MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Board of Education

FROM: William J. Barnes, Superintendent

DATE: February 3, 2026

SUBJECT: Update - Educational (Program) Sufficiency Study

The purpose of this memorandum is to update the Board on the implementation of the Educational (Program) Sufficiency Study (Program Sufficiency Study). The Department of Capital Planning and Construction has been administering the study along with Grimm + Parker Architects as the lead consultant. The team has been progressing through the first portion of the study with field visits to complete Facility Verifications. As seen in the attached ***Facility Assessments Information Sheet (Attachment #1)***, this is the first of three field visits to each Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) facility. The second set of field visits, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Assessments, are scheduled to begin in February. Also scheduled to begin in February is the review of existing Educational Specifications (Ed Specs) and the creation of new Educational and Administrative Specifications (Admin Specs) that do not currently exist for each facility type within the HCPSS portfolio. All program specifications will be brought to the Board of Education for report and approval.

Selected as the lead consultant for the Program Sufficiency Study, Grimm + Parker Architects demonstrated experience in the educational specification process, programmatic evaluation of facilities, CPTED certification and evaluations, planning and capacity utilization, and a strong background in working with educators, program managers, and community planning groups. The general scope of the work related to this initiative includes, but is not necessarily limited to:

- Facilitate stakeholder engagement sessions to update existing Educational Specifications and collate the requirements into cohesive documents and presentations to the Board of Education for approval,
- Develop administrative facility space specifications,
- Evaluate all HCPSS facilities owned or leased as compared to the updated and Board-approved Educational Specifications,
- Conduct CPTED evaluation, reporting, and scoring of all facilities,
- Assess State sufficiency standards and processes as compared to HCPSS' current process and established standards,
- Analyze current capacity methodologies related to State processes,
- Provide recommendations for prioritization of short-, mid-, and long-range HCPSS Capital Planning requirements.

Program Sufficiency Study Process:

Reimagining the Howard County Public School System's Capital Planning process has been a focus of the school system's leadership. Under the direction of the Board, the Superintendent has developed

a Facility Prioritization Process that is intended to work as part of the system's Capital Planning process and inform the HCPSS Education Facilities Master Plan (EFMP), the HCPSS Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), and the Capital Budget. To assist with this effort, the Program Sufficiency Study process collaboratively engages internal and external school system stakeholders for input and consensus-building on facility and capital improvements necessary to support existing and planned educational and organizational program requirements. Additional background information on the process can be found in the ***Background Summary (Attachment #2)***. A summary of ***Objectives, Requirements and Deliverables, of the Study can be found in Attachment #3***.

Timeline: The detailed ***Graphic Project Schedule*** with key activities can be found in ***Attachment #4***.

Capital Planning Summary:

The process of planning short-, mid-, and long-term strategies for the development of HCPSS' capital investment requirements involves the identification of needs and prioritization of projects. Strategies deployed that are used to define HCPSS' cost of ownership of its portfolio of major assets are based on established criteria, cost, impact, sustainability of services, and alignment with system objectives. The Capital Planning process also considers funding, acquisition, maintenance, and replacement requirements that are needed over the expected life span of assets and changes experienced in educational and administrative programs and services.

The Program Sufficiency Study aims to provide additional data that will drive decisions around the HCPSS Capital Planning process. Along with the results of the Program Sufficiency Study, HCPSS leadership will reevaluate the Board's prioritization process and develop recommendations for revisions to the process for the Board's consideration. This is a very important step for the school system to align the Capital Planning process with strategic goals, current and future needs, project prioritization, asset management, and fiscal resource management. Lastly, the Capital Planning Process and this needs assessment include analyzing risk, benefits, and the feasibility of projects while developing the funding strategy necessary to define the allocation of financial resources needed over time.

Please feel free to contact Mr. Cornell S. Brown, Jr., Chief Operating Officer, or Mr. Daniel Lubeley, Executive Director, Capital Planning and Construction, if you have any questions.

