

# **HB1390 - Public Schools - Public School Constructi**

Uploaded by: Dawana Sterrette

Position: FAV

**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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**HB1390SponsorOnly.pdf**

Uploaded by: Delegate Kevin M. Harris

Position: FAV

**KEVIN M. HARRIS**  
*Legislative District 27A*  
Charles and Prince George's Counties

Appropriations Committee  
*Subcommittee*

Vice Chair, Education and  
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*2nd Vice Chair*

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**THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES**  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Sponsor Testimony in Support of HB1390**  
**Public Schools – Public School Construction – Funding and Administration**  
**Delegate Kevin M. Harris**  
**Tuesday, March 26, 2024**

As we have seen time and again, schools have become targets for violence. Both nationally and statewide, schools are seeing rising levels of violence. In one Maryland school district, there has been a 65% increase in “serious incidents” as reported by school officials. In an anonymous violence reporting line for a Maryland school district, calls and reported tips have increased by nearly 50%.

Violence in our schools impacts our schools and community stakeholders. With increasing violence, students and staff are taken away from educational opportunities. Even when violence isn’t directly affecting our communities, the perceived threat of violence is enough to spark fear and anxiety. School psychologists report that nearly 25% of students in Maryland report feeling depressed and 20% of students have symptoms of anxiety. The consequence of violence in schools is the establishment of barriers to educational advancement.

Innocent children and educators now rely on school safety grant programs for their protection. Grant programs provide funding to school systems to improve school security. These measures, like secure and lockable classroom doors, safe refuge areas in classrooms, and surveillance technology, are common sense and practical. Amid today’s culture, they are also becoming more common. In U.S. school systems, 97% of schools have monitored/controlled access to entrances and exits. And 91% of school systems use security cameras to monitor schools. Despite the need to increase security measures in Maryland schools, the essential \$10,000,000 of funding is set to expire on June 30, 2026.

This \$10,000,000 is marked exclusively for the use of school security measures. Without this funding, many school systems will not be able to afford the cost of equipment and upgrades. A single low-end camera can cost up to \$1,000 while a high-resolution camera can cost \$8,000. One study on the cost of school security technologies estimates that the total cost of adding cameras to a high school could be up to \$200,000. The research further specifies that this estimate does not include the associated costs such as electricity. Without the necessary funding, individual school districts will be forced to decide between education and safety.

The removal of the grant deadline on the School Safety Program reflects a commitment to both school safety and education. By providing schools with access to funding, they need to ensure their students, staff, and faculty are safe, we free up necessary funding that can otherwise be used for educational priorities.

As recent history shows us, Maryland schools are no longer isolated from violent threats. Our most precious and important asset, our children, need our protection. It is time to take action. It is time that essential funding for commonsense measures is not inhibited by a deadline. For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report of HB1390 with the amendments adopted in the House.

**HB1390-BT\_MACo\_SWA.pdf**

Uploaded by: Brianna January

Position: FWA



**MARYLAND**  
*Association of*  
**COUNTIES**

## House Bill 1390

*Public Schools – Public School Construction – Funding Administration*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**  
**WITH AMENDMENTS**

To: Budget and Taxation Committee

Date: March 26, 2024

From: Brianna January

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 1390 **WITH AMENDMENTS**. As amended, this bill alters the purpose of the Nancy K. Kopp Public School Facilities Priority Fund and establishes the Workgroup on the Assessment and Funding of School Facilities, among other operational changes related to school construction. **MACo seeks an amendment to add local representation to the proposed workgroup.**

Counties support the creation of a new Workgroup on the Assessment and Funding of School Facilities to study and address modern challenges in school construction, and counties are proud to have participated in similar former workgroups in the past. County governments, as funding partners in school construction and facility projects, are major stakeholders in HB 1390's reforms and workgroup establishment. However, counties are not included in the bill's suggested list of workgroup members, nor are local education agencies, who arguably have the most at stake in any findings and recommendations of the future workgroup. As such, MACo requests amendments to add these critical stakeholders to the workgroup's membership.

It is critical that counties and school systems – as the ultimate enactors of HB 1390's provisions and any future recommendations from the bill's proposed workgroup – have formal membership in this workgroup and others like it. They are the stakeholders closest to the construction needs, capacity, and processes for Maryland's public schools. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS** HB 1390 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report **with those amendments**.



# **HB 1390.Sustain School Safety Facilities Grants an**

Uploaded by: John Woolums

Position: FWA

**BILL:** House Bill 1390  
**TITLE:** Public Schools – Public School Construction – Funding and Administration  
**DATE:** March 26, 2024  
**POSITION:** SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS  
**COMMITTEE:** Budget and Taxation  
**CONTACT:** John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all twenty-four local boards of education, supports House Bill 1390, to sustain the School Safety Grant Program, and requests an amendment to also sustain the Aging Schools Grant Program. Both programs are valued by local school systems and have a proven track record of enhancing the safety and quality of learning environments for our students and staff. In addition, while MABE appreciates the formation of a new Workgroup of the Assessment and Funding of School Facilities, we request amendments to include a representative of MABE selected by the association’s Executive Director, and would note the value of having representatives from the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) and Public School Superintendents Association of Maryland (PSSAM) on the previous iteration of this workgroup.

House Bill 1390 would repeal the sunseting of one of two programs included in a provision of a bill passed several years ago, and MABE firmly believes that neither program should be eliminated at this time, if ever. First, the bill would restore the \$10 million School Safety Grant Program. Sadly, if not alarmingly, the threats to school safety that gave rise to the creation of this program in 2018 remain a constant and high priority issues of great concern to all local boards of education in Maryland. Therefore, MABE fully supports the primary objective of this legislation to ensure that school systems are able to access grant funding for projects to improve the safety of school facilities. These funds have, and should continue to, aid local school systems and local governments in funding facility renovations to make schools and classrooms safer places. In addition, this grant funding supports the installation of security technology such as controlled access doors, security cameras, and weapons detection systems.

Secondly, MABE requests an amendment to prevent the sunseting of the other grant program poised to be eliminated in the same section of law. MABE has been a supporter of the Aging School Program since it was established in 1997 and strongly supports maintaining the \$6 million Aging Schools Program in future State budgets. This program provides state funding to local school systems for improvements and repairs of older public school buildings and has contributed to the completion of many important school facility projects that would not have otherwise qualified for state funding.

The Aging School Program provides much needed targeted resources to local school systems for school repairs that are necessary to maintain older public schools. Eligible expenditures under the program include asbestos and lead paint abatement; fire protection systems and equipment; painting; plumbing; roofing; heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems; and other renovation projects. Again, MABE strongly supports continued funding of this important program in order to address the broad scope of aging school facility needs.

The amendment MABE requests would simply involve moving the closing bracket to the right, to ensure that neither Section 5-317, the School Safety Grant Program, nor Section 5-324, the Aging Schools Program, be allowed to sunset beginning in FY 2026 and thereby eliminate the availability of modest but meaningful state investments to improve the safety of quality of public school facilities.

For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on House Bill 1390, with the amendment to simultaneously repeal the sunseting of the Aging Schools Program.