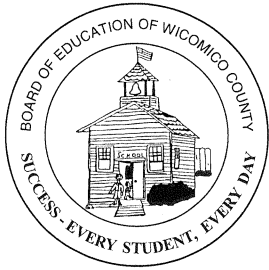
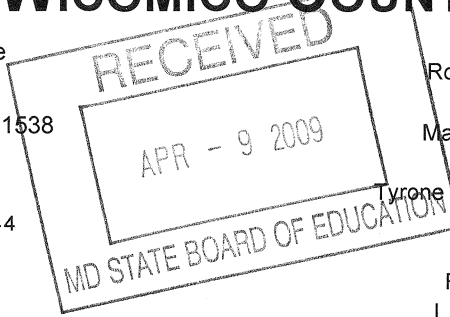


BOARD OF EDUCATION OF WICOMICO COUNTY



101 Long Avenue
P.O. Box 1538
Salisbury, MD 21802-1538

410-677-4400
FAX 410-677-4444
www.wcboe.org



Robin H. Holloway
President
Mark S. Thompson
Vice President
Tyrone A. Chase, Ph.D.
Susan A. Hitch
Brian K. Kilgore
Ronald O. Willey
L. Michelle Wright

John E. Fredericksen, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Anthony South, Executive Director
Maryland State Board of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore MD 21201

April 8, 2009

RE: Wicomico County Maintenance of Effort Waiver Request Superintendent's Response

Dear Executive Director South:

Please accept the attached materials on behalf of the students, parents, guardians, and staff of the Wicomico County Public Schools regarding this important action. The Wicomico County Executive has filed an application on behalf of the County Council to have the State of Maryland waive the statutory requirement to provide \$577,056 for Maintenance of Effort (MOE), leveraging \$5,759,130 in State funding. His request also proposes cutting Board of Education funding an additional \$1,422,944 for a total reduction of \$2,000,000, as of this writing. The full county budget will be submitted to the County Council April 15th, enabling more detailed discussion and consideration.

The principle of Maintenance of Effort is critical to the local-state government partnership of funding our schools, placing similar obligations and opportunities on all. It assures the people of Maryland that their tax supports and educational expectations are being fairly balanced. The loss of these funds will hurt children and degrade the educational progress made in recent years. Waiving MOE requirements also sets a negative precedent.

We are keenly aware of the difficult economic situation our county is in at this time. We are in this together and are ready to do our part. Options are available whereby a local solution can be created that solves the challenge closer to home with the potential of a higher level of satisfaction. We wish to collaborate locally to make the best things happen for our community, rather than operate within a MOE Waivered budgeting process. I'm confident that we can craft a solution with the County Executive and his team that will address county financial challenges and provide the school system the needed money to qualify for the State funds. Thank you.

Respectfully,

John E. Fredericksen, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Superintendent of Wicomico County Public Schools:
Response to Maintenance of Effort Waiver Request

Wicomico County faces an extremely challenging budget year as it attempts to prepare a balanced working budget for fiscal 2010 at a time when county revenues are projected to be down by approximately \$12 million. In this fiscal climate, the county has submitted to the Maryland State Board of Education a waiver request from Maintenance of Effort requirements for fiscal 2010. The county has requested a waiver to permit it to reduce funding for public education by \$1,422,944 from the current year's funding level and to forego an increase of \$577,056, which represents Maintenance of Effort for the fiscal 2010 budget, for a total of \$2,000,000. This would result in the level of funding for fiscal year 2010 for Wicomico schools of \$48,781,655.

The administration of the Wicomico County Public Schools agrees that there are significant budget challenges, but believes strongly that these challenges can be resolved by the school system and the county working together to create a budgetary solution that will support student learning and help the school system continue the considerable progress that has been made since the start of Thornton funding. We want to work with the county to create a budgetary solution within the existing funding framework, without a waiver of Maintenance of Effort.

