



County Council of Baltimore County
Court House, Towson, Maryland 21204

Izzy Patoka
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Testimony in favor of HB 1257

Dear Chair Ebersole, Vice Chair Pasteur, and Members of the Delegation:

I write in support of **House Bill 1257**, legislation that would improve transparency and public reporting of school construction projects in Baltimore County.

Baltimore County Public Schools manages hundreds of millions of dollars in capital construction projects, including new school facilities, major renovations, HVAC replacements, and other systemic improvements. These projects represent substantial investments from Baltimore County taxpayers and the State of Maryland. Given the scale of these investments, residents should have access to clear and accessible information regarding how these public funds are being used. Currently, there is no publicly accessible dashboard that allows residents to easily track project timelines, original and revised budgets, percent completion, or variances from approved capital allocations. In many cases, residents must file Public Information Act requests simply to obtain detailed updates on construction spending or project status. For a capital program of this magnitude, the absence of routine and easily accessible reporting can undermine public trust.

House Bill 1257 would address this issue by improving transparency and public access to information about school construction projects. Similar systems are already successfully utilized in other Maryland jurisdictions. For example, Montgomery County Public Schools maintains a public-facing capital improvements dashboard that clearly outlines project status, funding sources, percent completion, and anticipated timelines. Anne Arundel County Public Schools also provides accessible reporting tools that allow residents to monitor construction projects without requiring formal records requests.

These tools allow parents, taxpayers, educators, and elected officials to understand where projects stand, whether they are on schedule, and whether they remain within approved budgets. Transparent reporting strengthens accountability, helps deter cost overruns, and ensures the public can clearly see how taxpayer dollars are being invested in our school infrastructure.

Importantly, this legislation does not interfere with the educational mission of Baltimore County Public Schools. Rather, it simply establishes a reasonable standard of fiscal transparency for publicly funded capital projects. Baltimore County residents can already track road projects, bond issuances, and procurement contracts online. School construction projects should be held to the same level of transparency.

House Bill 1257 brings Baltimore County in line with best practices across Maryland and helps ensure that public investments in our schools remain visible and accountable to the public.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a **favorable report on House Bill 1257**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Izzy Patoka".

Izzy Patoka Baltimore County Council