

Donovan Letter to Senate.pdf

Uploaded by: Herbert D Colding

Position: FAV

3/30/2026

Dear Chair and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee,

I am writing to you today as a Maryland taxpayer, and—most importantly—a concerned father of a student currently attending a Maryland public charter school. I am writing to respectfully urge your support for HB1430, with two critical provisions: maintaining the funding level at \$800 per pupil and removing the amendment that excludes certain charter schools based on district-level school closures.

As a parent, I value what charter schools bring to our communities. Families often choose these schools for their innovative teaching methods, smaller class sizes, and rigorous curricula. However, a significant inequity exists:

- Traditional Public Schools: Facilities, maintenance, and utilities are covered by the district.
- Charter Schools: These same costs are often pulled directly from classroom dollars.

Every dollar spent on rent is a dollar taken away from textbooks, technology, and student support services. HB1430 offers a path toward correcting this imbalance. The proposed \$800 per pupil funding is not just reasonable; it is a strategic financial move for the State of Maryland:

- Federal Matching: Passage of this bill allows Maryland to access the federal State Charter School Facilities Incentive Grant (SFIG), potentially bringing in \$10 million annually for five years.
- Cost-Effectiveness: The total state investment would be less than the cost of a single new school construction project (which often exceeds \$40 million).
- Protecting Existing Funds: This bill does not divert current school construction funding; it creates a dedicated appropriation to support students without stripping resources from elsewhere.

I am deeply concerned by the amendment excluding charter schools in districts that have closed 50 or more schools. This provision is counterproductive for two reasons:

1. Inequity: It unfairly penalizes students based on their zip code, undermining the statewide intent of the program.
2. Federal Risk: To qualify for the \$50 million in federal SFIG funding, Maryland must have a uniform, statewide facilities program. Maintaining this exclusion risks losing those federal millions entirely.

HB1430 is a balanced, practical solution that ensures more funding reaches the classroom where it belongs. I respectfully urge the Committee to support HB1430 at the \$800 per pupil level and to remove the exclusion amendment so that all public school students are treated equitably.

Thank you for your time, your service to our state, and your consideration of our children's future.

Sincerely,

Herbert Colding

Herbert Colding

Support HB1430 - CPA (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Leah Taylor

Position: FAV

March 30, 2026

Dear Chair and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee,

We are writing as Maryland community members, a public school educator (mom), AND parents to respectfully urge your support for HB1430, with two important considerations: maintaining the funding level at \$800 per pupil and removing the amendment that excludes certain charter schools based on district-level school closures.

This issue is deeply personal for us. Our children attend a public charter school here in Maryland, and we have seen firsthand how much they have thrived in that environment. Their school has provided them with opportunities, individualized attention, and a learning community that has helped them grow academically and personally. It has made a meaningful difference in their confidence, curiosity, and love of learning.

Like all public school students, our children deserve access to a well-supported learning environment. Yet unlike district-operated schools, their school must cover rent, maintenance, utilities, and facility costs out of classroom funding. This creates a clear and ongoing inequity, one that directly impacts students like my children.

The proposed \$800 per pupil funding level is a reasonable and fiscally responsible step toward addressing this gap. Based on current enrollment, the estimated cost is approximately \$20 million annually. Importantly, passage of this bill would allow Maryland to access the **federal State Charter School Facilities Incentive Grant (SFIG)**, which can provide up to \$10 million per year for five years. With this federal support, the State's effective annual cost would be reduced to approximately \$10 million.

To put this in perspective, that amount is less than the cost of a single new school construction project, which often exceeds \$40 million. At the same time, this bill does not reduce or divert any existing school construction funding and it creates a new, dedicated appropriation.

We are also very concerned about the amendment that excludes charter schools in districts that have closed 50 schools. This provision creates inequity among public school students and undermines the statewide intent of the program. More importantly, federal SFIG funding requires a uniform, statewide facilities program. Excluding any group of charter schools risks making Maryland ineligible for these funding, potentially costing the State up to \$50 million over five years.

HB1430 represents a thoughtful and balanced solution. It would help ensure that more funding goes directly into classrooms, support students like our children, who are benefiting from public charter schools, and allow Maryland to leverage significant federal resources that would otherwise go to other states.

We respectfully urge the Committee to support HB1430 with an \$800 per pupil funding level and to remove the exclusion amendment so that all public school students are treated equitably.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mr. and Mrs. Taylor

Letter to Senate.pdf

Uploaded by: Lori Colding

Position: FAV

3/29/2026

Dear Chair and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee,

I am writing as a Maryland community member, public school teacher, and parent of a student attending a Maryland public charter school to respectfully urge your support for HB1430, with two important considerations: maintaining the funding level at \$800 per pupil and removing the amendment that excludes certain charter schools based on district-level school closures.