With the advent of funding to local school systems from Thornton, Wicomico County's school system benefited by having additional resources to support an increased focus on quality instruction. The focus included retention and recruitment of highly qualified staff, enhanced special education and other programs serving special needs populations, school climate, and other areas identified by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act (see attachment #1). The MGT of America report indicates that the Thornton dollars have been well spent, making Maryland's public education system No. 1 in the nation, according to Education Week's survey "Quality Counts:"

"Bridge to Excellence, Maryland's visionary program to bring adequacy and equity to elementary and secondary classrooms, has successfully fueled increased student achievement and academic innovation throughout the state, according to a new independent analysis," MSDE said in January. "Just as important, the report says that the Bridge to Excellence (BTE) funding—worth at least \$1.3 billion in additional dollars to local systems—has started to reduce the gaps in achievement among certain economic and racial subgroups of students, according to the independent analysis by MGT of America."

In March, the Wicomico County Board of Education approved and submitted the school system's proposed budget for fiscal 2010 to the County Executive. The Unrestricted Current Expense Budget for fiscal year 2010 projects projected revenues of nearly \$115 million based upon state aid estimates, an increase of \$5,759,130. Because the Board of Education understands the economic challenges facing our county government, the Board requested an amount of \$50.8 million, an increase of \$577,056, or 1.15 %, which

only represents Maintenance of Effort. This is the first time in many years the school system has requested only Maintenance of Effort from the county. Without a waiver, the county portion of the increase -- \$577,056 -- would have to be funded for the school system to receive the nearly \$5.8 million from the state.

Both county and state increases are related not to funding the status quo, but to meeting increased needs in the school system. The \$577,056 increase from the county represents Maintenance of Effort, the minimum funding necessary for the school system to maintain current per pupil spending (attachment #3). The state increase of nearly \$5.8 million reflects the school system's rising enrollment (one of only a few Maryland counties experiencing enrollment growth), and the growing percentage of students qualifying for Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS), which at 49.85 % is one of the fastest-growing percentages in the state and represents an 11.11 % increase since 2000.

Even as Wicomico County Public Schools benefited from Thornton funding, Wicomico County's budgetary support for public education declined due in large part to a revenue cap enacted in 2002 (see attachment #2a and #2b). While the county has funded Maintenance of Effort every year since 2002, its ability to meet this obligation has been hampered by the revenue cap.

Wicomico County Public Schools face significant challenges, both in the school population and the community:

- The FARMS population is 49.85 %, and 8 of the county's 12 Title I schools are classified as high-poverty schools with FARMS numbers 70 percent or higher. None of Wicomico's 24 schools meets the federal definition for a low-poverty school. Despite this lack of wealth, Wicomico is pleased that none of its schools is classified as persistently dangerous, which often correlates with family income.
- County students served by the English Language Learners' (ELL) Program speak 27 different languages, and the percentage of ELL students has grown 21.9 % in the past three years.
- Special Education services were provided to 1,704 students ages 6 to 21 in 2007-08. The school system's financial commitment to providing and expanding special education services has grown each year.
- The population classified as homeless has risen from 327 in 2004 to 1,295 in 2009 (attachment #3).
- The school system's high school dropout rate is the second highest in the state.
- The mobility rate for students during the school year is third highest in the state for elementary and fourth highest for middle and high school, as reported in the 2008 Maryland Report Card.

There are significant challenges in the community as well. Wicomico County has the seventh highest percentage among Maryland counties of teen pregnancy. Crime statistics for Salisbury and Wicomico County show that the incidences of murders, rapes and robberies are all up.

To meet the community's needs for early childhood education as well as family support, the Wicomico School System funds such initiatives as prekindergarten targeted to the populations with greatest need, the East Salisbury Elementary Family Center, the Judy Center, Child Find, 21st Century STARS after-school programs, WISE (Wicomico Middle's Integrated Social and Educational Program) and Title I programs in 12 schools. Many of these programs were established with grant funds but have since become part of the school system's budget as the need for the program outlasted the federal or state funding.

Despite these challenges, Wicomico County Public Schools have endeavored to work toward the Bridge to Excellence Master Plan goals of high student achievement, safe learning environment, and effective and efficient operations. As a school system, Wicomico strives to carry out the motto of "Success – Every Student, Every Day."

