

THERE'S MORE TO THE STORY



ANNUAL REPORT 2023
HOWARD COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM



Tonya Aikens
President & CEO

Dear friends,

This year's National Library Week theme was There's More to the Story, and that was certainly true in Howard County! Throughout the year, we embraced that theme as we introduced new initiatives and invited residents to dialogue, learn from one another, and build community.

We unveiled our new STEAM Machine at the HiTech Carnival. Geared toward students from disconnected and under-resourced communities, this mobile classroom travels the county bringing engaging hands-on projects and activities that are aligned with HCPSS' science curriculum.

We introduced the *Inequities Within* report, which presents data and shows local history of racial inequity and its ongoing impact on education, health, housing, and criminal justice in Howard County and the state of Maryland. This report provides an overview of racial equity across education, healthcare, housing, economic, and legal systems within our county.

We celebrated 20 years of A+ Partners in Education with Howard County Public School System. At a partnership celebration, library and school educators and staff shared how the partnership had impacted students and their families. One of the first systemwide school and library partnerships in the nation, A+ remains an integral part of students' K-12 experience.

Along with Governor Moore, County Executive Ball, County Council members, and community leaders, we announced a proposal for a reimagined and transformative library in downtown Columbia. Envisioned as a true community gathering space, the new library would foster creativity, learning, and civic engagement and will be the first, innovative library of its kind in the region.

After a pandemic hiatus, we resumed our strategic planning process, engaging the community around our priorities and goals for the next three years. The new plan launches in FY24.

While this year's report touches on some of the highlights, there's more to the story. We started lending video games; celebrated Banned Books Week; hosted the ever-popular bookmark contest and first Seed Share; hosted The Longest Table; and so much more.

Thank you for your continued support. Together, we learn, share, and grow from each other's stories.

Sincerely,

Tonya Aikens & Antonia Watts

Antonia Watts
Board of Trustees
President, FY23



STEAM MACHINE

"This place is awesome.
I don't want to ever leave!"
~ student



Introduced in August 2022, HCLS' **STEAM Machine** brings hands-on science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics classes to students. This mobile classroom seats 14 students and is equipped with Wi-Fi, laptop computers, two LED TVs, video production equipment, and experiential science kits from BGE, Exelon Foundation, and National Energy Development's Energizing Student Potential.

The STEAM Machine was funded in part by an American Rescue Plan Act Grant through the Institute of Museum and Library Services and administered by the Maryland State Library Agency.

7,576
STUDENTS

46
SITES

\$86,000

for Battle of the Books - raised by the nearly 450 guests who attended Evening in the Stacks Goes Pop!



PROJECT LITERACY



Open to adult native English speakers without high school diplomas and English language learners in Howard County, **Project Literacy** staff and volunteers teach classes and provide one-on-one tutoring. Thanks to a Federal grant, HCLS started a Pathways to Success program this year in collaboration with the Howard County Office of Workforce Development (OWD). For immigrants with an advanced degree or professional training from their native country looking for jobs that match their skills, HCLS and OWD help students identify and build career paths with the support of experts in workforce development. Through the program, students improve professional English language skills, practice conversation skills one-on-one with native speakers, and attend job related workshops.

26,060

CONTACT HOURS

1094

STUDENTS:

- 14 received their External High School Diploma
- 8 obtained U.S. Citizenship
- 25 people got better jobs, started higher education or training program

"I was a TV anchor in El Salvador. After leaving my country and arriving in the U.S., I wanted to get back into marketing and communications, but I was stuck in Spanish-language sales jobs. HCLS connected me with Luminus, and I became part of their New American Staffing program. Now I have a permanent job in an English-speaking office!"
~ Maria
(name changed, not pictured)

"I came to the U.S. from Korea, and I struggled to get a good job even though I had a bachelor's degree in food and nutrition. Through Project Literacy's Career Pathways for Skilled Immigrants Program, I got my high school diploma. Emma and Ben connected me with the Howard County Office of Workforce Development, who paid for my enrollment in Howard Community College's Clinical Medical Assistant program."
~ Emily
(name changed, not pictured)

SELECTED FINDINGS

11.7x

Black students are 11.7 times more likely to experience homelessness than white students.