As both an educator in a Maryland public school and a charter school parent, I have seen firsthand the important role charter schools play in supporting diverse student needs. Many families choose charter schools because of the unique features they offer—such as smaller settings, reduced class sizes, rigorous curricula, and innovative teaching methods. These elements can make a meaningful difference in a student's educational experience. However, unlike traditional public schools, charter schools are often required to cover rent, maintenance, utilities, and other facility-related costs using classroom dollars. This creates a clear and ongoing inequity that limits the resources available directly for student learning.

The proposed \$800 per pupil funding level is both reasonable and fiscally responsible. Importantly, passage of HB1430 would also allow Maryland to access the federal State Charter School Facilities Incentive Grant (SFIG), which could provide up to \$10 million annually for five years. With this federal match, the State's effective annual cost would be significantly reduced. To put this in perspective, that amount is less than the cost of a single new school construction project funded through the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC), which often exceeds \$40 million. This bill would not reduce or divert existing school construction funding; rather, it establishes a new, dedicated appropriation and increases the IAC budget to administer the program.

It is also critical that the amendment excluding charter schools in districts that have closed 50 schools be removed. This provision creates inequity among public school students and undermines the statewide intent of the program. More importantly, eligibility for federal SFIG funding requires a uniform, statewide facilities program. Excluding any group of charter schools could jeopardize Maryland's eligibility and risk the loss of up to \$50 million in federal funding over five years.

HB1430 represents a practical and balanced solution. It provides modest, predictable support to public charter schools, helps ensure more funding is directed to classrooms, and allows Maryland to leverage significant federal resources that would otherwise go to other states. I respectfully urge the Committee to support HB1430 with the \$800 per pupil funding level and to remove the exclusion amendment so that all public school students are treated equitably, and Maryland can fully access available federal funding.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lori Colding

Lori Colding

Written Testimony__SB0960_HB1430 [Favorable w_Amen

Uploaded by: Marsha Reeves

Position: FAV

KIPP Baltimore

HB1430 – SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

Maryland Public Charter School Program – School Facilities – Funding

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of HB1430 and to recommend two key modifications to ensure the bill achieves its intended impact: (1) setting the funding level at no less than \$800 per student, and (2) removing the amendment that excludes certain charter schools. As KIPP Baltimore’s Executive Director, I have seen how powerfully school facilities shape both experience and outcomes. Buildings are not neutral—they reflect our expectations for students and influence what is possible for them. If Maryland is serious about its commitment to public education, this bill must be funded at a level that meaningfully supports school facilities.

Maryland currently lacks a dedicated, statewide facilities funding mechanism for public charter schools. As a result, schools must redirect operational and instructional dollars to cover building-related costs—an inefficient use of resources that places unnecessary strain on classrooms.

HB1430 presents a balanced and cost-effective solution. At approximately \$800 per student, the State’s annual investment would be partially offset by access to the federal State Charter School Facilities Incentive Grant (SFIG), which can provide up to \$10 million annually. This significantly reduces the net cost to the State while increasing total investment in school facilities.

However, the bill’s effectiveness depends on its structure. A statewide, inclusive program is required to qualify for federal funding. The current exclusion provision not only creates inequity among public school students but also risks forfeiting tens of millions of dollars in federal support.

In short, HB1430 is a fiscally responsible opportunity to improve facilities funding, maximize federal dollars, and ensure more resources reach students. The amended bill will also serve a strong signal to Maryland’s 25,000+ public charter school students and families that their elected government sees and supports their potential. I urge the Committee to advance the bill with an \$800 per pupil funding level and without the exclusion amendment.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,



Marsha Reeves

Executive Director, KIPP Baltimore, Maryland District 41

Resident, Maryland District 41

Every child grows up free to create the future they want for themselves and their communities.

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Advocacy%20letter%20-%20YMcNeil.pdf.pdf

Uploaded by: Yvonnada Mcneil

Position: FAV

HB1430 – SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

Maryland Public Charter School Program – School Facilities – Funding

Dear Chair and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee,

I am writing as a Maryland parent to respectfully urge your support for **HB1430**, with two important considerations: maintaining the funding level at **\$800 per pupil** and removing the amendment that excludes certain charter schools based on district-level school closures. Public charter school students are public school students. Yet unlike their peers in district-operated schools, their schools often must pay for rent, maintenance, utilities, and building costs using classroom dollars. This creates a clear and ongoing inequity.

