

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF FREDERICK COUNTY

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President

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November 16, 2012

The Honorable Martin O'Malley
Governor of Maryland
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1925

Dear Governor O'Malley:

On behalf of the Board of Education of Frederick County, Frederick County Public Schools, and the children and families of Frederick County, I ask for your help. We need your support and intervention in a matter of utmost importance to every school district in the state. Specifically, we ask you to champion an increase in the inflationary factors in state-aid calculations. This simple fix will boost state education aid to local school systems and will have real impacts for Maryland's children, families and communities.

All school systems in the state have experienced tough fiscal times in the recent economic downturn. Over the last five years, our operating budget has barely kept pace with our students' most basic needs—we have grown our budget by a meager 6 percent including phase 1 of the shift in teachers' pension costs. As is the case in other Maryland counties, our local County Commissioners are expressing their intentions to offer our students only Maintenance of Effort funding in the next fiscal year.

Federal sequestration looms on the horizon, making our budgetary outlook even bleaker in the face of potential cuts. At the same time, we face increasing costs for utilities; health, liability and property insurance; pension administrative fees; non-public placements; and technology. FCPS is falling further and further behind in our starting salaries for teachers at the very time when we need to boost our competitiveness.

In Frederick County—like in other counties in Maryland—we know how to do more with less. We have managed to find creative solutions to maintain our academic standards and offer our families outstanding service while still balancing our budgets. But creativity has limits. As the downturn drags on and as we face increasing expenses, we face choices we had hoped never to face. For example, should we increase class sizes and further cut a workforce that is already the leanest in the state? We are at the point where any further reductions will be on the backs of our students, and we ask for your help to avoid that potential reality.

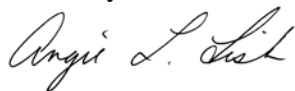
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We are one of many Maryland school systems in this position. Our concerns are their concerns. We have made major cuts—our students and families have endured, but our prospects moving forward are dire. Without your help and without significant increases in state funding, Maryland's children, families and communities will suffer.

We are very proud to be part of the state that Education Week has continuously declared to lead our nation in education. We join you in working to see that Maryland maintains that leadership, and we ask you to join us in finding the resources to make that happen. Please increase the inflationary factors in state-aid calculations to help us provide the quality education that keeps Maryland a vital and thriving place for our children, our families, and our businesses.

Governor O'Malley, over the course of your tenure as the top executive in Maryland, you have continued to champion public education and the importance of producing high school graduates who are prepared for higher education and/or viable careers. You have done this in a historically difficult environment. All in Frederick County thank you for that and for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Angie L. Fish
President
Board of Education of Frederick County



Theresa R. Alban, Ph.D.
Superintendent
Frederick County Public Schools

cc: Ms. Eloise Foster, Budget Office
Board of Education of Frederick County
Board of County Commissioners of Frederick County
Frederick County Delegation
Leslie R. Pellegrino, CPA, Executive Director of Fiscal Services
Ann Bonitatibus, Chief Operating Officer