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**Subject:** Talbott Springs Elementary School Deferred Funding Response  
**Date:** September 10, 2019 at 2:32 PM  
**To:** [scott@scotteblog.com](mailto:scott@scotteblog.com)

CJ



## Howard County Council Opel Jones, District 2

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## Howard County Council

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September 10, 2019

Howard County Board of Education  
10910 Clarksville Pike,  
Ellicott City, MD 21042

Dear Chairwoman Mavis Ellis and Members of the Howard County Board of Education,

Dr. Michael Martirano's proposal to defer funding for Talbott Springs Elementary School (TSES) is shocking, appalling, and disheartening. According to Dr. Martirano's FY 2021 proposed Capital Budget, Talbott Springs Elementary School was a top priority for the FY 2021 Capital Budget and FY 2022-2026 Capital Improvement Plan. The proposed priority Capital Improvement Project was scheduled to begin in 2021 and now is proposed to begin in 2026 due to Dr. Martirano's unconscionable deferred funding decision. The deferred funding has been a "yo-yo" approach for renovations and additions to this undervalued school. This is outrageous and completely offensive to the families that send our future leaders to this school.

The TSES community is deeply distraught with the lack of transparency from the Superintendent's office. They have worked with the Howard County Board of Education ensuring the board's approval of a feasibility study, have held planning advisory committee meetings, and have reviewed schematic designs, all that was approved by the Howard County Board of Education. Furthermore, halting this highly anticipated and much-needed school renovation would indefinitely alter the community's trust in the Board of Education and would set a dangerous precedent for the future of our children.

Talbott Springs Elementary School is notably known to be one of the most overcrowded elementary

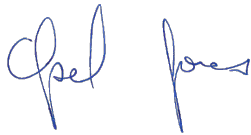
schools in our county and has been ranked as one the worst facility in the public-school system. This decision may in fact “railroad” our students; furthermore, it would be blatantly foul to ignore these indigent conditions. Additionally, Talbott Springs, Oakland Mills Middle School, and Oakland Mills High School atone for roughly 20 percent of Howard County Public School System deferred maintenance. Our future leaders east of Columbia deserve better!

Investing in our students should be a priority, especially in communities that are marginalized. Talbott Springs Elementary School opened its doors to our community in 1973 and the first renovations to the school were in 2000. Since my installation, my office has received countless reports that Talbott Springs Elementary School has ongoing concerns with mold and challenges with the school's fountain drinking water. Talbott Springs currently boasts an outdated layout that is noisy and does not contribute to a productive learning environment, because the facility has lacked investment.

As the County Council elected representative from District 2, I urge the members of the Howard County Board of Education to allow our students in the eastern part of Columbia to remain a priority that was originally proposed by Dr. Martirano and relayed to my community for the FY 2021 Capital Budget. Our students who attend our fantastic public-school system should not be forced to wait six to eight years for necessary modifications for the advancement of their academia.

The time is now to act for the betterment and amelioration for Talbott Springs Elementary School and its community. Lastly, as a father, community activist, and resident of District 2, I strongly encourage you to approve the Superintendent’s September 5, 2019, Capital Budget and plan proposals which keep the funding for Talbot Springs Elementary School as a top priority!

Sincerely,



Opel Jones, Ph.D.  
Vice Chair  
Howard County Council, District 2

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