

From: [Michael Martirano](#)
To: [Vicky Cutroneo](#)
Cc: [Kirsten Coombs](#); [Chao Wu](#); [Jennifer Mallo](#); [BoE Email](#); [Karalee Turner-Little](#); [Mark Blom](#); [Jahantab Siddiqui](#)
Subject: Re: [External] Councilmembers Mercer Rigby, Jones, and Jung Call on Howard County Public School System to Develop Integration Plan
Date: Wednesday, August 14, 2019 5:55:42 AM

There is NO reason for any member of our Board to apologize. Simply put, this should have been communicated more effectively to us by the CC.

MJM

Dr. Michael J. Martirano
Superintendent
Howard County Public School System

“Be kind ALWAYS! Everyone is fighting a hard battle.”

On Aug 14, 2019, at 2:18 AM, Vicky Cutroneo <Vicky_Cutroneo@hcpss.org> wrote:

Colleagues,

I was on my way into an event at Camp Inclusion when I received Chair Rigby's phone call, and was extremely surprised to read the press release when I got home, as there was no mention of it in our conversation. I apologize for not notifying entire Board and leadership of conversation but did not feel sense of urgency as I believed a resolution was an idea in the discussion stages only; moreover, I assumed that all BOE members were being contacted and that conversations with my colleagues could wait the three hours until the camp was over.

Regards,
Vicky Cutroneo, Member
Howard County Board of Education
Mobile: 443-364-0008
vicky_cutroneo@hcpss.org

From: Kirsten Coombs <Kirsten_Coombs@hcpss.org>
Sent: Wednesday, August 14, 2019 1:27:22 AM
To: Chao Wu <Chao_Wu@hcpss.org>; Michael Martirano <Michael_Martirano@hcpss.org>
Cc: Jennifer Mallo <Jennifer_Mallo@hcpss.org>; BoE Email <boe@hcpss.org>; Karalee Turner-Little <Karalee_TurnerLittle@hcpss.org>; Mark Blom <Mark_Blom@hcpss.org>; Jahantab Siddiqui <Jahantab_Siddiqui@hcpss.org>
Subject: Re: [External] Councilmembers Mercer Rigby, Jones, and Jung Call on Howard County Public School System to Develop Integration Plan

This press release implies that the Board was made aware of it. Even though Mavis' quote indicates her vote as an individual Board member, she also identifies herself as Chair. This may not have been her intention, but because her statement was not vetted nor brought to the attention of the full Board or staff, we were unable to collectively discuss potential repercussions.

This is unfortunate given the timing of Dr. M's presentation on Tuesday. I think it is important for us to start this process on the most positive note possible, while openly communicating similarities and differences of opinion with one another.

What happened today portrays us as a fragmented Board. While we have an established process for legislative testimony, which we followed in regard to CB17, this public statement in

support of the proposed resolution gives the public the impression that entire board was apprised of the proposed resolution. In this case, there was no time sensitive issue that required Board input immediately. We followed the process on CB17, but comments included in this press release exceeded the bounds of established protocols.

I request that the legislation be shared with the entire Board as soon as possible so we can discuss it as a group and determine an official Board position. In the future, if Board members have knowledge of legislation that could potentially impact our students, staff, or community, then they should communicate any information they have with the entire Board as soon as possible.

In Partnership,
KC

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From: Chao Wu <Chao_Wu@hcpss.org>
Sent: Wednesday, August 14, 2019 12:18:28 AM
To: Michael Martirano <Michael_Martirano@hcpss.org>
Cc: Jennifer Mallo <Jennifer_Mallo@hcpss.org>; Kirsten Coombs <Kirsten_Coombs@hcpss.org>; BoE Email <boe@hcpss.org>; Karalee Turner-Little <Karalee_TurnerLittle@hcpss.org>; Mark Blom <Mark_Blom@hcpss.org>; Jahantab Siddiqui <Jahantab_Siddiqui@hcpss.org>
Subject: Re: [External] Councilmembers Mercer Rigby, Jones, and Jung Call on Howard County Public School System to Develop Integration Plan

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So it seems only Mavis knew this before the press release?

Chao

Dr. Chao Wu
Board Member
Howard County Board of Education
Email: chao_wu@hcpss.org
Phone: 443-355-9990
Web: www.hcpss.org

