



**Testimony in Support of HB1329
Education – Public School Construction – Funding**

Appropriations

March 11, 2026

FAVORABLE

Free State PTA (FSPTA) represents over 70,000 volunteer members and families in over 500 public schools. As the state's premier and largest child advocacy organization, Free State PTA is a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, schools and communities, and a strong advocate for public education. ***We are offering a favorable testimony in support of House Bill 1329.***

The condition and capacity of public school facilities are fundamental to the quality of education that Maryland students receive. House Bill 1329 responsibly updates the State's funding goal for school construction by increasing the annual target from \$450 million to \$550 million beginning in fiscal year 2027. Maryland's student population continues to grow in many jurisdictions, and many existing school buildings require modernization to meet current safety, accessibility, and educational standards. By establishing a higher annual goal within existing debt affordability guidelines, this legislation helps ensure that the Capital Improvement Program can continue to support a stable pipeline of school construction and renovation projects across the state.

Consistently we hear from PTA's across Maryland that many children are currently learning in school buildings that are decades old and in desperate need of repair, renovation, or replacement. Aging HVAC systems, outdated classrooms, and deteriorating infrastructure can negatively affect student health, comfort, and learning conditions. Codifying this funding intent in statute provides greater predictability for local school systems as they plan long-term facility investments. Reliable state participation allows districts to address overcrowding, replace aging infrastructure, and create modern learning environments that support today's instructional needs. Importantly, the bill clarifies that the annual funding goal does not include funding from the Built to Learn program (a necessary additional investment to fully address school infrastructure needs), ensuring transparency and protecting the baseline commitment to school construction. For these reasons, House Bill 1329 represents a prudent investment in Maryland's students, educators, and communities, and it merits favorable consideration.

Free State PTA urges the committee to issue a favorable report on HB1329.

Thank you,
Free State PTA, Advocacy Committee