

Dear Delegate Barnes,

My name is Kevin McGee, and I am writing to you today as a parent whose kids have benefited greatly from our local Charter school to advocate for your support of HB1061 School Construction - Public Charter School Facility Fund - Establishment sponsored by Delegate Young. As the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, this bill is scheduled to be before you on March 5th.

Our local public charter school, Chesapeake Public Charter School (CPCS) in St. Mary's County, has had a great impact on my three boys. We were fortunate enough to win a school lottery back in 2018 to gain access to the school. We have had one move on to high school and two others progress into middle school. CPCS has a unique environment that feels more like sending my kids to another home than to a public school. The school has also prepared my kids well for success in high school and beyond.

The school has such high demand that it has been expanding classes every year, moving from two classes per grade to three. This obviously creates a need for improved facilities to house the growing student population. The facility that hosts the school clearly does not receive the same level of funding that the other local schools in the county receive. I want to ensure that the experience my kids had learning and growing up in the CPCS environment can be shared with more kids in the community.

LEAs are able to utilize capital funding and general funds from other sources, not available to public charter schools, to support their facilities, operations, & maintenance. HB1061 seeks to establish a fund managed by the IAC that allows public charter schools to apply for up to \$2000 per pupil annually for eligible facilities-related expenses. This funding does not impact the Blueprint formula or take funding away from any other public school students, as the funding would come from the State's General Fund. Instead, HB1061 will allow more Blueprint dollars to be spent IN the classroom on learning instead of ON the school's facility. It also sets strong parameters around spending accountability and transparency while ensuring there is standard bond bill language on repayment if a school should close or sell a privately-owned building.

We have had more than 20 years of public charter schools in Maryland. It is about time we get to work funding their public school facilities. We look forward to the hearing on March 5th and your support of HB1061, School Construction - Public Charter School Facility Fund - Establishment. Please know that it is not only myself, but the larger charter school community across the state of more than 24,000 families, 53 schools in eight districts standing behind you.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and for supporting all public school kids.

Kevin McGee