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Sent: Tuesday, August 13, 2019 6:04 PM
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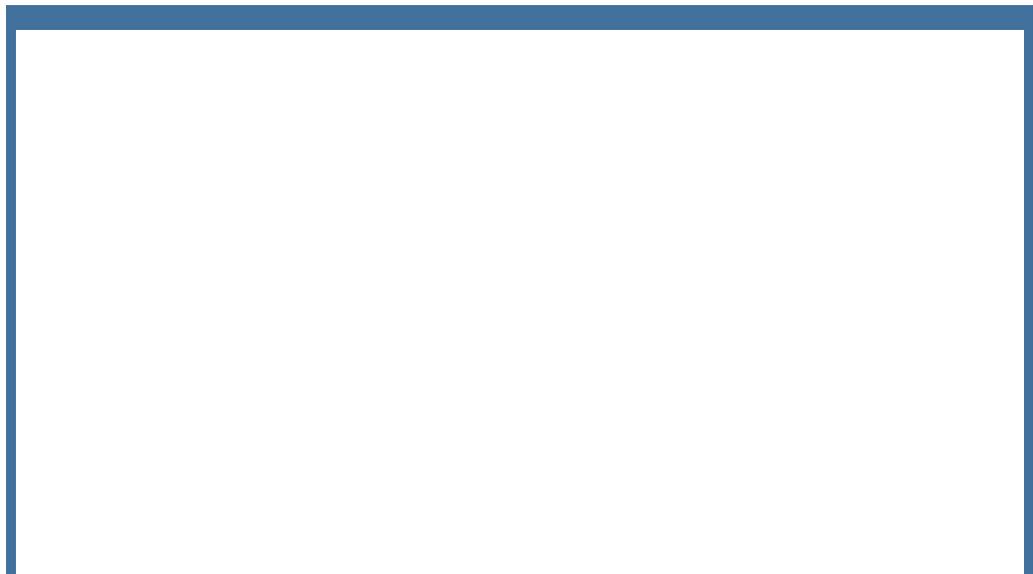
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Regards,

**Kirsten Coombs
Vice Chair
Howard County Board of Education**

667-786-3867

From: Howard County Council <cgelwicks@howardcountymd.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, August 13, 2019 4:18 PM
To: BoE Email <boe@hcpss.org>
Subject: [External] Councilmembers Mercer Rigby, Jones, and Jung Call on Howard County Public School System to Develop Integration Plan



Media Contact:

Felix Facchine

ffacchine@howardcountymd.gov

(410) 313-2001

For Immediate Release:

**Councilmembers Mercer Rigby, Jones, and Jung
Call on Howard County Public School System to
Develop Integration Plan**

Ellicott City, MD (August 13, 2019)- Howard County Councilmembers Christiana Mercer Rigby, Dr. Opel Jones, and Deb Jung will introduce a council resolution in September calling on the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) to develop a county-wide integration plan to desegregate its schools. Currently, school district boundaries in Howard County are drawn in a manner that concentrate students participating in the Free and Reduced Meals program (FARMs) into certain elementary, middle, and high schools.

This socioeconomic and racial segregation in the school system is contributing to increasing

achievement gaps and decreasing graduation rates for low-income students and students of color. Historic systems have created these achievements gaps and it is incumbent on the County to introduce new systems that foster necessary change.

"I'm extremely proud of this resolution because it recognizes the past and promotes a fair and balanced future for our Howard County Public School System students," said Dr. Jones. "We are working together to resolve the problematic and systematic inconsistencies that lower-income students face every day. This resolution helps to enhance, promote, and encourage a unified and socioeconomic blended education system for all."

"While we often claim to prioritize diversity and inclusion in Howard County, our school districts do not reflect the values of integration and community that we have built our county on," said Councilwoman Mercer Rigby. "For decades, Howard County public schools have become increasingly segregated by race and socioeconomic status. Redistricting is a civil rights issue here in Howard County, and it's time to take meaningful strides toward integration in our education system."

In the last three years alone, graduation rates for students participating in the FARM program have dropped from 83% to 78%, which is 17% lower than the graduation rates for non-FARM students. During the same time frame, FARM program students have become increasingly concentrated in the same elementary, middle, and high schools in Howard County. These disparities in student outcomes can be found in the Howard County Public School System's [2019 Feasibility Study](#) and [2019 Equity Report](#) presented to the Board of Education.

"As Chair of the Howard County Board of Education, capable of casting only one vote, I support this resolution that focuses on the socioeconomic and racial desegregation of Howard County Public Schools," said Mavis Ellis. "Many have called for equity, and it's the Board of Education's hard decisions that will make equity happen for all students in Howard County."

"There's a strength in diversity that benefits our community. Legislation and resolutions alone cannot solve socioeconomic challenges or promote true racial integration; however, they can provide platforms that allow us to correct past errors," said Candace Dodson-Reed, founder of the African American Community Roundtable of Howard County and education advocate. "I applaud Councilwoman Mercer Rigby's and Councilman Jones' leadership and effort as they work with the community to ensure that each child in our public school system has everything they need to be successful."

"Let's reclaim Columbia's dream of equal opportunity for all by rebalancing the socioeconomic and racial profiles of Howard County's public schools," said Councilwoman Jung. "We know what we have to do, and we know the time is now."

Numerous academic studies indicate that diverse, integrated classrooms lead to better academic outcomes for all students, while increased segregation leads to greater achievement gaps for low-income students and students of color. While the school system undergoes its School Boundary Review Process, Councilmembers Mercer Rigby, Jones, and Jung call on HCPSS to comprehensively address the socioeconomic and racial segregation in Howard County Public Schools through a meaningful redistricting process.

