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MAYOR

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HB 1290

March 1, 2022

TO: Members of the House Appropriations Committee
FROM: Natasha Mehu, Director, Office of Government Relations
RE: HB 1290 - Education – Public School Construction – Funding and Administration
POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair McIntosh, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 1290.

HB 1290 increases the State’s share of school construction costs up to 10% based on Concentration of Poverty Program (CPP) thresholds established under the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future. House Bill 1290 further increases the State’s share of school construction costs by 5.0% if the proposed project is a net-zero school. The bill includes at least \$50 million in fiscal 2023 for the School Construction Revolving Loan Fund and requires the IAC to prioritize loans to counties that have (1) not advanced funding in the Public School Construction Program; and (2) limited debt capacity.

Increasing the State’s share of school construction costs based on the Concentration of Poverty Program would benefit Baltimore City. CPP is a key component of the Blueprint and provides grants directly to schools with at least 55% of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals for a full-time community school coordinator and in-school health care coverage for students. CPP provides per-pupil funds, in addition to compensatory education funds for wraparound services including before- and after-school academic programs and enrichment activities.

HB 1290 will increase the State’s share of school construction costs on a sliding scale and provide critical capital improvement funds for targeted Baltimore City schools that are most in need. The General Assembly has prioritized educational equity for traditionally underserved communities. This will greatly benefit Baltimore City Schools, our students, and our community.

For these reasons, we respectfully request a **favorable** report on HB 1290.