High Student Achievement: MSA scores in Math and Reading improved greatly from 2004 to 2008 (attachment #4). The majority of Wicomico students in 2008 had taken and passed the HSAs, and more than 90 % of Wicomico's class of 2009 has met the HSA graduation requirement (attachment #4), with a goal of 100 % by graduation later this spring. Almost all of our schools have made Adequate Yearly Progress, and no elementary or high schools are in improvement status. Wicomico ELL students exceeded the state AMAO (Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives) I target on the LAS (Language Assessment System) Links assessments of student progress by 6 %, the AMAO II target on children attaining English proficiency by 22 %, and met the AMAO III target at the elementary, middle and high school levels.

Thornton funding has enabled the school system to expand its kindergarten program to full day, enhance its special education services with programs and personnel, improve instructional and administrative technology, and provide professional development in many areas including alignment with the Voluntary State Curriculum and meeting the requirements of NCLB. Wicomico has 94 % of its teachers Highly Qualified as defined by NCLB; the school system has improved that percentage significantly since 2005, when the percentage of Highly Qualified teachers was 84 %. Wicomico continues to strive to recruit and retain a highly qualified workforce, and to do so it must offer competitive salaries and benefits. Even with the Thornton funding for the past several years, Wicomico teacher salaries are still in the bottom third of salaries in the state (attachment #5), and could be expected to decline further in rank with a budget reduction.

Safe Learning Environment: To ensure a safe learning environment, Safe and Drug-Free Schools strategies were boosted with Thornton funding. In fact, in fiscal 2007, the

Wicomico County Sheriff's Office ceased the school resource officer (SRO) program. Subsequently, the Board of Education deemed the service a priority and as a result added \$548,000 to the budget to reinstate the SRO program. Wicomico is the only Maryland school system paying for school resource officers to support student safety.

Effective and Efficient Operations: To ensure that the school system is making the most efficient use of monies each year, the Board annually realigns funds to avoid additional costs. In the approved proposed budget for fiscal 2010, the Board has realigned \$2.9 million to achieve current educational goals without having to request additional funds. The school system also actively pursues grant opportunities from federal, state, and local private and agency sources, totaling \$11.15 million in the current year's budget and \$16.35 million in next year's budget, with much of the increase coming from targeted federal stimulus funds.

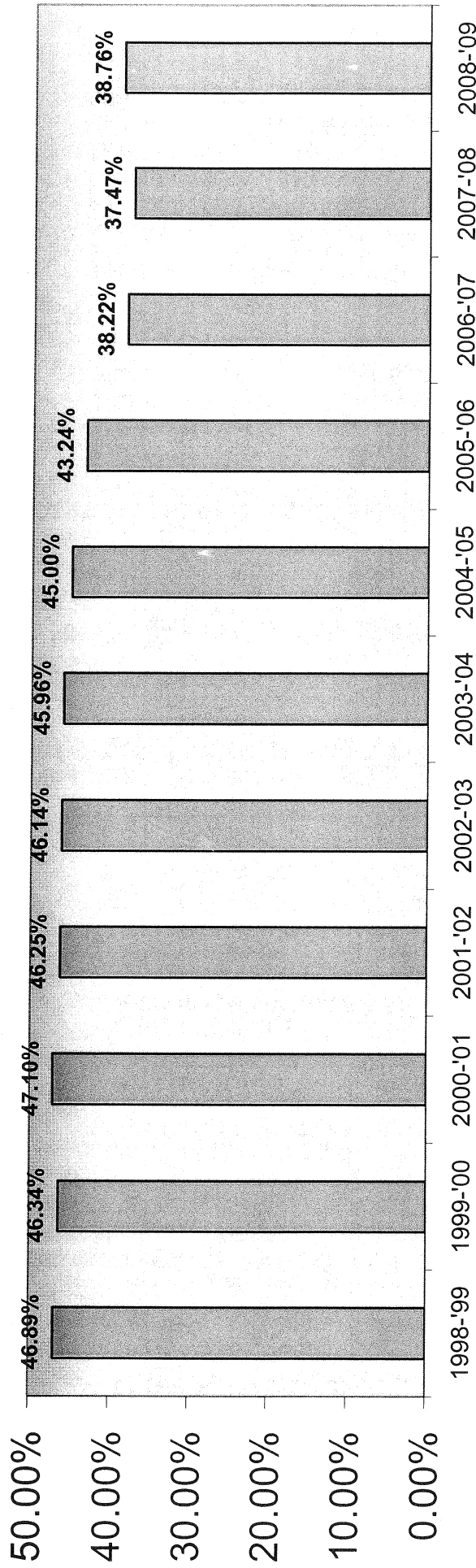
The school system concurs with the County Executive's statement in the waiver request that funds from the Federal Fiscal Stabilization Act and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 -- funds of approximately \$3.8 million a year for the next two years targeted to Title I, special education and technology -- cannot be used to supplant existing revenue streams, and will not have an effect on Maintenance of Effort.