Attachments:

- Facility Assessments Information Sheet (Attachment #1)
- Background Summary (Attachment #2)
  - Policy 6020 – School Planning/School Construction Programs (Policy Link) https://policy.hcpss.org/6000/6020/
- Objectives, Requirements & Deliverables (Attachment #3)
- Graphic Project Schedule (Attachment #4)

cc: Cabinet
Daniel Lubeley
Shaun Powell
Robert Bruce
Timothy Rogers
Andrew Jinks
Jennifer Bubenko

Mission:

HCPSS will be conducting a comprehensive assessment of our facilities, and has engaged an assessment team consultant to lead this effort. This assessment will collect data to inform and enhance the facility prioritization process and aid projecting future capital planning needs. HCPSS facilities will be evaluated on both **educational sufficiency** and **safety + security** metrics as part of this effort. This work is in addition to facilities conditions assessments conducted by the State.

What to Expect:

Assessment teams will be visiting each HCPSS facility multiple times as described in the three phases outlined below. School involvement will vary for the team's visits in each phase. Assessment team members have completed mandatory background checks in accordance with district policy and are authorized to access school facilities. HCPSS Operations staff will work directly with each HCPSS school/facility to schedule and coordinate all site visits. The schedule will be updated as plans change, and schools will receive reminder notifications two weeks before each visit.

Phase 1: Facility Verification

Estimated Phase 1 Timeline - December 2025 – February 2026

Site Verification Visit

- Assessment teams will verify site conditions and amenities.
- These visits will occur outside school hours, and interaction with staff will not be required.

Building Verification Visit

- Assessment teams will verify existing building conditions and verify select dimensions inside and outside of the building.
- These visits may occur during the school day, but interaction with staff and will be at a minimum. Interruption to school operations will try to be minimized during each visit.
- Access to all rooms will be required (including portable classrooms, exterior storage and stadium/athletic structures), but the assessment team will not need to be accompanied during their evaluation. HCPSS Operations staff will coordinate appropriate access to interior spaces with each school/facilities staff as part of scheduling process.

Estimated duration of Phase 1 visits:
Building Verification approx. 1-2 hrs for ES/MS & 3-4hs for HS; Site Verification approx. 1-2 hours,

Phase 2: CPTED Assessment (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design)

Estimated Phase 2 Timeline - February 2026 – May 2026

- Assessment teams will evaluate current conditions, assessing safety and security features throughout the building interior, building exterior, and site.
- These visits will occur during the school day so the assessment team may observe arrival and dismissal procedures.
- A short interview will be conducted with select staff members such as the Principal, Admin Staff, or Security Staff.
- Access to all rooms will be required, but the assessment team will not need to be accompanied during their evaluation.
- Features to be evaluated are passive in nature, and observations should not interfere with the educational environment.

Estimated duration of Phase 2 visits: Approx. one full school day, inlcuding arrival and dismissal

Phase 3: Educational Sufficiency Index Evaluation

Estimated Phase 3 Timeline - March 2026 – July 2026

- Assessment teams will evaluate current conditions, assessing educational provisions against the updated Educational Specification.
- These visits will occur during the school day to provide insights and confirmation of space utilization.
- A short interview will be conducted with select staff members such as the Principal, Admin Staff.
- Access to all rooms will be required, but the assessment team will not need to be accompanied during their evaluation.
- Certain measurements may be required inside classrooms, but every effort will be made to minimize interruptions to the educational environment.

Estimated duration of Phase 3 visits: Approx. 1/2 to one full school day, depending on facility size

Attachment #2

Howard County Public School System
Program Sufficiency Study
Background Summary

Background:

As a reminder, it is noted that on April 30, 2025, the Department of Planning and Construction, and the Department of Purchasing for the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS), issued a Requestion for Qualifications (RFQ) for Professional Consulting Services to perform the Program Sufficiency Study. The purpose of the RFQ was to request qualifications from interested firms to provide professional consulting services, to perform an assessment of all HCPSS facilities for program requirements (interior and exterior), educational/program sufficiency, space adequacy, utilization, and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). Under this procurement action the consulting firm Grimm + Parker Architects was engaged to complete the following:

- Perform an evaluation of HCPSS' facility space needs for current and future programs,
- Evaluate each facility for educational, administrative, and space sufficiency as compared to the approved State sufficiency standards, HCPSS Educational Specifications, and administrative facility space specifications,
- Develop a long-term plan to optimize facility utilization, meet current program requirements, and plan for new programs.

Board Policy 6020 (https://policy.hcpss.org/6000/6020/):

As outlined in the Value Statement of the attached School Planning/School Construction Programs Policy 6020, the Board defines its responsibility for providing safe, inclusive, nurturing, and supportive educational and work environments for all students and employees. The Board recognizes the continuing need to plan, design, and construct new educational facilities and to renovate or make additions to existing schools that are in accordance with all applicable codes, as well as Maryland and federal law. Fulfilling this responsibility requires a comprehensive program that monitors population trends, enrollment trends, educational program spatial requirements, cost/benefit considerations, technologies that support environmentally responsible construction, and an annual six-year capital improvement program.

