



Board of Education of Howard County  
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland House of Delegates,  
Appropriations Committee  
March 5, 2025

**HB1436: FAVORABLE**

**Public School Construction - Projections and Funding - Inflationary Adjustments**

**Board of Education  
of Howard County**

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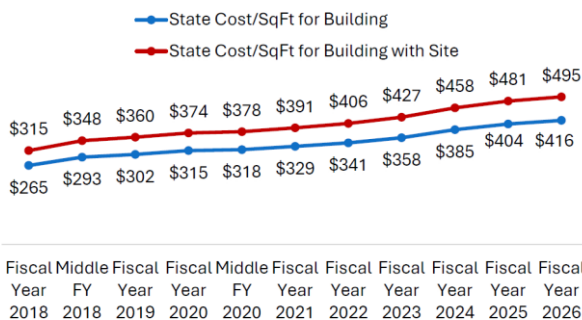
William J. Barnes  
*Superintendent,  
Secretary/Treasurer*

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) supports **Public School Construction - Projections and Funding - Inflationary Adjustments** for its potential to more accurately inform funding authorities of the true cost of school construction.

Under existing Education Article § 5–304 the Interagency Commission for School Construction (IAC) is required to prepare projections for school construction and capital improvement needs to the Capital Debt Affordability Committee. HB1436 would add to this area of law by requiring that the projection must include inflationary adjustments using a cost of construction inflation index. The bill also extends the reporting requirements for the IAC on projections to the Governor for consideration when setting the annual allocation of school construction funds in the State Capital Budget. Under an uncodified section of law passed in 2024 that indicates it is the intent of the General Assembly that beginning in fiscal year 2023, within the current debt affordability guidelines, the State should provide at least \$450,000,000 each year for public school construction in order to maintain a relatively stable number of funded projects in the Capital Improvement Program, HB1436 adds that this goal should be recalculated with an inflationary adjustment that uses a cost of construction inflation index.

The Howard County Public School System's (HCPSS) capital budget funds the construction of new school facilities and provides for renovations, additions, roofing and barrier-free projects, technology equalization, and the purchase or relocation of portable classrooms for existing facilities. Increased costs, sustainability challenges, and catching up to years of rapid enrollment growth in Howard County, as well as competing interests between infrastructure and programmatic needs, have brought school system capital and maintenance budgets to the forefront of legislative initiatives in recent years. As a legislative platform, the Board supports adequate funding to help close the gap in the capital infrastructure needs of the school system.

State Cost of Construction Per SqFt



While the impact of HB1436 is not a direct increase in available capital funds for local school systems, calculating future inflationary considerations could be beneficial. The year over year change in the per square foot cost funded by the State since 2018 (chart to the left) illustrates the inflation in school construction costs. As more capital dollars are needed to address fundamental school system needs and costs are expected to continue to rise, the bill ensures the State and Governor are aware of the true cost of construction.

For these reasons, we urge a FAVORABLE report on HB1436 from this Committee.