3x

Black adults are three times more likely to be denied a home loan.

5.4x

Hispanic residents are 5.4 times more likely to lack prenatal care.

And, Hispanic students are 5.4 times more likely than white students to skip school because they felt unsafe.

1.8x

Asian residents in the county are 1.8 times more likely to face poverty than white residents.

Asian residents fared worse than non-Hispanic White residents in housing, health, and economic outcomes.

To answer questions about whether national data about disparities across education, health, housing, and legal systems holds true for Howard County and for Maryland, HCLS applied for and received a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services and Maryland State Library Agency to commission a report.

The *Inequity Within* report demonstrates that even in a county where the majority of residents appear to be thriving, there are communities and subgroups that do not fully reap the benefits of residing here. As one of the wealthiest, healthiest, and most diverse communities in the state and the US, the perception or belief that racial inequity does not exist here can be a hindrance to advancing issues of equity in the county.

What Howard County residents and leaders do with this data is up to each person. HCLS' goal is for people to read this report, further educate themselves, and work toward resolving these disparities.



INEQUITY WITHIN

A+ PARTNERSHIP



In the fall of 2002, Howard County Public School System and Howard County Library System formed **A+ Partners in Education** to expand the educational opportunities and enhance the academic achievement of every Howard County student. It was one of the first systemwide school and public library partnerships in the nation and continues to thrive 20 years later.

Every school has a dedicated HCLS liaison, who collaborates with their HCPSS colleagues on hundreds of school-based HCLS classes and events, which serve those school communities.

Once they start school, all kindergarten students tour an HCLS branch. In FY23, **4,382** students participated in the field trip to the library.



57,676

HCPSS STUDENTS
borrowed or accessed

153,206

books, e-books, and other
resources using A+ accounts

Every HCPSS student has an A+ Student Account with the library system, built right into the student portal, hcpss.me.

923

A+ Partnership classes and
events reached

57,584

STUDENTS & FAMILIES



KINDERGARTEN, HERE WE COME!

"The class helped us to get to know what to expect on the first day and at school." ~ parent

The Library is integrated into students' experiences from the beginning of their academic career. Incoming kindergarteners may attend a **Kindergarten, Here We Come!** class to learn about their first day in Kindergarten through stories and activities. They even get to board a real school bus.

920

ATTENDEES

435 students

485 adults

28 classes, includes two bilingual sessions in English and Spanish

ON THE ROAD TO KINDERGARTEN

HCLS teams visit neighborhoods and schools to meet young children whose families face barriers coming to the library.

2,983

attendees at **103** visits to neighborhoods and day care centers

2,048

visitors at **52** visits to HCPSS preschool, pre-k, RECC & summer food sites



With input from staff and customers, Howard County Library System introduced a new mascot ... Booker!

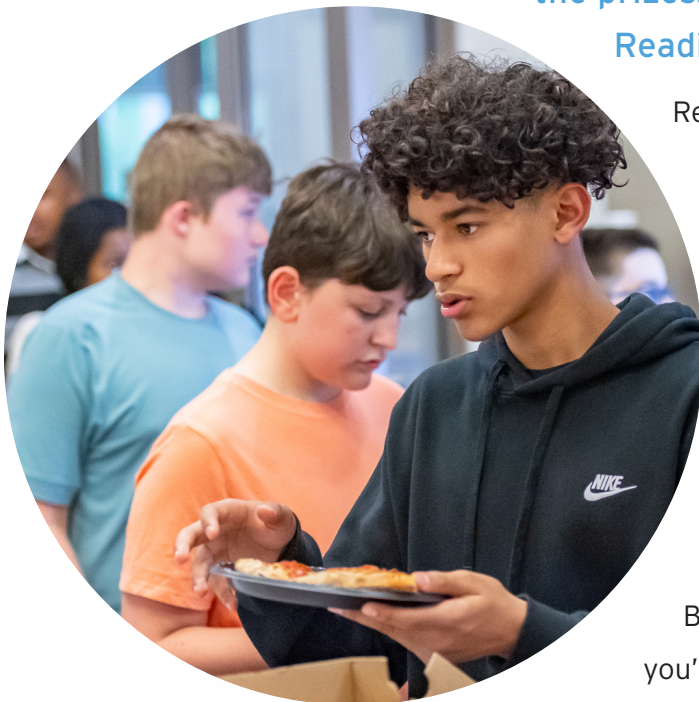
Booker is a saw-whet owl, a species native to Maryland, who adds wisdom and enthusiasm to the library.