Additionally, to align with the purpose, standards, and responsibilities of Policy 6020, Implementation Procedures on the topic of School Planning/School Construction

Programs delineate the procedures related to long-range capital planning requirements and the construction of new schools and the modernization/renovation of existing facilities that are included in the Board's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The Program Sufficiency Study is an initiative that was implemented in support of Policy 6020.

Strategic Plan:

The Study aligns with HCPSS' Strategic Plan. Though Priority 4 is the primary driver of the work, the process as designed and the desired outcomes are influenced by and will impact priorities within the Strategic Plan beyond this focus area.

- Priority 1 – Strengthen Learning & Instruction

  To create equitable learning environments, each student's experience is grounded in high expectations aligned to standards, guided by their needs, assets, and aspirations, and backed by necessary supports to prepare them for future endeavors.

- Priority 2 – Cultivate Student Belonging & Well-Being

  To inspire growth and engagement, each student thrives in a safe and supportive environment where their academic, social, emotional, and behavioral health needs are met, and has equitable opportunities to co-create and shape their experiences.

- Priority 4 – Enhance Systemic Planning & Procedures

  To be innovative and accountable, dynamic systems are built to plan, allocate, and monitor resources, striving for safe and healthy environments that prioritize need and advance equitable outcomes.

- Priority 5 – Partner With Families & Community

  To strengthen belonging and access for all students, family engagement opportunities and community partnerships are established to extend learning and supports for students within and beyond the classroom.

Attachment #3

Howard County Public School System
Program Sufficiency Study
Objectives, Requirements & Deliverables

Objectives: The objective is to establish and prioritize short-, mid- and long-range priorities as necessary to structure requests for the resources required to plan, design, procure, construct, and implement programs in accordance with the HCPSS Strategic Plan. The Study accomplishes these objectives by:

- Completing a comprehensive space and program examination of each school system facility, inventory interior and exterior spaces, and assessing current and future educational goals.
  - Identify gaps and deficiencies.
  - Study areas for improvement.
  - Plan for future growth.
  - Review Fixture, Furnishing and Equipment compliance.
  - CPTED study of all facilities.
- Developing an Educational Sufficiency Index (ESI) to identify deficiencies in each facility and establish and communicate program space priorities.
- Developing recommendations to improve overall efficiency and optimize space use to support educational and student support services and programs.

Requirements: The project team assigned to complete the Study has been tasked to fulfill the following requirements:

- Conduct the Educational Specification Review Process to update the Elementary School, High School, and Special Education School to meet current requirements. Approved by the Board in 2023, the Middle School Ed Specs will receive a cursory review for any required updates. Ed Specs will be created for the Homewood Center and the Applications and Research Laboratory.

- Facilitate meetings with HCPSS staff to develop space requirements for the administrative function of facilities (Central office, conference space, warehouse space, operations staff space).
- Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of space utilization in each building.
- Space Program Analysis
- Develop recommendations for space management strategies, including potential renovations, expansions, or reallocations based on analysis of findings.
- Provide updated facility documents
- Provide a CPTED evaluation of all HCPSS educational and administrative facilities

Stakeholder Engagement:

