

The Honorable Guy Guzzone
The Honorable Jim Rosapepe
3 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
Annapolis, MD 21401
RE: SB0843 School Construction – Local Cost-Share – Alterations: SUPPORT

Dear Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee:

My name is Matthew Swanson. I live in Chestertown. I'm the father of four Kent County Public Schools students, including two who have already gone through the middle school and one who is currently enrolled.

As he walked out the door this morning, I asked my seventh grader August to tell me the challenges he faces at school—not academically or socially, but with the middle school building itself. Here are a few of the things he shared:

- Sometimes the lights just randomly don't work.
- The toilets get flooded, and we have to leave the building.
- The pipes just keep breaking and we have to miss school.
- We were kicked out of my homeroom for two weeks because the floor was broken.
- The lockers get stuck, the gym equipment is worn out, and the desks are so old that they don't attach properly to the chair, so if you lean the wrong way, your stuff falls on the floor.

While dealing with the plumbing excitement throughout the first semester, KCMS asked students not to use the bathroom unless they really had to, and if they *had* to—not to flush.

It's already hard to be in middle school. The academics start getting more difficult. The social dynamics get a lot more complicated. *You* remember. The building itself is supposed to work. The desks and lights are supposed to work. The toilets and floors are supposed to work.

If you believe, as I do, that our children represent the future of our community, our county, our state, or country, our world, we are sending a powerful message that we don't much care about the future. We can do better than this, folks. We must.

Please fund this bill. It's a long-overdue opportunity to energize our community, invest in our people, boost our educational prospects—and, at the very least—make sure our students can walk across a well-lit floor on the way to a functioning bathroom.

Thank you,
Matthew Swanson, Chestertown