EARLY LITERACY

SUMMER READING & MEALS

"I loved the prizes and the easy challenges to earn the prizes. I love reading and it was a win-win."

Reading and prizes! " ~ student



Reading is a critical part of a student's journey.

Continuing to improve reading skills over the summer works to prevent "summer slide" in academic achievement. It's a time when students can choose books by authors or in genres they prefer. Reading is not just good for folks, it's fun!

Adults participated in summer reading too, with a popular reading journal that encouraged readers with challenges for an entire year.

Because it's hard to read and concentrate when you're hungry, Central and East Columbia Branches provided free summer meals and afternoon snacks, through a partnership with HCPSS and Good Harvest.

10,702

AGES BIRTH - 5

632%

INCREASE OVER FY22

6,121

ELEMENTARY

80%

INCREASE OVER FY22



6,898

TEENS

211%

INCREASE OVER FY22

7,642

ADULTS

1,000+%

INCREASE OVER FY22

BATTLE OF THE BOOKS

1,234

STUDENTS

on 317 teams of fifth graders read a set of 12 books and answer questions about them at Merriweather Post Pavilion.

HCLS SPELLING BEE

HCLS hosts the regional Spelling Bee sending one winner to compete in the Scripps National Spelling Bee.

7,000+

STUDENTS

participated in school bees

41 students competed in the HCLS Spelling Bee

1 winner: Navya Dwivedi
Clarksville MS, grade 6

WINNING WORD

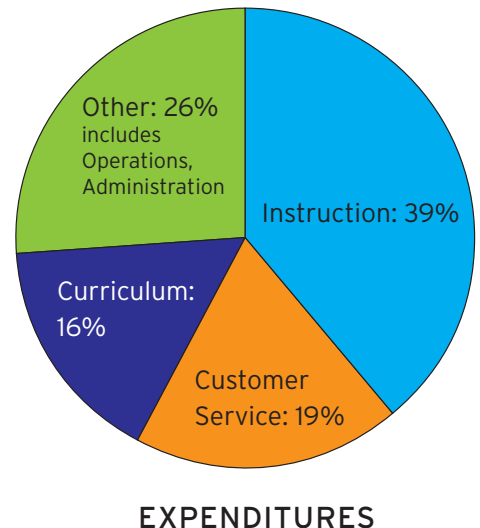
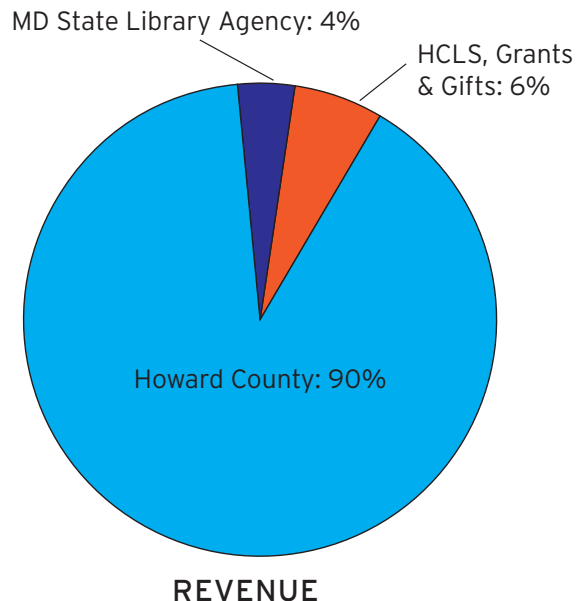
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"Thank you for a wonderful event (Battle of the Books at Merriweather Post Pavilion). Despite the best planning, things happen. Our small team had a wonderful time despite the weather-related issues. Our community is so lucky to have dedicated library teams and supporters, including the Scheffenacker family. Our kids learned a good lesson about perseverance through this experience. I have also noted that since BOB started in November, my daughter has read a lot more, aside from the BOB books, and her grades have all gone up, too. I think the creativity and self-discipline required by BOB definitely added to the growth of our team. Thank you again. Your work is appreciated by this Coach and Mom."



