



**Board of Education of Howard County  
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland House of Delegates,  
Ways and Means Committee  
March 31, 2022**

**Board of Education  
of Howard County**

**SB0124: FAVORABLE  
Public Schools – Grant Program to Reduce and Compost School Waste**

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The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) supports **SB0124 Public Schools – Grant Program to Reduce and Compost School Waste** as an opportunity for county boards and public schools to receive grant funds to develop and implement programs to reduce food waste and establish composting of pre- and post-consumer waste.

Programs under SB0124 must educate students, staff and parents on the connection between food waste climate, environment, and hunger, support school infrastructure to measure food waste and reductions, train and educate on the implementation of food waste reduction and composting, transition the school to an offer vs. serve model, develop processes for surplus food to be used after school, or be taken home, contract with composter, establish on-site composting, replace single serve milk cartons with bulk dispensers, establish share tables, package and distribute surplus food to local food banks, or establish other programs that prevent and reduce waste in a public school. Priority will be given to programs led by students, schools with high FARMS, those that involve a small and minority or veteran owned business, and those that create employment opportunities and leadership development and pay a living wage. A county or school that receives a grant must annually report on the amount of food waste prevented, diverted, and composed, and improvements in education of students and staff on environmental best practices related to food waste management.

As amended in the Senate, the Governor must include at least \$250,000 in the annual budget for the fund. If funds were made available, the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) could utilize the program to support sustainable practices to reduce food waste in schools. Through the Howard County Bureau of Environmental Services, several schools participate in a local food scrap collection program and others are looking to join as the County expands. HCPSS Food and Nutrition Service staff will continue to encourage recycling and composting waste through planning by staff, getting students involved in decision-making relative to menus, providing appropriate information on the website to educate students and families on the impact of wasted food, etc. The grant opportunity offered by SB0124 could support these efforts.

For these reasons, we urge a FAVORABLE report of SB0124 from this Committee.