

REGINA T. BOYCE  
Legislative District 43A  
Baltimore City

Environment and  
Transportation Committee

Subcommittees

Energy  
Chair, Natural Resources and  
Open Space



Annapolis Office  
The Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen Street, Room 304  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3476  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3476  
Regina.Boyce@house.maryland.gov

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 13, 2026

Testimony in Support of HB 854

**School Construction - Nonpublic Special Education School Renovation Program -  
Established**

In Maryland, students across the state have the ability to have their educational needs met through nonpublic special education schools when the public school system cannot meet their Individualized Education Plan (IEP). While the Blueprint for Maryland's Future provides nonpublic special education schools with teacher pay parity, enhanced funding formulas, cost-sharing mechanism, a special education workgroup established to analyze and make recommendations on improving services and addressing the specific needs of nonpublic special education school environments, and increased per pupil funding, **nonpublic special education schools do not qualify for school construction funding through the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC).**

**HB 854, School Construction - Nonpublic Special Education School Renovation Program - Established,** creates a program administered by the Interagency Commission on School Construction to provide grant funding to certain nonpublic special education schools for certain renovations and improvements to classrooms, upgrades to residential cottages on school grounds, health, safety and accessibility upgrades, infrastructure modernization, and certain new construction.

Students served in nonpublic special education schools are funded by the Maryland public school system. HB 854 addresses a long-standing structural inequity: **while public schools have established state capital funding mechanisms, nonpublic special education schools that serve publicly-placed students have limited access to dedicated capital support.** Currently, Maryland's IAC primarily funds public school projects, with limited grants for nonpublic school renovations and safety improvements with tight eligibility criteria. The limited amount of funding available for nonpublic special education schools results in a funding imbalance. **Nonpublic special education schools are not only meeting but exceeding expectations, and yet, their facilities do not match the quality of services provided.** When facilities deteriorate or cannot be modernized, these schools risk reduced placement capacity and increased long-term costs because they can't take on more students. By broadening funding opportunities through HB 854, we can ensure that all students, regardless of educational needs, have access to modern facilities.

We often say, **“public dollars for public schools.”** This bill ensures that public school students placed in nonpublic special education schools not only receive public dollars for their education, but for the infrastructure that educates them. Maryland remains deeply committed to fully funding public education, whether that means at a public school or nonpublic special education school. This legislation simply acknowledges that nonpublic special education schools also serve public school students.

Thank you for your consideration, and I urge a favorable report on HB 854.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Regina T. Boyce". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R'.

Regina T. Boyce