The Wicomico School System is committed to resolving these budget challenges at the local level, despite the great challenges that the school system and the county face. Wicomico County Public Schools and Wicomico County should work together to find a solution to the current budget situation that is fiscally responsible and protects the schoolchildren of Wicomico County.

WICOMICO COUNTY SUBSTANTIAL EDUCATIONAL ENHANCEMENTS

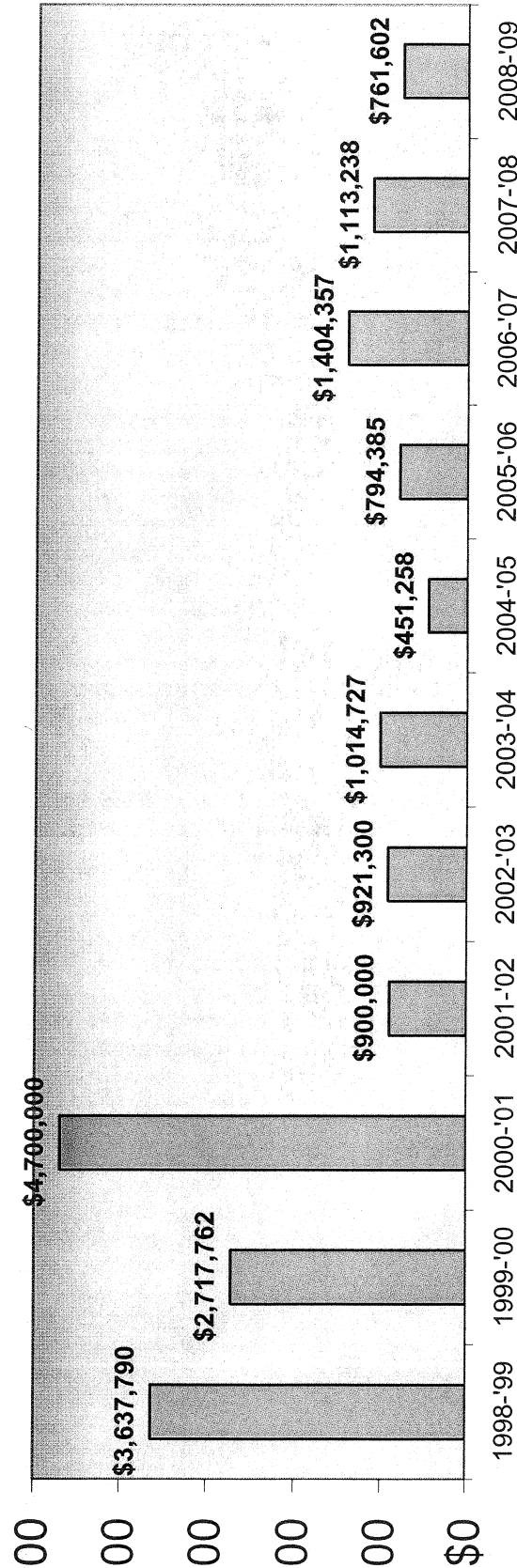
Wicomico County Schools	Positions	Amount	FARMS	ELL	SPED	General	School Level
Additions to Educational Programs:							
Kindergarten programs	29	608,000	X	X	X	X	E
Other Additions core subject programs	1	42,000				X	E, M, H
Special education programs	59.5	1,324,000			X		E, M, H
English Language Learners (ELL) programs	2	156,000		X			E, M, H
Academic intervention programs	1	782,441	X	X	X		H
Graduation enhancement programs	3	993,039	X	X	X	X	H
Subtotal, Additions to Educational Programs	96	3,905,480					
Additions to the Instructional Process:							
Competitive salaries and benefits		19,706,567					
New Personnel or Positions added (due to change in program focus or enrollment growth)	24	9,161,000		X		X	E, M, H
Recruitment of highly qualified teachers/ paraprofessionals	1	9,406,108	X	X	X	X	E, M, H
Alignment to the Voluntary State Curriculum (VSC) and State Testing Program	4	2,079,475				X	E, M, H
Improvement of communications/community partnerships		138,407				X	E, M, H
Improvement of instructional practices	14	1,371,290				X	E, M, H
Implementation of mathematics programs	13	551,350	X	X			E, M, H
Implementation of reading programs	2	281,150	X	X			E, M, H
Implementation of Other Additions core academic programs	4	674,864				X	E, M, H
Implementation of Safe and Drug-Free School strategies	14.5	1,686,155				X	E, M, H
Subtotal, Additions to the Instructional Process:	77	45,056,366					
Additions to Professional Development:							
Additions to Professional Development (unspecified)		424,971	X	X	X	X	E, M, H
Provision of targeted professional development for NCLB subgroups		1,043,900	X	X	X		E, M, H
Provision of targeted professional development for core content areas		233,000			X	X	E, M, H
Subtotal, Additions to Professional Development:	0	1,701,871					
Additions to Accountability Measures							
Activities related to NCLB high quality teachers/ paraprofessionals		13,000	X	X	X		E, M, H
Increased participation and improved performance on college entrance exams		15,000				X	H
State and local assessments to evaluate student performance		98,425	X	X	X	X	E, M, H
Subtotal, Additions to Accountability Measures	0	126,425					
Additions to the Use of Technology and Data Analysis:							
Implementation of technology in schools	1	1,737,996				X	E, M, H
Optimization of administrative technology	5	1,261,781					
Optimization of technology for analyzing student achievement		786,000	X	X	X	X	E, M, H
Implementation of new student information systems		114,000				X	E, M, H
Subtotal, Additions to the Use of Technology and Data Analysis:	6	3,899,777					