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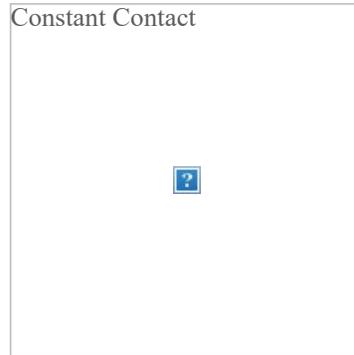
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Howard County Council, 3430 Court House Dr., Ellicott
City, MD 21043

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Subject: Re: [External] Councilmembers Mercer Rigby, Jones, and Jung Call on Howard County Public School System to Develop Integration Plan
Date: Wednesday, August 14, 2019 5:51:22 AM
Attachments: [image1.png](#)



Tweets Tweets & replies Media Likes

will begin repairs to sidewalks loc...
[scotteblog.com](#)



Scott Ewart @lscottewart · 12h ▼

Holy cow...did 4 Howard County Council members just publicly state that our schools are segregated....and not mention the development process over the years that has lead to the concentration of low income families in certain areas of this county?



NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Contact: Felix Facchine, 410-313-2001
ffacchine@howardcountymd.gov

Councilmembers Mercer Rigby, Jones, and Jung Call on Howard County Public School System to Develop Integration Plan

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This socioeconomic and racial segregation in the school system is contributing to increasing achievement gaps.



Scott Ewart @lscottewart · 17h

“Bike with a Cop” is back on August



MJM

Dr. Michael J. Martirano
Superintendent
Howard County Public School System

“Be kind ALWAYS! Everyone is fighting a hard battle.”

On Aug 14, 2019, at 12:16 AM, Kirsten Coombs <Kirsten_Coombs@hcpss.org> wrote:

That is very disappointing.

Was there any discussion about the budget implications?

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From: Michael Martirano <Michael_Martirano@hcpss.org>

Sent: Tuesday, August 13, 2019 6:50:32 PM

To: Jennifer Mallo <Jennifer_Mallo@hcpss.org>

Cc: Kirsten Coombs <Kirsten_Coombs@hcpss.org>; BoE Email <boe@hcpss.org>; Karalee Turner-Little <Karalee_TurnerLittle@hcpss.org>; Mark Blom <Mark_Blom@hcpss.org>; Jahantab Siddiqui <Jahantab_Siddiqui@hcpss.org>

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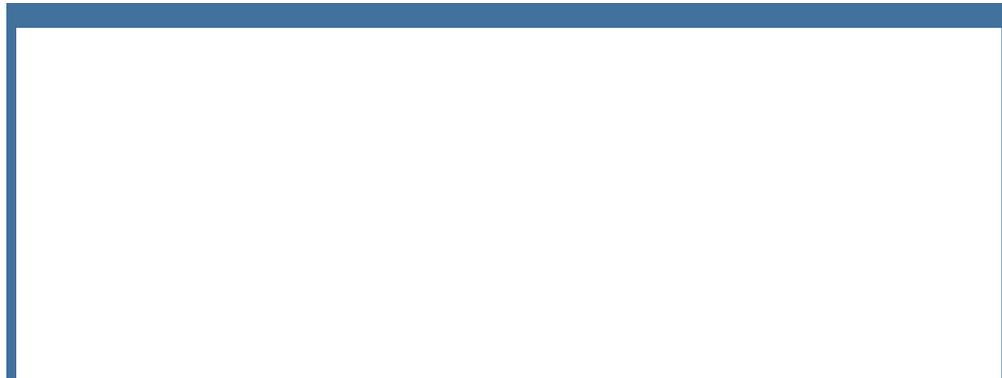
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Howard County Council | ph: 410-313-2001 | web: cc.howardcountymd.gov

Howard County Council, 3430 Court House Dr., Ellicott City, MD 21043

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Subject: Re: [External] Councilmembers Mercer Rigby, Jones, and Jung Call on Howard County Public School System to Develop Integration Plan
Date: Wednesday, August 14, 2019 1:19:29 AM

Colleagues,

I received a phone call at 1pm from Chair Rigby offering redistricting “political coverage” from County Council via a resolution. I responded that I did not need nor desire political coverage for my decisions.

I was given impression that a resolution was in the discussion stages and was surprised to see fully articulated press release a few hours later.

Regards,

Vicky Cutroneo, Member
Howard County Board of Education
vicky_cutroneo@hcpss.org
Mobile: 443-364-0008

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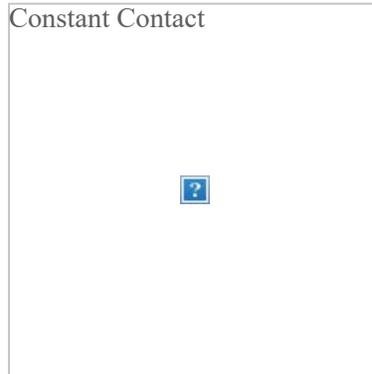
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