



# NEWS RELEASE

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**This is a corrected version of the budget release from last evening. The total operating budget number has been updated.**

## **BCPS Superintendent presents proposed FY2022 budget, acknowledges challenge of serving students with greater needs during period of limited resources**

*“Our budget is really about people.”*

Towson, MD – Baltimore County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Darryl L. Williams presented a \$1.77 billion [operating budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2022](#) during the Board of Education of Baltimore County’s Jan. 5 meeting.

“Our budget is really about people,” Williams said, as he highlighted that salaries and benefits comprise 83 percent of the BCPS budget.

The superintendent’s FY2022 budget proposal contains a modest compensation increase for staff to keep salaries competitive with surrounding school systems. In lieu of any new initiatives, the budget maintains spending for instructional staffing ratios and materials; per pupil budgets for schools; facilities maintenance; technology infrastructure; and capital programs. The budget also reflects a minimum wage increase; Community Eligibility Provision (schoolwide free student meals) expansion to 87 schools; increased special education services; utility rate inflation; and the addition of Grade 5 to Watershed Charter School.

Williams explained that savings will help fund increases in benefits and contractual inflation.

Before outlining budget specifics, Williams presented an overview of the school system’s status during the COVID-19 pandemic and following a catastrophic ransomware attack in November. Williams shared that the school system has experienced a significant drop in elementary enrollment and that student engagement is more challenging to maintain during remote learning. He also thanked staff, students, and families for their diligence and flexibility during this trying time. He noted that instruction lapsed for

only three days due to the ransomware attack and that, during the first four months of the school year, Food and Nutrition Services delivered 1.7 million meals to families in need from more than 300 locations. He also noted that 73,000 student devices were distributed last spring and at the start of this school year and that an additional 82,000 staff and student devices are being exchanged due to the ransomware attack.

Williams stressed that while enrollment dropped by 3,954 students in the last year, the needs of BCPS students continues to grow. In the past decade, BCPS has experienced a 44 percent increase in students eligible for Free and Reduced-price Meals, a 162 percent increase in English learners, and a 105 percent increase in homeless students. Williams noted that BCPS planners anticipate enrollment to rebound once pandemic conditions ease and schools return to in-person instruction.

According to Williams, the pandemic has strained resources for vulnerable students by limiting food and nutrition programs, changing the traditional delivery of special education, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and social-emotional support services, and requiring restructured curriculum and training to deliver remote instruction.

“As often happens,” Williams said, “our needs are greater than available funding.”

Williams acknowledged that last year the county funded BCPS a Maintenance of Effort budget due to fiscal concerns at the outset of the pandemic and that the school system could face lower state funding for FY2022 if funding is based on current lower enrollment.

He explained that his proposed budget assumes roughly flat state revenue compared to FY2021 and county funding \$16 million above FY2021 to support potential employee compensation changes.

The FY2022 proposed budget has been posted online. A Board public hearing and work session will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 12, at 7 p.m., to be followed by a second Board work session on Tuesday, Jan. 19, at 6:30 p.m. The Board will vote to adopt the budget on Tuesday, Feb. 9, at 6:30 p.m. All Board meetings will be virtual and accessible to the public via the BCPS website.

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[Baltimore County Public Schools](#), the nation’s 25th largest school system, is focused on raising the bar and closing gaps to prepare our students for the future. Thanks to innovative and talented leaders, teachers, staff, and students, BCPS celebrates [many honors](#).