EDUCATION APPROPRIATION AS % OF WICOMICO COUNTY BUDGET



	1998-'99	1999-'00	2000-'01	2001-'02	2002-'03	2003-'04	2004-'05	2005-'06	2006-'07	2007-'08	2008-'09
Ed Funding	\$35,426,026	\$38,143,788	\$42,843,788	\$43,743,788	\$44,665,088	\$45,679,815	\$46,131,073	\$46,925,458	\$48,329,815	\$49,443,053	\$50,204,655
County Budget	\$75,558,963	\$82,317,888	\$90,962,018	\$94,591,026	\$96,796,341	\$99,392,309	\$102,523,738	\$108,526,433	\$126,441,348	\$131,950,578	\$129,535,922
% of Co Bgt.	46.89%	46.34%	47.10%	46.25%	46.14%	45.96%	45.00%	43.24%	38.22%	37.47%	38.76%

WICOMICO COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION COUNTY APPROPRIATION ANNUAL INCREASES



	1998-'99	1999-'00	2000-'01	2001-'02	2002-'03	2003-'04	2004-'05	2005-'06	2006-'07	2007-'08	2008-'09
Amt. Funded	\$35,426,026	\$38,143,788	\$42,843,788	\$43,743,788	\$44,665,088	\$45,679,815	\$46,131,073	\$46,925,458	\$48,329,815	\$49,443,053	\$50,204,655
Prev Yr.	\$31,788,236	\$35,426,026	\$38,143,788	\$42,843,788	\$43,743,788	\$44,665,088	\$45,679,815	\$46,131,073	\$46,925,458	\$48,329,815	\$49,443,053
Increase	<u>\$3,637,790</u>	<u>\$2,717,762</u>	<u>\$4,700,000</u>	<u>\$900,000</u>	<u>\$921,300</u>	<u>\$1,014,727</u>	<u>\$451,258</u>	<u>\$794,385</u>	<u>\$1,404,357</u>	<u>\$1,113,238</u>	<u>\$761,602</u>

