

March 9, 2026

The Honorable Members of the House Appropriations Committee  
Maryland General Assembly  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: HB1430 – Maryland Public Charter School Program – School Facilities – Funding**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Kaiser, and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

My name is Angelica Jackson, M.S.Ed., and I am the CEO and Co-Founder of Phoenix International School of the Arts (PISOTA), Charles County's first and only public charter middle school. I write in strong support of HB1430, which would provide dedicated facilities funding for Maryland's public charter schools through the Interagency Commission on School Construction as well as make Maryland eligible to receive tens of millions of dollars in federal capital dollars for public schools.

PISOTA serves grades 6–8 and combines Cambridge International Education with professional arts training in Dance, Musical Theater, Visual Arts, and Music. Our students are predominantly from families qualifying for Free and Reduced Lunch, and we draw from across Charles County through a random lottery system. We exist because we believe the arts are not enrichment—they are workforce development. Every day, our scholars prove that belief right.

Yet like many charter schools in Maryland, PISOTA faces a fundamental inequity: we are public schools responsible for securing and maintaining our own facilities without the capital funding that traditional public schools receive. We bear the full cost of rent, maintenance, utilities, and compliance—expenses that come directly out of the per-pupil funding meant to serve our students. This creates a structural disadvantage that no amount of operational efficiency can overcome.

HB1430 addresses this gap directly. By requiring the Governor to include \$1,600 per student in the annual budget for charter school facility maintenance and operations beginning in FY2028, this bill acknowledges a simple truth: public charter school students deserve to learn in safe, well-maintained facilities just like their peers in traditional public schools. Facilities funding should not be a privilege determined by school governance structure—it should be a right extended to every public school student.

For PISOTA, dedicated facilities funding would mean the difference between choosing to repair a leaking roof or purchasing new curricular materials for the MSDE-mandated daily math instruction. It would mean our families—many of whom chose PISOTA specifically because of our mission to prepare young artists and scholars for the global creative workforce—can trust that their children's learning environment meets the standard they deserve.

Maryland has an opportunity to lead. Our state's charter school law already affirms that charter schools are public schools. HB1430 ensures our funding reflects that reality. I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on HB1430.

Thank you for your time and commitment to Maryland's students.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Angelica Jackson', written over a horizontal line.

**Angelica Jackson, Ed.D.**

CEO & Co-Founder

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