

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF FREDERICK COUNTY

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Karen Yoho
Member

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Bill: House Bill 1450

Title: Education – Food Waste Grant Program - Established

Position: SUPPORT

Date: March 6, 2020

Committee: Ways & Means Committee

Contact: Karen Yoho, Member, Frederick County Board of Education

The Board of Education of Frederick County supports House Bill 1450.

Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) currently has a pilot composting program in 14 of our schools, which is approximately 20% of the schools in our system. The intent is that composting will become sustainable as the number of trash pickups are reduced at each school. While we have seen some of the participating schools reduce the number of pickups, we are not yet able to fully fund the costs of composting. The costs incurred to have the composting removed from the schools is at this time being funded by FCPS and through the donations of the Rotary Clubs in Frederick County.

Our partnership with the business community is absolutely essential to the success of this program. The local Rotary Clubs have provided manpower, training, and funding, and a professional composting company provides the removal services. This is the type of public-private partnership that benefits the community at large.

The data below illustrates amounts so far this year. The totals are likely higher due to when each of the 14 schools has captured and reported their data.

- Recycling – 13,271 pounds
- Composting – 57,275 pounds
- Liquid Waste Diverted – 27,992 pounds

Some have wondered why FCPS would spend time having students, teachers, custodians, cafeteria employees, and others involved with composting. Besides the eventual cost savings to our school system, there are larger impacts on our county. Most of our trash is being hauled out of state. There are obvious associated costs to taxpayers and the environment. And as an educational system, teaching students to be more responsible about their environment will benefit them throughout their lives. In addition to composting, we have quite a few schools that have incorporated “share tables” for students. We also have at least three schools that partner with local food banks that pick up excess packaged food products.

The grants offered under HB 1450 would allow systems such as FCPS to continue our composting efforts as we move towards a more sustainable model. We are hopeful that this could occur within the next few years. Should our pilot prove successful, as we expect, we can continue to expand the program.

For these reasons, the Board of Education of Frederick County respectfully requests that the committee issue a favorable report on House Bill 1450.