

**SB 756.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kathleen Maloney

Position: FAV



March 8, 2022

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky  
Chairman  
Senate Education, health and Environmental Affairs Committee  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Senate Bill 756-University of Maryland-County School Technology Pilot  
Program-Established  
**SUPPORT**

Dear Chairman Pinsky:

The school redistricting process in Howard County can be supported by SB 756 as amended by allowing HCPPSS to access the cutting-edge research in geospatial analysis, data visualization, and process optimization and improvement from USM faculty, staff, and institutes.

While there is no argument that the work undertaken by HCPSS staff to redistrict students is anything less than stellar, it is difficult for those working in the process to work on the process. This bill with amendments allows a third party to provide technical assistance to HCPSS for this redistricting process.

USM faculty, staff and institutes are actively researching in these key areas and can provide keen insights as well as recommendations for process improvement. In addition, a survey of other redistricting processes will be done to provide context for the recommendations. USM will support this by assigning a project manager for this endeavor who will be able to access and assign key USM resources to this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Daraius Irani', written over a large, stylized blue scribble.

Daraius Irani, Ph.D.  
Vice President  
Division of Strategic Partnerships and Applied Research



# **SB756 Sponsor Testimony.docx.pdf**

Uploaded by: Katie Fry Hester

Position: FAV

**KATIE FRY HESTER**  
*Legislative District 9*  
Carroll and Howard Counties

Education, Health, and  
Environmental Affairs Committee

Chair, Joint Committee on  
Cybersecurity, Information Technology  
and Biotechnology



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**THE SENATE OF MARYLAND**  
**ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401**

**Testimony in Support of SB756 - University System of Maryland - County School Technology Program - Established**

March 8, 2022

Chairman Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee, thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 756, which I have sponsored on behalf of the Parent Teacher Association of Howard County, and which will establish a pilot program within the University System of Maryland to study school redistricting using advanced data analytics tools and GIS.

Across the nation, school redistricting is often a controversial topic. Where our children learn is important to both the children and the parents themselves, and it's difficult to make everyone entirely happy. School boards face extremely difficult decisions to balance countervailing priorities, while trying to keep as many families satisfied as possible. This bill aims to assist school boards in making these decisions by studying how advanced statistical tools could reshape how redistricting is done. The pilot program established under this bill will begin by studying Howard County's redistricting process and identifying where applied data tools can be utilized to remove personal influence, predict the size of future pre-kindergarten classes, and report findings to the General Assembly. Furthermore, if Howard County were to redistrict their schools, this pilot would conduct a parallel process to demonstrate the validity of its recommendations in real time.

If SB756 passes, this program could provide a clear and translatable blueprint for school redistricting in other jurisdictions across the state. It would also demonstrate the utility of leveraging advanced tools to redistricting and make the process smoother for all parties. The Howard County School System has voted to support this legislation with some clarifying amendments, and Towson University's Division of Strategic Partnerships and Applied Research has indicated their interest in taking on the pilot program.

**For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 756.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Katie Fry Hester'.

Senator Katie Fry Hester  
Carroll and Howard Counties

## **Favorable Testimony**

Uploaded by: Tonya Tiffany

Position: FAV

Good afternoon, I am Tonya Tiffany, VP of Issues for the PTA Council of Howard County. The PTA council represents local PTA organizations from every Howard County School and is backed with position votes of support from PTA delegates.

The origin of SB0756 is based on the crossroads of several major events for the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS), which included budgetary limitations for capital projects, public demonstrations of USM capabilities, a contentious redistricting cycle, all held within a continuing growth phase.

The HCPSS Office of school planning has recently updated its redistricting policy to include several new considerations and the formation of an analytical approach. The next planning and redistricting cycle has just begun and follows a process defined in HCPSS policy 6010. The process includes the use of a consultant and COTS (Commercial Off The Shelf) software.

This bill intendeds to support the long-term capabilities of HCPSS rather than supplant them, using USM assistance to address any area of opportunity to gain efficiency within the framework of HCPSS policy. HCPSS is confident of its abilities at present, but there are many items unique to LEA units in the State of Maryland and Howard County that could be addressed using analytical considerations factoring in unique polygons, capital budget variables, class size change impacts, implementation of Blueprint for Maryland criteria, School facility Index variables, walk distances facilitated by prioritized capital projects, land use policy affecting enrollment, exemptions to policies affecting growth patterns, new safety criteria, PPP use, Leased facility distribution, socioeconomic factors, student data privacy and more. In addition, there are opportunities to mature processes to factor in real time data as well as long term trend analysis to the portfolio of capabilities.

PTACHC broadly and unanimously supports this bill which was written to allow a broad range of participation options. As the bill has progressed closer to potential adoption, many of the coordinating and listed parties including PTACHC would like an opportunity to refine specifics with amendments. In PTACHC's case, we would like to see clarifying language regarding funding which appears to be in a single fiscal year when the expectation was for a multi-year distribution throughout the pilot period of performance. The school system and USM have also engaged in drafting potential amendments which should be considered. PTACHC respectfully requests these are considered and balanced with the core intent to provide additional analytical support to HCPSS and share lessons learned for the State funded school system.

