



Prince George's County Board of Education
14201 School Lane • Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772 • www.pgcps.org

November 18, 2019

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Telephone: 301-952-6115

Facsimile: 301-952-6114

Board Member

K. Alexander Wallace
District 7

Schools:

Andrew Jackson Academy
Arrowhead Elementary
Barack Obama Elementary
Benjamin Foulois Creative and
Performing Arts K-8
Benjamin Stoddert Middle
Bradbury Heights Elementary
District Heights Elementary
Dr. Henry A. Wise Jr. High
Drew-Freeman Middle
Imagine Foundations at Morningside
Public Charter School
Imagine Lincoln Public Charter
Longfields Elementary
North Forestville Elementary
Overlook Spanish Immersion
Princeton Elementary
Samuel P. Massie Academy
Suitland Elementary
Suitland High
William Beanes Elementary

Communities:

Camp Springs
District Heights
Forestville
Morningside
Suitland
Upper Marlboro
Westphalia

Secretary-Treasurer

Monica E. Goldson, Ed.D.

ADMINISTRATION

Chief Executive Officer

Monica E. Goldson, Ed.D.
Telephone: 301-952-6008

Alvin Thornton, Ph.D. | Monica E. Goldson, Ed.D.

Board Chairman | Chief Executive Officer

Prince George's County Board of Education | Prince George's County Public Schools
14201 School Lane, Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772

Dr. Thornton and Dr. Goldson:

Less than a year ago, during the midst of our nation's federal government shutdown, I expressed my desire of waiving the meal costs for all Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) students who were not already receiving financial assistance to access a quality, nutritional meal provided by the school system until the shutdown concluded. Since then, as it has been wholeheartedly supported and highlighted, our school system, through our community, business, non-profit, and faith-based partners, as well as through the personal generosity of, both, private citizens and our own employees, has been able to raise, both, awareness to the topic of food insecurity and the funding to begin to combat this socio-economic circumstance that negatively impacts our students' ability to learn.

While my spirit has been warmed by the generous giving of our partners to support the wellbeing of our students, it is my belief that we, collaboratively, as a governing board and school system, can do more to combat food insecurity and end the practice of "meal shaming", where students, through no fault of their own in many cases, are publicly identified as having insufficient funds to fulfill the cost of the meal they desire to obtain.

I approach this matter with two perspectives; first, as an elected member of the Board of Education who has fielded numerous constituent concerns around food insecurity and the meal shaming practices that occur, particularly in interactions with our elementary-aged students, and second, and more personally, as an alumnus of our school system who has, himself, fallen victim to these meal-shaming practices that, decades later, still occur.

It is my belief that no young child in PGCPS should have to potentially endure the public humiliation that occurs when a hot meal is taken away from them and, in return, are handed a substitute, alternative meal that I, and many others, see as simply inadequate. The practice of meal shaming serves no other purpose than to be a catalyst for school-based bullying, the degradation of our students' emotional well-being, and the stigmatization of differing socioeconomic statuses that exist amongst our student body.

It is with these perspectives and beliefs that I write to inform each of you of my submission to the full Board of Education of the **No More SHAME Act** (*Draft Board Policy 5210 - Universal Meals Program for Early Childhood, Primary, and Intermediate Grade Levels*). Through this proposed policy, our Board and school system will codify the conviction that, regardless of circumstances, hunger will no longer be an achievement barrier for our youngest students and that we commit to the goal of ending meal shaming.

Respectfully submitted,

K. Alexander Wallace

Board Member, District 7

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide a great education that empowers all students and contributes to thriving communities.

Prince George's County Public Schools