

Sabillasville Environmental School

Ms. Sheena Talley
Principal

Ms. Ianna Little
Admin. Secretary



Ms. Marilyn Greenfield
Guidance Counselor

16210B Sabillasville Road
Sabillasville, Md 21780
240 236-6000

February 20, 2024

Dear Budget and Tax Committee,

My name is Alisha Yocum and I am the President of the Board of Directors for Sabillasville Environmental School - A Classical Charter. We are a rural charter school located in the northern part of Frederick County that provides education to grades K-7 currently with plans to add 8th grade next year. Our school focuses on agriculture and environmental science.

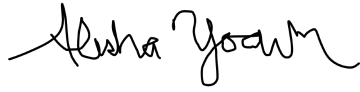
Today, I am writing to you in support of the bill that is being submitted before you on February 21. The communities with public charter schools, the teachers and staff that work there, the districts that include them, and the students that attend them would all benefit directly from the much-needed funding SB0892 would supply. As a small school with currently only 185 students these funds would make a huge impact on our budget. Just like most charter schools in the state, our school spends around 17% of its budget on maintenance and repairs to our facility. Our current building is over 50 years old and needs major updates to the HVAC system, a new roof, and new blacktop for our parking lot, which all have to be paid out of our PPA funding unless you support this bill. Imagine if instead of using our PPA funding for these repairs we could put that money back in the classroom! What a difference it would make for not only our students at SES, but the thousands of public charter school students across the state.

LEAs are able to utilize capital funding and general funds from other sources, not available to public charter schools, to support their facilities, operations, & maintenance. SB0892 seeks to establish a fund managed by the IAC that allows public charter schools to apply for up to \$2000 per pupil annually for eligible facilities-related expenses. This funding does not impact the Blueprint formula or take funding away from any other public-school students, as the funding would come from the State's General Fund.

Charter school students are public school students, and they deserve to be educated in safe, welcoming, adequate school buildings just like their traditional public school peers. Just because a family decides to send their children to a public charter school and stay in the public school system, why do they have to attend, on average, an older, more in need of repair, discarded building? Why do charter school teachers have to teach in buildings that do not have adequate space, amenities, or supports? Why do charter school operators have to pull funding out of their Blueprint dollars to pay for their buildings, while traditional schools & LEAs pull from capital funding and general funds? Bottom line, it isn't

equitable. Through your support, we can work to close inequities public charter school students, families, and teachers experience in their school buildings every day.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alisha Yocum". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Alisha Yocum
President, Board of Directors