The proposed \$800 per pupil funding level is both reasonable and fiscally responsible. Based on current enrollment, this would result in an estimated cost of approximately **\$20 million annually**. Importantly, passage of this bill would allow Maryland to access the federal **State Charter School Facilities Incentive Grant (SFIG)**, which can provide up to **\$10 million per year for five years**. With this federal match, the State's effective annual cost would be reduced to approximately **\$10 million**.

To put this in perspective, that amount is less than the cost of a single new school construction project funded through the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC), which often exceeds \$40 million. At the same time, this bill does not reduce or divert any existing school construction funding. It creates a new, dedicated appropriation and increases the IAC budget to administer the program.

It is also critical that the amendment excluding charter schools in districts that have closed 50 schools be removed. This provision creates inequity among public school students and undermines the statewide nature of the program. More importantly, federal SFIG funding requires a **statewide, uniform facilities program**. If any group of charter schools is excluded, Maryland risks becoming ineligible for these federal funds—meaning the State could lose up to **\$50 million over five years**.

This bill represents a practical, balanced solution. It provides modest, predictable support to public charter schools, helps ensure more funding is directed to classrooms, and allows Maryland to leverage significant federal resources that would otherwise go to other states. I respectfully urge the Committee to support HB1430 with an \$800 per pupil funding level and to remove the exclusion amendment so that all public school students are treated equitably and Maryland can fully access available federal funding.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Yvonnada McNeil

Greenbelt/Prince Georges County

Testimony in Support of HB 1430, Favorable with Am

Uploaded by: Zayn Ak

Position: FAV



Testimony in Support of HB 1430, Favorable with Amendments
Maryland Public Charter School Program – School Facilities – Funding
April 1, 2026

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Yilmaz Z. Ak, and I serve as the Chief Executive Officer of Chesapeake Lighthouse Foundation (CLF), a Maryland public charter operator serving more than 4,300 students in Prince George's County and Anne Arundel County. I respectfully submit this testimony in support of HB 1430, with amendments to set facilities funding at a meaningful level of at least \$800 per pupil.

Maryland charter schools are public schools, but we receive no dedicated facilities funding. We pay for buildings, maintenance, and major repairs from operating budgets, roughly 15 percent each year. That means classroom dollars are diverted to rent and debt service before we pay a teacher or purchase instructional materials.

The past two years have made this burden unsustainable. Blueprint-driven funding reductions and rising staffing costs have erased any remaining margin for many charter schools. At the same time, the State Board's new regulation expanded allowable district withholdings for administrative fees and special education adjustments, further increasing instability and widening deficits. Even high-performing schools that are closing achievement gaps are now being pushed toward program cuts and closures for purely financial reasons.

For CLF in Prince George's County, the risk is immediate. If HB 1430 remains at \$200 per pupil, it will not materially offset facility costs or stabilize school budgets. Under current conditions, **I will be recommending to our Board the closure of our two high school programs in Prince George's County, serving more than 1,500 students**, to preserve elementary programs and meet our financial obligations. This is not a decision we want to make, but without meaningful facilities support, the math no longer works.

HB 1430 is a practical, targeted equity fix. At \$800 per pupil, it would cover a substantial portion of charter facility costs, keep more operating dollars in classrooms, and help prevent avoidable school closures. For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB 1430 with amendments to restore facilities funding to at least \$800 per pupil.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to Maryland students.

Respectfully submitted,
Yilmaz Z. Ak, Ed.S.
Chief Executive Officer
Chesapeake Lighthouse Foundation



Supporting Baltimore City students_ SB0960_HB1430

Uploaded by: Debbie Hollick

Position: FWA

KIPP Baltimore

HB1430 – SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

Maryland Public Charter School Program – School Facilities – Funding

March 30, 2026

Dear Chair and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee,

I am writing to support HB1430 and to respectfully ask that the Committee adopt two essential changes: **maintain funding at no less than \$800 per student and remove the amendment that would exclude Baltimore City charter schools.** For students and families, this issue is not abstract. When schools must cover facilities costs out of instructional budgets, it affects classroom resources, long-term planning, and the overall quality of the learning environment.

Public charter school students are public school students. They deserve access to safe, well-maintained facilities just like their peers. HB1430 is an important step toward ensuring that all students—regardless of school type—learn in environments that support their success.

The \$800 per pupil funding level represents a meaningful and achievable baseline. It also enables Maryland to access the federal State Charter School Facilities Incentive Grant (SFIG), bringing additional resources into our state’s education system. The proposed exclusion of certain schools, however, would undermine both equity and opportunity. It would disproportionately impact students in Baltimore and could jeopardize Maryland’s eligibility for federal funding altogether.

