

HB1430 – Maryland Public Charter School Program – School Facilities – Funding
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
April 1, 2026

Position: Favorable with Amendments

Chair and members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Maryland Alliance of Public Charter Schools (MAPCS), the statewide advocacy organization representing Maryland’s public charter schools and the more than 25,000 students enrolled in them, we respectfully submit this testimony in support of House Bill 1430 with amendments.

Public charter schools are public schools. However, unlike district-operated schools, charter schools in Maryland are often responsible for paying for their own facilities—including rent or mortgage payments, utilities, maintenance, and repairs—out of their operating budgets. As a result, charter schools must divert funds intended for classroom instruction toward the basic costs of maintaining a school building.

Currently, charter schools in Maryland spend more than \$2,400 per student each year on facilities. This means dollars intended to support teachers, academic programs, and student services are instead used to cover building costs. In practical terms, school leaders are often forced to make difficult tradeoffs—such as whether limited funds should be used to repair a leaking roof or purchase new books for the library. These are not choices any public school should have to make.

HB1430 represents an important step toward addressing this structural inequity by establishing a predictable, statewide per-pupil facilities funding stream for public charter schools.

At the same time, we respectfully urge the Committee to adopt two amendments to ensure the policy is equitable, effective, and fiscally sound.

First, we request the adoption of **Amendment #1 to strike lines 6 through 10 on page 2**. As currently drafted, the bill excludes public charter school students in Baltimore City. While we understand this was an intentional policy choice, this exclusion creates inequity within Maryland’s public charter sector and denies access to students who would significantly benefit from these resources. This amendment ensures that all public charter school students—regardless of geography—are eligible for facilities funding. Importantly, this change does not reduce or impact existing Interagency Commission on School Construction funding for any other public schools. It simply ensures equitable access within this new funding stream. Additionally, excluding any group of students would make Maryland ineligible for the federal State Charter School Facilities Incentive Grant program.

Second, we request the adoption of **Amendment #2 to increase the per-pupil amount on page 2, line 22 from \$200 to \$800**. This adjustment is not only about adequacy—it is about

fiscal efficiency. At \$800 per pupil, Maryland would be positioned to maximize participation in the federal State Charter School Facilities Incentive Grant program, potentially drawing down up to \$10 million annually in federal funds over five years. At lower funding levels, the State risks leaving federal dollars on the table.

At full implementation, this policy would represent approximately a \$20 million annual investment. However, with federal matching funds, up to half of that cost—approximately \$10 million annually—could be offset. In other words, this amendment allows the State to double the impact of its investment while significantly reducing the net cost.

With these amendments, the bill becomes not only a more equitable policy, but a more fiscally responsible one.

Creating a dedicated facilities funding stream—at an appropriate level—will help charter schools cover essential costs such as rent or mortgage payments, utilities, safety and security, maintenance, insurance, and building operations. This ensures that operating dollars can remain focused on their intended purpose: supporting classroom instruction and student success.

Importantly, HB1430 does not change or reduce the existing school construction funding process administered by the Interagency Commission on School Construction. Traditional public schools will continue to receive capital funding through the current system. This bill simply addresses a longstanding gap for charter schools and increases the State's allocation in the budget to the IAC to cover the cost of this program.

Most importantly, HB1430—with these amendments—addresses a clear and longstanding inequity in how Maryland funds its public schools.

Charter school students are public school students—no matter where they live—and they should not be funded at a disadvantage.

With these amendments, this bill not only advances equity—it leverages federal dollars, protects classroom funding, and makes smart use of State resources.

We respectfully urge the Committee to adopt these amendments and issue a favorable report on House Bill 1430 as amended.

Thank you for your consideration.

McKenzie Allen

Maryland Alliance of Public Charter Schools

On behalf of Maryland's public charter schools and the 25,000 students they serve