remembers asking about the graduation rate five or six years ago, and he was told it was going to improve, but they could not look at it for ten years because they could not assess it for ten years, to which Dr. Hanlin responded, she cannot speak to that answer. Mr. Hall said it seems to him that, if they are putting a lot of funding in, he wants to know what kind of results they are getting in the first year to see whether or not they should keep putting more money in. Mr. Cannon said it may have been the terminology where they were using third grade readiness. Dr. Hanlin clarified, they are assessing every year, to which Mr. Hall responded, he would hope so. He then asked if there is a matrix, or do they just say it looks like they are doing pretty good. Dr. Hanlin asked Mr. Hall what kind of matrix, and asked if he means a rubric or a matrix. Mr. Hall then asked, does she have a way of assessing on a planning basis which is structured and says this kid grew 1.7 percent this year, to which Dr. Hanlin responded, absolutely. She said they measure reading grade level multiple times during the year. Mr. Hall asked if they are testing pre-kindergarten kids, to which Dr. Hanlin responded, yes, they are giving the kindergarten readiness assessment.

Mr. Dodd asked if the universal pre-kindergarten still has families who are paying for their children to attend because he thought at one time there were some families who had to pay, to which Dr. Hanlin responded, no. Mr. Ford said, if they are attending public school, there is no tuition at all. Mr. Dodd said he thought pre-kindergarten was for kids who were needy, but if there were some openings for families, they would pay, to which Dr. Hanlin responded, they do not pay. Mr. Dodd asked if they ever had to pay, to which Mr. Ford responded, no.

Mr. Cannon asked what role Head Start is playing right now as far as pre-kindergarten is concerned, to which Dr. Hanlin responded, they have a Head Start Program, as he knows, and he can look at their readiness assessment data. She said, when they look at all of kindergarten readiness across Maryland, and, specifically, in Wicomico County, they can look at that data. She said she knows they are in communication with Head Start, especially where they assist them in providing services for their special needs students who are attending Head Start. Mr. Cannon asked, in preparation for the budget for pre-kindergarten, is Dr. Hanlin referring to both 3 and 4 year olds, to which Dr. Hanlin responded, 4 year olds. She said they will continue to operate their Judy Centers through grant funding, which is 3 year olds, but they are talking about 4 year olds. Mr. Ford clarified, there are only slots for 40 3-year-old students through the Judy Center. Mr. Cannon said there are 600 students enrolled now, to which Mr. Ford responded, about 50 percent of those students are in a half-day program. Mr. Cannon asked if they just had registration last week, and if they know the results of that yet, to which Mrs. Miles responded, 541. Mr. Ford said that is just a small window of time, and they will continue to get registrants for months on end all the way up to the day school starts. Dr. Hanlin said that is for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten, so they cannot really just add the new number to the 600.

Mr. Ford asked if they will be back when it is their budget session for specific questions, to which Mr. Cannon responded, yes.

Dr. Hanlin said there was one additional question asked by Council. She said, apparently, Jen Smith came and spoke with Council about teacher turnover, and there was a question about the 20 percent. She said 20 percent is over a three-year cohort, so it is over a course of three years, and it is about 7 percent in any given year. Mr. Hall asked if that is strictly teachers and administrators, to which Dr. Hanlin responded, teachers. She said, unfortunately, the turnover rate with classified employees is higher than that. Mr. Ford said the other thing they have talked about at length is just the teacher shortage. He said he was at a Statewide meeting yesterday in Annapolis, and the shortage will continue. He said Maryland is an import State which means they are importing a significant portion of teachers to man their classrooms, and it is not getting any better. He said the State, in fact, is issuing several grants as part of the Kirwan Commission. He said the work that was done will hopefully provide some additional incentives for locals to be able to offer students to enter the teaching profession, which is something that currently is not happening, not only in Wicomico County, but Statewide, and, as a matter of fact, Nationwide.

Mr. Matt Holloway asked if they know whether any of their teachers have taken advantage of the Donarschoose.org giveaway that happened last week. He said it is a website where teachers can go on and, basically, put in a wish list for classroom supplies. He said last week one of the Cryptocurrencies fully funded that \$21 million dollars, and so any teacher who had a wish list on the website got fully funded. Mr. Ford said the teachers may have, but he is not aware of whether they did.

Mr. Gene Malone said Mr. Fitzgerald is out for surgery, so he is sitting in for him as Vice President, and just would like to say they appreciate the relationship they have with Council, and he would like to commend Dr. Hanlin and her team. He said he always equates the Board of Education and the Public School System like a giant boat where it cannot be turned around quickly or change directions on a dime, but Dr. Hanlin and her team are navigating some pretty tough waters, and are making some directional changes for the good of the students with the graduation rates and Dr. Hanlin's three priorities. He said, in regards to pre-kindergarten, the statistics are overwhelming that if they do not get students kindergarten ready, by the time they are in third, fourth or fifth grade, and they are not at that level, their chances of success in the world are pretty minimal. He said Dr. Hanlin has the right priorities, and he believes they are heading in the right direction. Dr. Hanlin said she will guess that Mr. Fitzgerald is probably watching because she thinks he really wanted to be here.

Mr. Hall said he knows they had their Teacher of the Year Banquet two weeks ago, and he just thinks the teachers are outstanding. He said they are very fortunate, and have a very high-quality spectrum of teachers, as well as the passion that goes with them. He said he has attended those events in the past, and what a pleasure it was to see how dedicated some of these people are. He said they are very fortunate, to which Dr. Hanlin responded, they are. Mr. Ford added, they do realize that. Mr. Cannon said Council appreciates their preparation and everything they have helped Council with, and it was great to see the portal today. There was no further discussion.

Open Work Session  
Board of Education Quarterly Work Session  
April 17, 2018



---

John T. Cannon, President



---

Larry W. Dodd, Vice President, District 3



---

Ernest F. Davis, District 1



---

Marc Kilmer, District 2



---

John B. Hall, District 4



---

Joe Holloway, District 5



---

Matt Holloway, At-Large



---

Laura Hurley, Council Administrator