As KIPP Baltimore’s Chief of Staff—and a longtime leader in our region’s teacher preparation and public education ecosystem—I have seen firsthand the impact school facilities have on students and educators. Buildings are more than infrastructure; they signal our belief in students’ potential and shape their ability to realize it. Maryland has long taken pride in its public schools—I urge the Senate to uphold that commitment by supporting this bill at a level that meaningfully invests in school facilities for all students.

Maryland has an opportunity to lead by establishing a fair, inclusive approach to facilities funding—one that reflects our shared commitment to all public school students.

I respectfully urge you to support HB1430 with these critical amendments.

Thank you for your consideration; please don’t hesitate to reach out with questions or to discuss further.

Sincerely,
Debbie Hollick, Ed.D.

Chief of Staff, KIPP Baltimore
Resident, Maryland District 42A

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Afya_Baltimore_HB1430_testimony_3.30.2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Elizabeth Adams

Position: FWA



March 30, 2026

Dear Chair and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee,

I am writing as a Maryland community member (I live in Baltimore City), a charter school leader, a parent of children who have attended both charter and traditional schools, and someone who is deeply committed to public education in our state. I have worked in public education for over 30 years. I am respectfully urging your support for **HB1430**, with two important considerations: maintaining the funding level at **\$800 per pupil** and removing the amendment that excludes certain charter schools based on district-level school closures.

Public charter school students are public school students. Yet unlike their peers in district-operated schools, their schools often must pay for rent, maintenance, utilities, and building costs using classroom dollars. This creates a clear and ongoing inequity.

The proposed \$800 per pupil funding level is both reasonable and fiscally responsible. Based on current enrollment, this would result in an estimated cost of approximately **\$20 million annually**. Importantly, passage of this bill would allow Maryland to access the federal **State Charter School Facilities Incentive Grant (SFIG)**, which can provide up to **\$10 million per year for five years**. With this federal match, the State's effective annual cost would be reduced to approximately **\$10 million**.

To put this in perspective, that amount is less than the cost of a single new school construction project funded through the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC), which often exceeds \$40 million. At the same time, this bill does not reduce or divert any existing school construction funding. It creates a new, dedicated appropriation and increases the IAC budget to administer the program.

More importantly, federal SFIG funding requires a **statewide, uniform facilities program**. If any group of charter schools is excluded, Maryland risks becoming ineligible for these federal funds—meaning the State could lose up to **\$50 million over five years**.

This bill represents a practical, balanced solution. It provides modest, predictable support to public charter schools, helps ensure more funding is directed to classrooms, and allows Maryland to leverage significant federal resources that would otherwise go to other states.



I respectfully urge the Committee to support HB1430 with an \$800 per pupil funding level and to remove the exclusion amendment so that all public school students are treated equitably and Maryland can fully access available federal funding.

Thank you for your consideration.

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

Oral Testimony in support of HB1430 (wAmendments)

Uploaded by: Eryn Lessard

Position: FWA



HB1430 – SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

Maryland Public Charter School Program – School Facilities – Funding

Good afternoon, Chair Guzzone and members of the Committee. My name is Eryn Lessard, and I serve as Managing Director of Development and External Affairs at KIPP Baltimore, our city’s largest public charter school, serving more than 1,400 students and thousands of alumni across Baltimore. I live in District 41, where KIPP Baltimore is also located—meaning the students and families we serve are my neighbors. Before this role, I was a Baltimore City public school teacher, librarian, and administrator—and in each of these roles, my students were, and are, public school students.

Across those roles, I have seen firsthand how the condition of a school building shapes what is possible for students and educators. I have taught in classrooms that were too hot to focus in the early fall and too cold in the winter. As a librarian, I worked in spaces that were under-resourced and underutilized—not because of a lack of vision, but because of a lack of investment.

Today, my work sits at the intersection of community partnership, philanthropy, and long-term planning for our school environment. In order to expand our successful K–8 program to include Pre-K, and to build school libraries for the first time in KIPP Baltimore’s 20-plus year history, our community came together to raise significant philanthropic support and to prioritize these spaces as long-term investments in our students’ success.

At the same time, we are responsible for the ongoing costs of occupying and maintaining our building—including lease payments, custodial and maintenance services, and critical infrastructure needs. In recent years, that has included addressing aging HVAC systems, replacing chillers, and making major repairs following weather-related burst pipes that damaged our gymnasium and main office.

Public charter school students are public school students—but unlike traditional district schools, charter schools in Maryland do not have access to a dedicated public funding stream for facilities. As a result, schools must either divert operating dollars away from instruction or rely on philanthropy to meet both long-term investments and urgent, day-to-day facility needs.

