



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

March 29, 2022

TO: The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chair, Budget and Taxation Committee

FROM: Marc Elrich
County Executive

RE: House Bill 1290, *Education – Public School Construction – Funding and Administration*
Support

I am writing in support of House Bill 1290, *Education – Public School Construction – Funding and Administration*, which reflects the statutory changes to the State school construction program that were recommended by the Maryland General Assembly’s Workgroup on the Assessment and Funding of School Facilities. Montgomery County was pleased to have two representatives from its State Delegation serve on the Workgroup – Senator Nancy King and Delegate Marc Korman.

The School Facilities Workgroup meetings were followed closely by the members of an internal County workgroup that was created over the summer to pursue why State financial participation in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) construction projects was so low. While Montgomery County is among those counties that by formula receives State support for 50% of a project’s eligible costs, the State support was only averaging about 20%. It had become increasingly important to better understand this dynamic since the County’s budget staff was finding it difficult to identify the matching funds required to access *Built to Learn* school construction funds. Thus, the County workgroup was tasked with identifying possible modifications to State policies and/or MCPS practices that may increase school construction aid to MCPS.

The County workgroup completed its work at about the same time as the School Facilities Workgroup and some of the recommendations turned out to be similar. In particular, the changes recommended by the School Facilities Workgroup that allow for “add-ons” to the State share percentages and the calculation of enrollment at schools adjacent to a project are meaningful. Coupled with the requirement that gross area baselines be recalculated to better align with the programmatic standards and requirements reflected in the *Blueprint*, House Bill 1290 will certainly make a positive difference for Montgomery County, and I would assume other counties as well. Therefore, I urge the Committee to act favorably on the bill.

cc: Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee