



# Maryland Education Coalition



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## Senate Bill 960/House Bill 1430

### Maryland Public Charter School Program - School Facilities – Funding

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

#### Informational - Request to table pending further study

The Maryland Education Coalition (MEC) was originally founded over 40 years ago (1980) and is the oldest, most experienced, and diverse public education advocacy coalition in Maryland. MEC advocates for adequate operating/capital funding, equitable policies, and transparent accountability statewide for the nearly 900,000 students in Maryland's 1,350 plus public schools including charter schools, regardless of their academic, cultural, economic, geographic, racial, or other demographic status.

MEC believes all public-school facilities must meet 21st century standards for enrollment, and academic program needs within a safe, healthy, and supportive learning environment. The State with local support must allocate ample funds for school facility operation, renovation, maintenance, systemic replacements, construction, health, and safety in a way that prioritizes needs fairly by district, school, and major category.

MEC historically has advocated adequate funding to support the operation and maintenance of the more than 1,350 public school facilities in Maryland including the fifty public charter schools (50/3.7%) to ensure each has sufficient funds to operate, maintain, expand, modernized, or build new facilities so all 850,000 plus students have access to a high quality school facility that meets each academic, program and student service needs in a safe and healthy environment based on 21<sup>st</sup> century standards.

MEC is on the record in support of current public charter school policies. We are also on the record with the Maryland General Assembly, Kopp and Knott Commissions urging the creation of a separate budget line item and policy specifically to address the maintenance and operation of all public schools separate from funds tied to student instruction, academic programming, student services, and staffing. We urge a study group made up of state and local education leaders including knowledgeable stakeholders.

**Currently, operation and maintenance of school facilities, including utilities, are funded from the foundation and other unrestricted sources** that are primarily needed to support growing academic instruction, programming, student services, and staffing needs. We also note that there is a **growing list of aging public schools\*** requiring additional funds to maintain and operate them with no dedicated funding source. A dedicated source is needed for all public schools, not just charter schools.

**House bill 1430, if passed even as amended by the House, would set a new precedent applicable for about 18 public charter schools ONLY, by creating a significant inequity for 1,300 plus traditional public schools, requiring the distribution of dedicated funds for the maintenance and operation of public charter schools ONLY.**

Therefore, **MEC urges an unfavorable report of SB960/HB1430 until a further study that includes stakeholders, to determine policy and funding allocations applicable to all 1,350 plus public schools.**

\* [IAC-FY-2025-Annual-Report](#), (see pages 24-25)