ENROLLMENT 2004-2008

	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY	TOTAL	INCREASE/DECREASE FROM YEAR PRIOR
YEAR	# OF STUDENTS	# OF STUDENTS	# OF STUDENTS	# OF STUDENTS
2004	7006	7394	14400	41
2005	7099	7410	14509	109
2006	7192	7280	14472	-37
2007	7301	7136	14437	-35
2008	7450	7183	14633	196

STUDENTS IDENTIFIED AS HOMELESS

CODE	4/7/09	6/30/08	6/30/07	6/30/06	6/30/05	6/30/04
SHELTER	44	50	41	26	47	110
HOTEL MOTEL	45	61	72	37	24	24
RELATIVE/ FRIEND	1159	1157	909	678	430	172
OTHER	47	0	58	56	0	21
TOTAL	1295	1268	1080	797	501	327

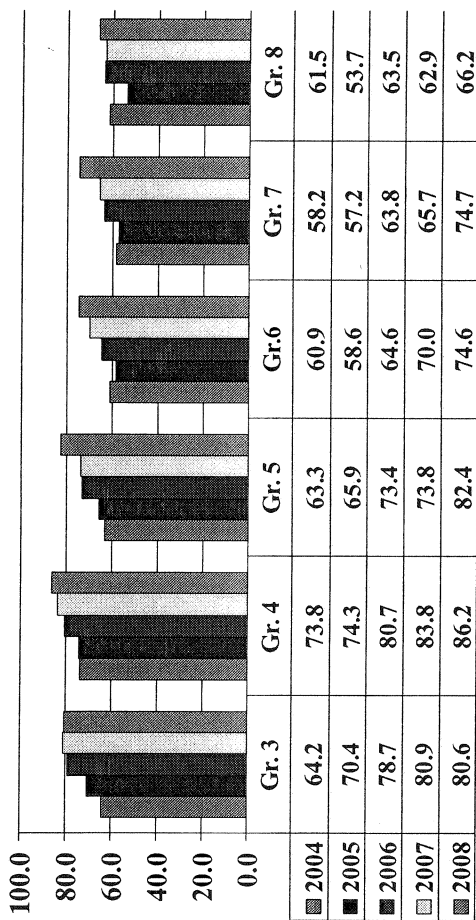
ASSESSMENT RESULTS

2004-2008

Wicomico County

Maryland School Assessment-CRT
Percent Proficient/Advanced

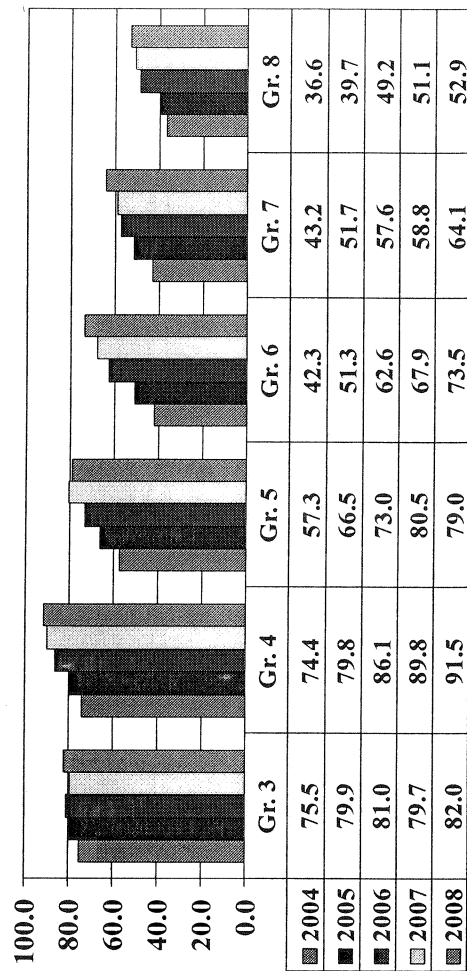
Reading



Wicomico County

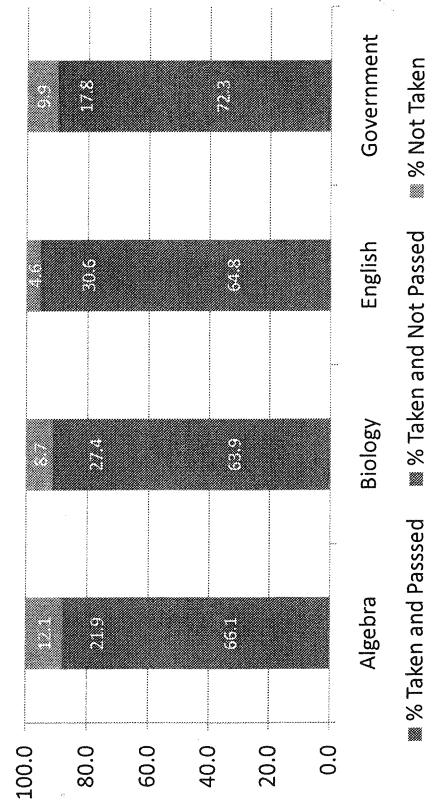
Maryland School Assessment-CRT
Percent Proficient/Advanced