ACADEMIC CONTESTS

OPERATING
BUDGET:
\$26,774,171



quick numbers

1,136,003

ITEMS IN COLLECTION

6,842,09

ITEMS BORROWED

Physical: 4,187,172

Online: 2,557,609

Special Collections: 97,314

240,046

CARD HOLDERS



1,473,840

PHYSICAL VISITS

Website hits: 2,314,054

AskHCLS questions answered: 51,603

Research assistance interactions: 581,775

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook: 13,395 followers

Twitter: 6,883 followers

Instagram: 3,311 followers

YouTube: 50,489 views



PRESIDENTIAL CIRCLE DONORS

Yolanda and Francis Bruno Family Fund

Friends & Foundation of HCLS

The Horizon Foundation

Howard County Public School System

Howard Hughes Corporation

M&T Bank Charitable Fund

Josephine B. Scheffenacker Education Trust

Estate of George Rothstein

Howard County Library System is deeply rooted in the community, collaborating with individuals and organizations every day. We appreciate the partnership of the organizations listed and many others not listed here.

African American Community Roundtable of Howard County

Alianza Latina

Association of Community Services

Autism Society of Maryland

Bethal Korean Church

Chemistry In The Library

Chinese American Parent Association

Clarksville Youth Care Group

Columbia Association

Community Action Council, Head Start

Downtown Columbia Partnership

East Columbia Preschool

ECO Tots

Ellville and Associates, P. C.

Executive Aquarium Services of Maryland

Glenelg United Methodist Church Preschool

The Horizon Foundation

Howard Community College

Howard County NAACP

Howard County Public School System

Howard County Government

- Department of Community Resources and Services, LCB, Getting Ahead
- Health Department, Maternal and Infant health
- Howard County Detention Center
- Office of Aging and Independence
- Office of Human Rights and Equity
- Office of Veteran Affairs
- Office of Workforce Development
- Howard County Police Department
- Department of Recreation and Parks
- WIC

Hilda's Place

HoCoPoLitSo

Hoco Pride

HopeWorks

Howard County Chamber of Commerce

Howard County Chinese School

Howard County Early Childhood Advisory Council

Howard County Master Gardeners

Howard County Muslim Council

Jewish Federation of Howard County

Johns Hopkins Howard County Medical Center

Korean American Senior Association

Leadership Howard County

Luminus

Maryland Humanities

Maryland State Government

- MD Dept of Labor, Skilled Immigrants Task Force
- MD Dept of Labor: Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning
- University of Maryland Extensions

Merriweather Arts and Culture Center

National Association of Black Engineers

Oakland Mills Online

Owen Brown Community Association

Princeton Review

Robotics First Challenge

Savage Community Association

United Way of Central Maryland

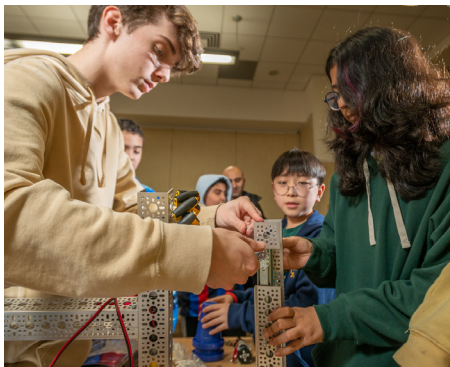
Your Journey Daycare



Native American Heritage Month
Celebration



Author Sheryll Cashin



Robotics Club



Global Neighbors: Korea



The Longest Table



Inaugural Seed Share



**HOWARD COUNTY
LIBRARY SYSTEM**
Public Education for All