

**Carroll County (MD) Times**

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**"Towson and Dulaney communities renew push for new high schools at public hearing"**

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Margarita Cambest/Baltimore Sun Media Group

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If the message that parents and community members of Towson and Dulaney high schools want Baltimore County to build them new schools wasn't clear, it was broadcast en masse on Wednesday.

Clad in Dulaney red or Towson maroon and holding signs supporting their respective schools, dozens of supporters of building two new high schools made their voices heard at a Baltimore County Board of Education meeting.

Only those with a seat were allowed to remain in the meeting.

The public hearing was held ahead of determining a budget for fiscal year 2019, which starts July 1, 2018.

One by one, parents, teachers and elected officials spoke, urging the board to fund planning and design for new facilities at Towson and Dulaney high schools. Others spoke in support of renovating Lansdowne High School, adding money for new guidance counselors countywide and a new gym for Hereford High School.

Our children and communities deserve to have a quality environment for a quality education, said Gretchen Maneval, of THS New in '22.

The New in '22 steering committee, which is made up of **Towson High** parents and other community members, is behind an effort to convince Baltimore County officials to earmark funding in fiscal year 2019 to begin planning and design of a new school that would be completed by 2022.

Group members say the existing high school, built in 1949, is overcrowded and that its facilities are outdated.

**Towson High** is more than 200 students over capacity, according to its profile on the Baltimore County Public Schools website. Some students attend class in six portable buildings located behind the main school building.

This is our constituency, this is our community, and we urge you to give support to **Towson High School** by giving planning money, Maneval said, adding that the group had the support of 95 percent of community members who responded to an online survey petition posted ahead of the

hearing to garner support for a new school.

More than 450 people have responded since the survey was posted May 18, Maneval said.

Eight-year-old Genevieve Romero, a West Towson Elementary student, said she is on track to go to **Towson High**. She wants to be an astronaut and asked for a new school to get a good education to do that.

Her father, Ray Gamero, said he moved to Towson from Oklahoma for the schools.

I don't know if she'll go to Towson, Gamero said. The main reason that we made Towson our home was because of West Towson Elementary, adding that if the school were not up to quality his family might choose to move again.

Margarita Cambest

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The survey asks participants to provide demographic information and answer questions related to **Towson High School's** future,...

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Baltimore County Councilman David Marks, a Republican who represents Towson, also spoke in support of building a new **Towson High**.

Baltimore County can be rightfully proud in the investments it has made in the southern part of the York Road corridor

but the missing part in this investment is **Towson High School**, Marks said.

Also in attendance were supporters of a new Dulaney High School, including County Councilman Wade Kach, a Republican who represents District 3.

Kach, who had called on proponents of a new Dulaney High School to come to the budget hearing and renew their request for a new school, spoke in support of a new Dulaney and a new Towson.

The 1990s remodel of **Towson High School** already needs to be replaced, Kach said.

We don't want the same thing to happen to Dulaney, Kach said. That's why we opposed the \$37 million remodel because we know in the future it's going to need replacement.

Dulaney High, which opened in 1964, is overcapacity by about 160 students, according to its BCPS school profile, and lies in Kach's district.

After parents pushed for a new Dulaney High School in 2016, County Executive Kevin Kamenetz proposed a \$40 million renovation of the school in his fiscal 2018 budget.

The Board of Education ruled against the renovation funding in March, citing the advocates' desire

for a new building. Kamenetz then cut the renovation money and diverted it to remaining elementary school construction projects in the county.

County spokeswoman Ellen Kobler said Kamenetz is proud of the \$1.3 billion Schools for Our Future Program. The funding has been earmarked to complete 16 new schools, 12 additions and seven comprehensive renovations throughout Baltimore County, but not a new high school for Towson or Dulaney.

The Board of Education will now begin a comprehensive study of middle and high school enrollment and capital needs this fall, and both Towson and Dulaney will be included in that review, Kobler said in an email.

State Sen. Jim Brochin, a Democrat from Towson, stressed support of new schools in elected officials' districts without pitting the areas against each other.

It should be a comprehensive plan for both schools, he said to the board. I was in Dulaney last week. Some of the walls are literally crumbling there which is unbelievable.

Steve Lafferty, a Democrat who represents Towson in the Maryland House of Delegates, agreed, asking the board to consider future population growth in Towson that may require bigger schools.

I urge for planning money in 2019 and to take students into account, he said. Nothing can be more important in the education realm than making sure we have a new **Towson High School** in 2022.

Caption

Meet Verletta White, the new interim Baltimore County Schools superintendent. (Kim Hairston/Baltimore Sun video)

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Caption Nancy Sullivan talks about being a line dancing instructor at the Catonsville Senior Center.

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**Highlights: Towson High, Towson High School, Towson High School**