Math



2008 Wicomico High School Assessments

Participation & Status: All Grade 10 Students



2008 Wicomico High School Assessments

Participation & Status: All Grade 11 Students

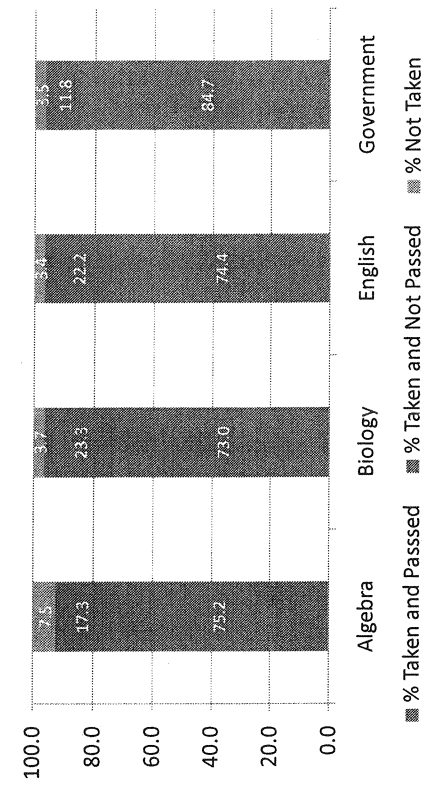


CHART 2

TEACHER SALARY COMPARISONS
2008 - 2009
MARYLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School System	BACHELOR'S SCALES				MASTER'S SCALES				Maximum incl. APC, Adv. Prep & Longevity	Rank
	Step 1	Rank	Step 10	Rank	Step 1	Rank	Step 10	Rank		
Allegany MD	40,697	23	51,363	15	41,859	23	55,537	13	73,879	21
Anne Arundel MD	43,452	6	57,236	4	46,093	7	60,719	5	90,520	5
Baltimore MD	42,000	14	48,036	22	43,264	21	53,508	18	80,762	11
Baltimore City MD	41,128	21	49,746	17	43,696	15	58,518	6	80,596	13
Calvert MD	44,600	2	64,021	1	47,600	3	68,406	2	102,425	3
Caroline MD	41,310	17	48,344	21	43,350	19	52,766	22	75,411	17
Carroll MD	41,500	16	52,164	12	41,955	22	56,176	11	81,355	9
Cecil MD	41,674	15	53,134	9	43,449	18	54,909	15	75,284	18
Charles MD	43,724	5	53,745	7	47,396	4	58,262	7	84,842	8
Dorchester MD	40,640	24	45,274	23	43,509	17	52,203	24	74,630	20
Frederick MD	40,706	22	51,819	14	43,963	13	55,965	12	86,365	6
Garrett MD	42,043	13	52,466	11	44,043	12	54,466	17	69,220	24
Harford MD	41,171	20	53,717	8	43,677	16	56,988	10	80,188	14
Howard MD	44,527	3	58,631	3	47,395	5	63,738	3	91,521	4
Kent MD	41,242	19	49,203	19	41,504	24	52,393	23	80,176	15
Montgomery MD	46,410	1	62,201	2	51,128	1	70,330	1	103,634	2
Prince George's MD	44,355	4	55,966	5	48,621	2	61,351	4	109,012	1
Queen Anne's MD	43,000	8	44,100	24	43,313	20	53,360	20	80,706	12
St. Mary's MD	43,240	7	54,833	6	45,631	8	57,307	9	86,005	7
Somerset MD	41,300	18	48,935	20	43,881	14	53,437	19	73,862	22
Talbot MD	42,400	10	51,900	13	44,800	9	54,600	16	73,800	23
Washington MD	42,807	9	52,511	10	44,246	11	57,727	8	74,927	19
Wicomico MD	42,140	12	49,320	18	44,290	10	53,100	21	76,750	16
Worcester MD	42,222	11	50,725	16	46,279	6	55,259	14	81,073	10

Source: Survey of Maryland School Systems by the Cecil County Public Schools Human Resources Office

NOTE: Bachelor Step 1 & 10 and Master's Step 1 & 10 include no experience or longevity add-ons.

Maximum teacher salary includes APC, highest advanced preparation and longevity stipends.

APPROVED
WICOMICO COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
BUDGET CALENDAR
FISCAL YEAR 2009-2010

October 20, 2008	Budget Manager distributes budget request/CMP packets to all employees having budget responsibility.
