

**Testimony of the  
Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners  
In Support of House Bill 1390 –  
Public Schools – Public School Construction –  
Funding and Administration**

**March 26, 2024**

The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners supports House Bill 1390, as amended. This bill establishes the Nancy Kopp School Facilities Fund to use an appropriate assessment of all school buildings. Assessing the condition of school buildings in a manner in which the information can be used to determine appropriate state funding is necessary, particularly in districts such as Baltimore City, which contains the oldest school building stock in the State. The school board is also interested in the use of \$70 million to be used beginning in FY27 for the same areas as the current Healthy School Facilities Fund, which is set to sunset FY 26. Those areas include air, heat, windows temperature control mold, etc.

It is well-established that City Schools faces significant capital needs for the school system's buildings. In addition, City Schools is a district that is regularly closing and merging schools, as well as returning buildings via surplus to the City of Baltimore, because of lower enrollment and the inability to adequately support facility needs. However, this year, the school system enrollment grew, the first time in 5 years.

City Schools estimates that more than \$3.86 billion (in today's dollars) is needed to bring all City Schools school buildings up to minimally acceptable standards through repairs and replacements to the remaining facilities that are still in need of a complete overhaul due to their age and conditions, even after the 21st Century School Buildings Program and the Built to Learn Act of 2020 have been fully implemented.

With the 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Buildings Program, the school board pays approximately \$20 million dollars, per year, in bond payments in order to support the construction of those newly renovated buildings; \$20 million that could have been used for instruction, interventions and other school related teaching expenses. Also, given current inflationary pressures on construction costs, there is ample evidence that facility issues with in City Schools is even more concerning and the \$3.86 billion significantly underestimates the full costs of addressing these unmet systemic facility renovation needs, and that even more funding would be required to complete a full portfolio replacement to the educational standards recommended by the IAC, and utilized by other school districts in Maryland and across the nation.

For the foregoing reasons, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners supports House Bill 1390 and urges a favorable report.

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