



March 9, 2026

Dear Maryland State House Appropriations Committee,

Please accept this letter in support of HB1430 - Maryland Public Charter School Program - School Facilities - Funding - sponsored by Delegate Chang. As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, this bill will be before you on March 11, 2026.

[Afya Baltimore Inc. \(ABI\)](#) is a nonprofit organization responsible for managing public charter schools in Baltimore City. Afya is a Swahili word for health, and health and wellness are at the heart of all that we do. ABI provides the foundational and operational support necessary for our schools to do the work of helping Baltimore's children to live healthy, balanced lives: intellectually, socially/emotionally, and physically.

ABI operates two schools across three facilities - The Tunbridge School (Elementary and Middle School at the York Rd. Campus) and The Belair-Edison School (Elementary School at the Brehms Ln. Campus and Middle School at the Brendan Ave. Campus). Two of these facilities are in historical former parochial school buildings which we own. The third facility is in a Baltimore City Public School System (BCPSS) owned building which we lease. We pay utilities only and are responsible for all other repairs and maintenance on the property, including significant capital investment.

Our two operator-owned buildings were in great disrepair when we purchased them in 2007 and 2010, as they had been pretty much abandoned for years prior as the Catholic schools went out of business. Our district-owned building was in poor condition as well when we began leasing it in 2016. At that time, and every year since, we have invested in our buildings. From our per pupil funding, we have paid for:

- debt service on two of our buildings, and rent on the third (the new guidance from the Maryland State Board of Education eliminates debt service charges from our funding)
- capital improvements each summer - both as a requirement of our loans and for the high standards we hold for our school communities
- utilities - with outdated HVAC, drafty buildings that are not energy efficient
- facility and cleaning staff to cover 159,000 square feet across three campuses
- security - comprehensive security systems including cameras and monitoring systems
- insurance - comprehensive property and liability insurance
- landscaping - annual upkeep across five acres of grounds, including planting, forestry work, and mulching
- regular upkeep and repairs on everything from signage to graffiti removal to lighting

On average in our schools, we spend 12% of our per pupil allocation on these things. Much of the money we spend ON these facilities could be spent IN our classrooms, with the passage of HB1430.



Charter school students are public school students; charter school staff are union employees — they deserve to be in 21st century buildings as much as their colleagues and classmates in traditional buildings do. Families and teachers that choose to be in a charter school - a choice which is their right to make according to Maryland State Law - should not have to be in older buildings that are more in need of repair.

We hope you will support the more than 24,000 students, across 53 schools in eight districts in Maryland with the passage of HB1430. I am happy to discuss this bill and the positive impact it will have on our schools any time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Will McKenna".

Will McKenna
Founder and Executive Director
Afya Baltimore Inc. (ABI)
wmckenna@afyabaltimore.org
410-736-8980