November 12, 2008	Budget Committee meets to review current year's budget line items and develop priorities for new year's budget process/funding submissions.
November 19, 2008	Employees with budget responsibility must turn in all budget worksheets noting new requests and/or funding realignments to Budget Manager to commence budget compilation and also to their Director for review.
December 10, 2008	Budget Manager meets with Directors to review/modify requests.
December 22, 2008	Directors submit modified requests to the Assistant Superintendents for review.
January 5, 2009	Assistant Superintendents meet and review with the Superintendent all budget requests they would support putting forth to the Board of Education.
January 7, 2009	Board holds a Public Hearing to receive public input for the FY2010 CMP & unrestricted operating budget requests @ 5:30pm in the Central Office Auditorium.
January 14, 2009	Superintendent instructs Budget Manager as to budget requests to compile for submission to the Board of Education Budget Committee & determines with Asst. Superintendents their priority order.
January 21, 2009	Board of Education Budget Committee meets with Superintendent and staff.
February 4, 2009	Board of Education Budget Committee meets with Superintendent and staff.
February 18, 2009	Board of Education Budget Committee meets with Superintendent and staff.
February 25, 2009	Board of Education Budget Committee meets with Superintendent and staff.
March 4, 2009	Board of Education directs Superintendent and Finance as to compilation and priority of budget for submission to the Wicomico County Council (WCC).
March 10, 2009	Board adopts the FY2010 Proposed Budget at their regular scheduled meeting.
March 13, 2009	Finance submits FY2010 Proposed Budget to WCC.
April ??, 2009	WCC has public hearing to review their budget.
May 20, 2009	Board holds a second Public Hearing to receive additional public input for the FY2010 CMP & unrestricted operating budget requests @ 5:30pm in the Central Office Auditorium.
May 29, 2009	WCC adopts their Expense Budget & notifies the Board of Education of our appropriation.
June 2, 2009 thru June 8, 2009	Superintendent and staff begin work to revise the proposed budget (if required) based upon the actual appropriation from the Wicomico County Council.
June 9, 2009	Superintendent and staff submit their budget recommendations to the Board of Education at their regular scheduled meeting.
June 23, 2009	Board of Education adopts the FY2010 Approved Budget at a special meeting.