

February 2, 2024

Delegate Ben Barnes, Chair
Delegate Mark S. Chang, Vice Chair
Appropriations Committee
House Office Building, Room 121
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: HB 365- School Construction- Local Cost-Share- Alterations

Position: Support

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang and Members of the Committee,

As the parent of three children in Kent County Public Schools I would like to STRONGLY ENCOURAGE a Favorable Report on HB 365. Kent County Middle School is the only Middle School in Kent County and all three of my children have attended, or are currently attending, this school. My children, as well as their friends and families, have often spoken about the poor conditions of the school. Given that the school was built 75 years ago this is to be expected.

For a school of its age, as well as its current condition, renovations would not be sufficient and at best be an expensive bandage that would only delay the inevitable for a short time. Additionally, the school was also constructed at a time when things that are considered essential today were not even considered. This includes elevators, appropriate lighting, and windows in classrooms. One of my children received part of his education in a special ed classroom and those facilities were severely lacking as well.

Given the current funding formula, the size and fiscal condition of Kent County as a whole, this urgently needed updating is simply not possible. It is imperative that this bill be given a favorable report for the future of the children in Kent County.

There has been some concern about the cost per pupil. Kent County has received little, if any, funding for school construction over the last 50 years. The newest school in the County was built in the early 1970s. Considering the length of time that a new middle school will likely be in active use, the low likelihood of a second middle school being required in the near future, as well as the number of students who will pass through its doors in that time, the total cost per pupil during that time becomes far more palatable.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to a favorable report from this committee!

SINCERELY,



Edward "Ted" Gallo