

**HB1430 – Maryland Public Charter School Program – School Facilities – Funding
House Appropriations Committee
March 11, 2026**

Position: Favorable

Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee,

On behalf of the **Maryland Alliance of Public Charter Schools (MAPCS)**, the statewide advocacy organization representing Maryland’s public charter schools and the more than **25,000 students enrolled in them**, we respectfully submit this testimony in **strong support of HB1430**.

Public charter schools are public schools. However, unlike district-operated schools, charter schools in Maryland are often responsible for paying for their own facilities—including rent or mortgage payments, utilities, maintenance, and repairs—out of their operating budgets. As a result, charter schools must divert funds intended for classroom instruction toward the basic costs of maintaining a school building.

Currently, charter schools in Maryland spend **more than \$2,400 per student each year on facilities**, meaning dollars intended to support teachers, academic programs, and student services are instead used to cover building costs. Unlike district-operated schools, charter schools must cover facility costs using operating dollars that would otherwise support instruction, effectively reducing the resources available for classrooms.

In practical terms, this means school leaders are often forced to make difficult tradeoffs that other public schools do not face. For example, a school leader may have to decide whether limited funds should be used to repair a leaking roof or purchase new books for the library. These are not choices any public school should have to make when serving Maryland students.

This funding structure creates a structural inequity within Maryland’s public education system and places charter schools at a disadvantage when planning sustainable school operations and investments in student learning.

Charter school students are already included in Maryland’s public education funding formulas, yet the schools they attend receive no dedicated state support for facility costs. As a result, charter school leaders are often forced to make difficult decisions about whether limited operating dollars should be spent on classrooms or on the buildings that house those classrooms.

HB1430 provides a practical and fiscally responsible solution by establishing a **predictable statewide per-pupil facilities funding stream** for public charter schools administered through the **Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC)**. Beginning in **Fiscal Year 2028 and each year thereafter**, the bill requires the Governor to include in the **annual State budget**

bill a facilities appropriation equal to the total statewide charter school enrollment from the prior fiscal year multiplied by \$1,600 per pupil, with funds provided **directly to public charter schools** for eligible facilities expenses.

Creating a dedicated facilities funding stream will help charter schools cover essential and ongoing costs such as **rent or mortgage payments, utilities, safety and security, maintenance, insurance, and building operations**. These are fundamental costs required to operate safe learning environments for students. Providing a stable and transparent funding mechanism for facilities ensures that operating dollars can remain focused on their intended purpose—supporting classroom instruction and student success.

Importantly, **HB1430 does not change or reduce the existing school construction funding process administered by the Interagency Commission on School Construction**. Traditional public schools will continue to receive **capital funding for major construction and renovation projects through the existing project-based process**.

This legislation instead establishes a modest facilities support structure for charter schools, which currently must cover these building costs independently. Because many charter schools operate in leased facilities or buildings not owned by local school systems, they are generally unable to access traditional capital construction funding in the same way as district-operated schools.

HB1430 therefore helps address a structural gap in how Maryland supports its public school facilities.

This bill simply ensures that public school students attending charter schools are not the only students in Maryland whose schools must pay building costs out of classroom funding.

From a fiscal perspective, HB1430 also positions Maryland to leverage additional **federal resources** that are currently unavailable to the state. The **State Charter School Facilities Incentive Grant (SFIG)** is a competitive federal program that provides matching funds to states that establish per-pupil facilities aid programs for charter schools. In recent years, this program has provided **up to \$10 million annually in federal funding** to participating states.

However, to access these federal dollars, Maryland must first establish a statewide facilities funding program in state law. By passing HB1430, Maryland would create the statutory framework necessary to compete for this federal match and bring additional education funding into the state.

In addition to promoting fiscal efficiency, this legislation also improves **predictability in state education budgeting**. Establishing a per-pupil facilities formula tied to enrollment provides transparency and stability for both the State and public charter schools, allowing for better long-term facilities planning and more effective use of education dollars.

Most importantly, HB1430 addresses a longstanding inequity in how Maryland supports its public school students. Students attending public charter schools deserve access to **safe, well-maintained school facilities supported by public funding**, just like their peers in other public schools.

For Maryland's **25,000 public charter school students and their families**, this legislation represents an important step toward ensuring that public education funding supports both the classrooms where students learn and the buildings that make those classrooms possible.

Finally, establishing a per-pupil facilities funding program allows Maryland to **protect classroom resources while leveraging additional federal support for school facilities**. By pairing a predictable state funding structure with potential federal matching funds, the State can strengthen public school infrastructure while ensuring that dollars intended for instruction remain focused on students and learning.

For these reasons, the **Maryland Alliance of Public Charter Schools** respectfully urges the Committee to issue a **favorable report on HB1430**.

Thank you for your consideration.

McKenzie Allen

Maryland Alliance of Public Charter Schools

On behalf of Maryland's public charter schools and the **25,000 students they serve**