PTACHC looks forward to assisting in any way to make this effort a success and follow through with our core mission to advocate for the well-being of children.

**SB0756 Howard Co BOE Testimony 030822 for EHEA - U**

Uploaded by: Staff Howard County

Position: FWA



**Board of Education of Howard County  
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland Senate,  
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee  
March 8, 2022**

**Board of Education  
of Howard County**

Vicky Cutroneo, *Chair*

Antonia Watts, *Vice Chair*

Christina Delmont-Small

Yun Lu, Ph.D.

Jennifer Swickard Mallo

Jolene Mosley

Chao Wu, Ph.D.

Peter J. Banyas  
*Student Member*

Michael J. Martirano, Ed.D.  
*Superintendent  
Secretary/Treasurer*

**SB0756: FAVORABLE With AMENDMENTS  
University System of Maryland - County School Technology Pilot Program –  
Established**

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) supports SB0756 **University System of Maryland - County School Technology Pilot Program - Established** with amendments that would meet the intent to provide resources and analytical tools for school redistricting.

The school boundary review process, as last completed by the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) in November 2019, concluded with more than 5,000 students attending a new school during the 2020-2021 school year. In addition to overcrowding, the process aimed to advance equity by addressing the distribution of students affected by poverty across schools, and plan ahead for the impact of a new high school, scheduled to open in fall 2023.

Through the ten-month-long process, parents, students, community members and elected officials in Howard County expressed their supports and concerns alike. Opportunities for public discussion and stakeholder input included an online survey, community meetings and seven public hearings following the presentation of the Superintendent's recommendation to the Board. Extensive consideration by the Board throughout the process involved nine public work sessions and the receipt of approximately 8,500 pieces of testimony.

Redistricting can be a difficult process where no one solution will satisfy everyone. In the time since the 2019 redistricting, the Board instituted a thorough review of HCPSS Policy 6010 School Attendance Areas to incorporate community, staff and Board feedback, with changes adopted just last month.

The Board appreciates the PTA Council of Howard County's (PTACHC) stated intent to provide analytical support from the University System of Maryland to the HCPSS Office of School Planning for future redistricting efforts. As written, SB0756 falls short of setting up a collaborative effort and has the potential to remove the process from local control, however staff is hopeful through recent discussions with stakeholders and the sponsor that the original intent can be realized.

For these reasons, we urge a FAVORABLE report of SB0756 with amendments from this Committee.



# **SB 756 USM - County School Tech Pilot Program (Hes**

Uploaded by: Barbara Wilkins

Position: INFO



# Maryland

DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET  
AND MANAGEMENT

LARRY HOGAN  
*Governor*

BOYD K. RUTHERFORD  
*Lieutenant Governor*

DAVID R. BRINKLEY  
*Secretary*

MARC L. NICOLE  
*Deputy Secretary*

## **SENATE BILL 756 University System of Maryland – County School Technology Pilot Program – Established (Hester)**

### **STATEMENT OF INFORMATION**

**DATE: March 8, 2022**

**COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs**

**SUMMARY OF BILL:** SB 756 mandates an appropriation in the amount of \$200,000 in FY 2024 for a County School Technology Pilot Program at the University System of Maryland, the purpose of which is to review the Howard County School redistricting process in order to apply computer-based analytical processes for more efficient school redistricting and predict the number of Pre-K seats that will be needed within the following three years.

**EXPLANATION:** The Department of Budget and Management's focus is not on the underlying policy proposal being advanced by the legislation, but rather on the \$200,000 mandated appropriation provision that impacts the FY 2024 budget.

DBM has the responsibility of submitting a balanced budget to the General Assembly annually, which will require spending allocations for FY 2024 to be within the official revenues estimates approved by the Board of Revenue Estimates in December 2022.

Changes to the Maryland Constitution in 2020 provide the General Assembly with additional budgetary authority, beginning in the 2023 Session, to realign total spending by increasing and adding items to appropriations in the budget submitted by the Governor. The legislature's new budgetary power diminishes, if not negates, the need for mandated appropriation bills.

Fully funding the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future (Kirwan) will require fiscal discipline in the years ahead, if the State is to maintain the current projected structural budget surpluses. Mandated spending increases need to be reevaluated within the context of this education funding priority and the Governor's tax relief proposals.

Economic conditions remain precarious as a result of COVID-19. High rates of inflation and workforce shortages may be short lived or persist, thereby impacting the Maryland economy. While current budget forecasts project structural surpluses, the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic continues to present a significant budgetary vulnerability. The Department continues to urge the General Assembly to focus on maintaining the structural budget surplus.

**For additional information, contact Barbara Wilkins at (410) 260-6371**

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