

Katie Hughes

Regarding HB0365 School Construction - Local Cost-Share - Alterations

2-2-24

My name is Katie Hughes and I am a concerned citizen from Kent County Md, teacher at the proposed new school and parent of two upcoming middle school students. I am testifying on approval for HB0365, to increase the state cost for construction of a new middle school.

I have worked at the middle school since 2009 as a science teacher and seen the current dilemmas of teaching in a building that doesn't meet the needs of 21st century students. Where half the students are in classrooms with no windows for most of their day. Where the roof leaks in so many places even if it isn't raining that we have large trash cans in the hallways to collect the water and falling ceiling tiles. Where students are in rooms way too small for the class size, since they were designed over 50 years ago. Where classrooms are nowhere near the students lockers and students are unsupervised. Where the HVAC system doesn't function properly, when some classrooms are at 88 degrees while others are at 55. All of these are just a few of the examples of why our school needs a new building. Learning and behaviors are impacted with our current building setup.

Historically our county has not put education first for financial considerations and I worry that without the state's increased funding in this bill, the county will be unable or unwilling to fund this new building and students will remain in an unsafe building that doesn't foster a learning community. This will lead to more students opting for other locations for schooling and therefore less tax revenue available, continuing the downward spiral of public education in Kent County.

I would like to thank the chair of this committee for reading this testimony. Your consideration to support the education for so many of our young people in Kent County is very much appreciated.

Katie Hughes