

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Testimony in Support with Amendments of House Bill 1 Built to Learn Act of 2020

January 23, 2020

House Bill 1 recognizes the significant need for increased State funding for public school construction by authorizing the Maryland Stadium Authority (MSA) to issue bonds to finance the construction of or improvements to public schools throughout the state. Among the many initiatives proposed by the legislation is an extension of Baltimore City Public Schools’ (City Schools’) 21st Century Buildings Program.

City Schools is home to the oldest public school buildings in the state, averaging 50 years old. Many buildings have inadequate heating and cooling systems, roofing, windows, and piping systems. Given the critical needs of our aging infrastructure, we support House Bill 1 for the positive impact it will have on the district.

In 2019, at current market value, we estimate the cost at \$4 billion to fully replace the aging facilities not currently part of the 21st Century Buildings Program. Under the current Capital Improvement Program (CIP), City Schools distills the large number of systemic replacement needs each year to identify \$70-\$90M in CIP requests for the very highest priority projects. However, we only receive approximately \$48M combined from the City and State (\$19M from Baltimore City and approximately \$29M from the State) – addressing about 1% of the estimated systemic and facility replacement needs. Clearly, current funding levels pale in comparison to the unmet need and merely allow City Schools to address a portion of our most urgent building challenges.

The City Schools community has advocated for nearly a decade for resources to provide students with the school buildings they need and deserve. With support from the Maryland General Assembly, the success of that advocacy resulted in the 21st Century School Buildings Program. Through that program, the State, the City of Baltimore and Baltimore City Schools contribute \$60 million annually that is financing renovation or replacement of 28 facilities that house both traditional and charter schools. However, those funds are only enough to renovate or replace a fraction of the district’s schools. We still have more than 100 buildings remaining in our portfolio housing both traditional and charter schools that have significant capital and repair needs.

In closing, given the overwhelming evidence documenting the critical needs of our aging infrastructure, City Schools feels strongly that any public school construction funding actions taken by the General Assembly during Session 2020 should be prioritized toward districts with

the greatest demonstrated needs. We look forward to working with the Committee to address certain aspects of the legislation that are specific to the needs of City Schools as they relate to the current *Baltimore City Public Schools Construction and Revitalization Act of 2013*.

Thank you for your consideration in addressing the capital needs of Baltimore City Public Schools. For all these reasons, we urge a favorable with amendments committee report of House Bill 1.

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