



# Kent County Middle School

402 East Campus Avenue Chestertown, MD 21620

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**Mark Buckel**  
Principal

**Kelley Melvin**  
Assistant Principal

Dear Chairs Barnes and Chang,

In my capacity as the Principal of Kent County Middle School, I lend my full support to House Bill 0365, titled "School Construction – Local Cost-Share – Alterations."

The imperative need for a replacement middle school in Kent County cannot be overstated. As a lifelong resident of Kent County and a long-term employee of Kent County Public Schools, I have witnessed the pressing need for a new facility over many years. The current building has been in use for over 60 years, and as the current principal of Kent County Middle School, I witness daily the obstacles to effective learning. I will outline a few critical issues in this letter.

Operationally, the current building presents difficulties, such as the absence of an elevator, necessitating staff to carry breakfast bags, paper cases, daily trash bags, and instructional materials up and down stairs. This poses a potential hazard to employees and serves as a barrier for ADA employees or visitors. Additionally, we contend with aging stormwater management pipes, leading to frequent floods in the hallways after heavy rains. This places additional burden on the custodial staff and has the potential to disrupt instructional time during the school day.

As the sole middle school in the county, all Kent County students will pass through this building at some point in their educational journey. The construction of a new middle school would provide students and families in Kent County with a more equitable learning environment compared to our neighboring counties. Furthermore, a new school building would offer modern features, a safe learning environment, and equitable access for all students and visitors.

While the Feasibility Study submitted by KCPS outlines some of the concerns, words and pictures alone may not provide an accurate reflection of the age and deficiencies of the building. House Bill 0365 holds the promise of providing Kent County students with the learning facility they genuinely need. We owe it to our children to offer them the best possible learning environment, and the current building falls short of meeting their needs.

For these compelling reasons, I strongly urge the members of the House Appropriations Committee to favorably report on House Bill 0365 - School Construction- Local Cost-Share-Alterations.

Sincerely,

Mark A. Buckel  
Principal of Kent County Middle School