



Howard County Council Public Hearing: Council Resolution 112-2019

September 18, 2019

Testimony

Good evening Council Chair Rigby and Council Members. ACS is proud to serve as the collective voice for over 160 member organizations and advocates. Throughout our 56-year history, we have advocated on behalf of Howard County's nonprofit human service, cultural, environmental and faith-based organizations and the individuals and families that they serve.

Recognizing that all Howard County parents want to create the best possible opportunity for their children to succeed, I am proud, as Executive Director of ACS, to express our support for Council Resolution 112-2019. We are incredibly lucky to live in a county that is beautifully diverse – culturally, racially, and economically. It is a County with the capacity to prepare all of our children to take their place in the cooperative economy of the 21st century where the ability to work in groups, to incorporate diverse perspectives and to innovate in ways that meet the needs of many is the key to success.

We are all familiar with the wealth of research showing that when schools are integrated, the academic performance of children from more affluent families remains steady, while those from less economically advantaged homes increases. Knowing this, it would be unconscionable to be aware of the achievement gap that currently exists in Howard County and to fail to develop a plan to integrate our schools. We have a duty to provide the best possible education for all students.

Developing a plan that will maximize the outcome for all students will require that we intentionally seek out the voices of all sectors within our community. It will require that we work to identify obstacles to success at the classroom, school, system, and community level, and that we develop and continually evaluate strategies to overcome them. It will require that we model for our children the cooperative process that we know produces the best results. Integrating our schools is not just the right thing to do, it is the best thing we can do to truly prepare our children for the world they will live in.

Thank you for the opportunity to convey our support for CR 112-2019.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Driessen

Executive Director