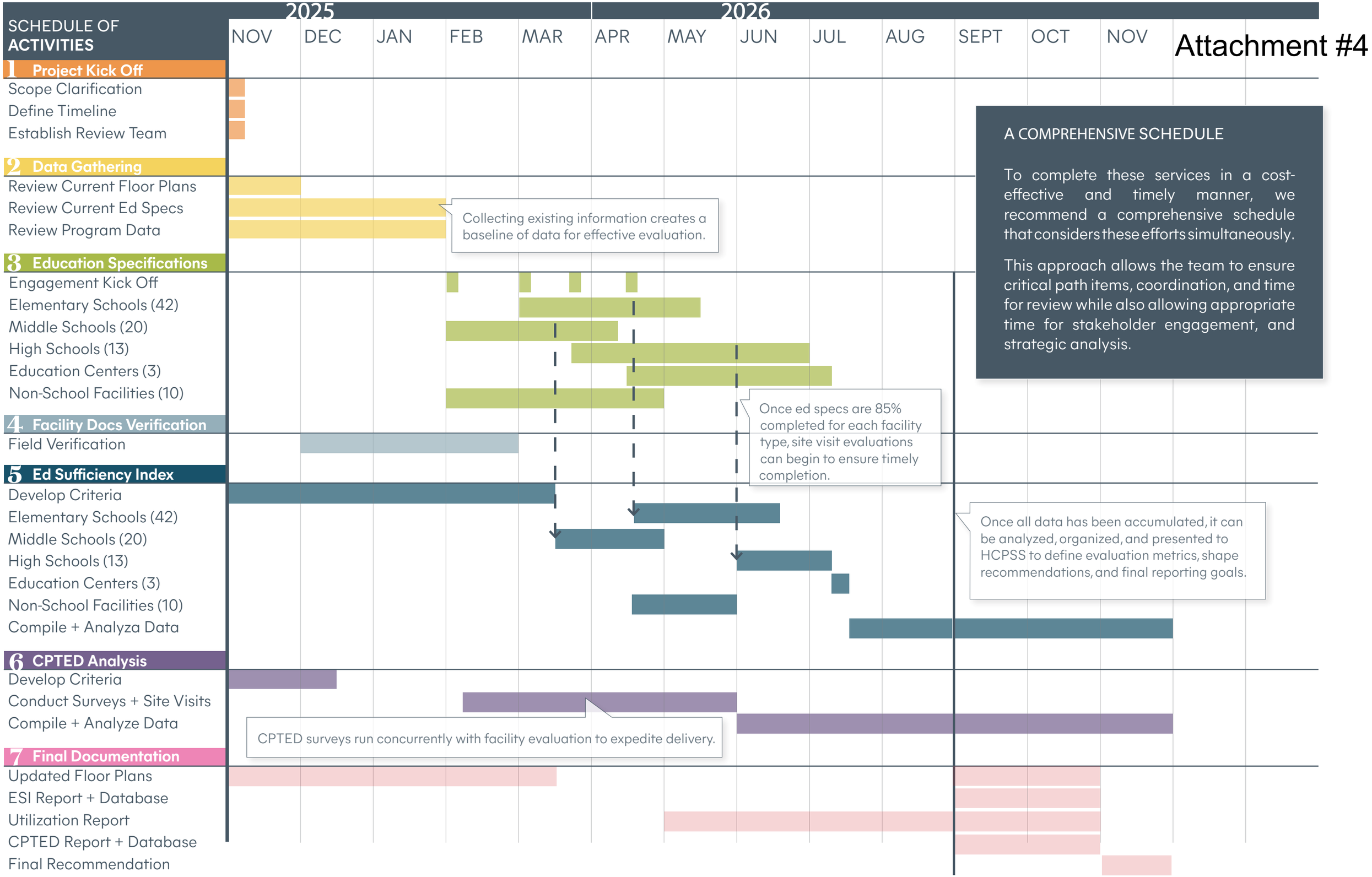
- As mentioned, stakeholders will be engaged for the purpose of obtaining input and feedback. The focus of this engagement will be to value set, manage expectations, and meet objectives through communication and feedback. This will be accomplished through several different methods as follows:

- Board Meetings (Small Group and Public)
- HCPSS Leadership Meetings
- School visits and staff interviews
- Cross-functional HCPSS Work Group Sessions
- Community presentation and feedback sessions
- A two-phased community survey (targeting values)

Deliverables: The project consultant (Grimm + Parker Architects) is charged with providing the following deliverables:

- Final Report
  - Space Program Analysis
  - Educational Sufficiency Index (ESI) Deficiency Ranking Analysis
  - Operational Recommendations
  - Implementation strategies
  - Recommendations for incorporating upcoming capital projects
  - Considerations for redistricting
- Updated floor plans
- Local and updated State-Rated capacities
- CPTED report for each facility with identified deficiencies
- Database with assessment data, deficiency data, and EPI results. The database is to possess the functionality to be updated once deficiencies are mitigated.

Attachment #4



A COMPREHENSIVE SCHEDULE

To complete these services in a cost-effective and timely manner, we recommend a comprehensive schedule that considers these efforts simultaneously.

This approach allows the team to ensure critical path items, coordination, and time for review while also allowing appropriate time for stakeholder engagement, and strategic analysis.