



Kent County Public Schools

Growing a Community of Leaders

KENT COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL

House Bill – School Construction – Local Cost-Share – Alterations

House Appropriations Committee

February 11, 2025

I wish to testify in support of House Bill 736, School Construction – Local Cost-Share – Alterations. In July 2019, I was hired as an Accountant for Kent County Public Schools with the intention to financially oversee the school system's School Construction, Maintenance, Operations, and Transportation budgets.

Within the School Construction Program, Kent County Public Schools has completed projects of various scales that have improved the learning conditions for students at four of the five schools within the county's portfolio. Each of these projects have been completed within the allowed budget, with many being under the allowed budget, showing strong financial oversight of the state and county's valuable funding. The only building that has not received an improvement to the learning conditions within the building is Kent County Middle School, which serves every child within Kent County Public Schools. Due to the results of the Feasibility Study conducted by Kent County Public Schools, it was determined that any renovation projects would be an inefficient use of limited funding for the building. The Maintenance & Operations team in addition to the Custodial staff at Kent County Middle School have demonstrated a tremendous ability to keep the school operational for the students despite the overwhelming daily challenges they face due to the age of the building systems.

Through the Capital Improvement Program, Kent County Public Schools has diligently worked toward achieving each possible Add-On allowable by the state. These Add-ons include Concentration of Poverty and Maintenance Effectiveness. A third Add-On for achieving a Net-Zero Energy building is also expected to be achieved through the A/E Design that is currently underway.

In the past 19 months, Kent County Public Schools has spent \$129,626.48 just in repairs to the building. These repairs have ranged from sewage infrastructure, roofing, HVAC, and repairs to the BAS. As a point of reference, the entire building repair budget annually to service each school location is \$21,000.00 and the entire school system's budget for all locations is \$115,000.00 annually. Kent

County Middle School also has a failing BAS control system, which is going to result in another potential \$33,843.00 expense soon. As you can see, the day-to-day operation of the school is causing extreme budgetary impacts. This means that Kent County Public Schools must utilize other sources of revenue, such as the IAC's Aging Schools Program to supplement the funding for these repairs. Kent County Public Schools receives an annual amount of \$38,292 through this program. Ideally, the projects that utilize Aging Schools Funding would be projects to enhance the learning environment, not to repair an aging building where the intention is to replace it in the near future.

For these reasons mentioned above, I urge the members of the House of Appropriations Committee to give a favorable report on House Bill 736 – School Construction – Local Cost-Share – Alterations. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kreigh J. Kirby



Accountant, Kent County Public Schools