

Testimony in Support of HB1430

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

Good afternoon Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Amanda Caddell, and I am the parent/guardian of a student at Phoenix International School of the Arts in La Plata. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB1430.

My family chose our charter school because of the strong curriculum, positive staff, and focus on the arts. For my child, this school has been a game changer. We had a rough 4th and 5th grade year at our zoned elementary school and PISOTA was a breath of fresh air with students from other areas of the county and staff with a shared vision.

Public charter schools provide families like mine with an alternative to zoned schools, wider options in the arts, and leadership with an open-minded approach to learning. They give parents the ability to choose a learning environment that truly fits their child's needs.

But while charter schools are public schools serving public school students, they often do not receive the same support for facilities that traditional public schools receive.

That means many charter schools must pay for building costs out of the same funding meant for classroom instruction.

School leaders are often forced to make difficult choices between investing in students and maintaining the building. Sometimes the decision becomes whether to repair the roof or buy new library books, whether to upgrade heating systems or invest in science equipment, or whether to improve classrooms or pay for basic building maintenance.

That is not a choice any school should have to make.

The \$1,600 per pupil facilities funding proposed in HB1430 would help create a more equitable system. It would ensure charter schools have dedicated support for maintaining safe, functional learning spaces so more resources can go into the classroom rather than toward the classroom building.

For families like mine, this bill is about fairness and opportunity. Charter school students deserve the same access to safe, appropriate facilities as any other public school student in Maryland.

When schools are not forced to spend classroom dollars on building costs, they can invest more in teachers, learning materials, student programs, and academic support.

Every child deserves a school environment that supports their learning and their future.

Thank you for your time and for considering this important step toward equity for Maryland's charter school students and families.

Respectfully,
Amanda Caddell
Charles County
Parent of PISOTA student