Facilities costs in Maryland average roughly \$2,400 per public charter school student. The current proposal of \$200 per student falls far short of that reality—and far short of what other states have implemented through public investment structures. At a minimum, funding at \$800 per student would allow Maryland to access the federal State Charter School Facilities Incentive Grant, unlocking additional resources for our state.

Every child grows up free to create the future they want for themselves and their communities.

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KIPP Baltimore

TOGETHER, A FUTURE WITHOUT LIMITS

The proposed amendment to exclude districts with significant school closures would effectively exclude Baltimore City’s public charter school students entirely—leaving thousands of students without access to any facilities funding.

I respectfully urge the Committee to ensure that this legislation includes all public charter school students across Maryland and provides funding at a level that reflects the real cost of safe, functional learning environments—at least \$800 per student.

Our students should not have to rely on private fundraising to access buildings that meet basic standards. This is a matter of equity.

Thank you for your consideration, and for your commitment to ensuring that Maryland students are equipped to achieve their unlimited potential.



Eryn Lessard

*Managing Director of Development & External Affairs, KIPP Baltimore (Maryland District 41)
Resident, Maryland District 41*

April 1, 2026

Written Testimony in support of HB1430 (wAmendment

Uploaded by: Eryn Lessard

Position: FWA

KIPP Baltimore

TOGETHER, A FUTURE WITHOUT LIMITS

HB1430 – SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

Maryland Public Charter School Program – School Facilities – Funding

March 30, 2026

Dear Chair Guzzone and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee,

I write to express my support for HB1430 and to respectfully urge two critical amendments: maintaining a funding level of at least \$800 per student and removing the provision excluding certain charter schools based on district school closures.

At its core, this bill is about equity. Public charter school students are public school students, yet their schools are often required to fund facilities costs—rent, maintenance, and repairs—from dollars intended for instruction. This creates an ongoing imbalance that directly impacts students' learning environments.

HB1430 offers a practical step toward addressing that inequity. A funding level of \$800 per student is a reasonable starting point that provides predictable support while remaining fiscally responsible. Just as importantly, it positions Maryland to access the federal State Charter School Facilities Incentive Grant (SFIG), unlocking up to \$50 million over five years—resources that would otherwise go to other states.

The proposed exclusion of charter schools in certain districts undermines both the intent and effectiveness of this legislation. Further, a statewide, uniform approach is required to access federal funding, and excluding any group of students risks disqualifying Maryland entirely from SFIG support.

This is a clear opportunity for Maryland to advance fairness across public education while leveraging federal investment. **I respectfully urge you to support HB1430 with an \$800 per pupil funding level and without the exclusion amendment.**

Thank you for your consideration, and for your commitment to ensuring that Maryland students are equipped to achieve their unlimited potential.

Sincerely,



Eryn Lessard

*Managing Director of Development & External Affairs, KIPP Baltimore (Maryland District 41)
Resident, Maryland District 41*

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Public_Letter_HB1430(Obenski).pdf

Uploaded by: Gary Obenski

Position: FWA

Dear Sen. Bailey,

My name is Gary Obenski. I have been a Maryland resident for 46 years and a proud Chesapeake Public Charter School parent for 5. I am writing to urge your **strong** support for HB1430.

Specifically, I am asking you to:

- Maintain the \$800 per-pupil facilities funding level
- Remove the amendment excluding charter schools in districts that have closed 50 or more schools
- Ensure Maryland can access up to \$50 million in federal School Facilities Incentive Grant (SFIG) funding

As a parent of three (3) children and a husband to a teacher at Chesapeake Public Charter School, I see the everyday attention to education and love for community this school brings to St. Mary's County. The school staff and board are miracle workers, stretching every dollar to give our children the best possible education. However, the strain is real. A huge chunk of our school's budget—money that should be going to our kids—is consumed by building costs. It's a burden that other public schools in our county just don't have to carry in the same way. It means less money for the very things that make a school great: innovative programs, extra help for students who need it, and the kind of enriching experiences that stick with a child for a lifetime.

That's why I'm so excited about HB1430. This bill is a game-changer!

By providing dedicated funding for facilities, HB1430 would finally free up our school's budget to invest directly in our children. New science programs, more arts and music, and the kind of support that ensures every single child can succeed – that's what this bill brings to the table. For my children, and for all our families, the impact of this bill would be immediate and profound.

But what truly inspires me is that this isn't just about our school. Our charter school is a place of innovation and exploration. We have the freedom to try new things, see what works, and share those successes with the entire school system. When you invest in us, you're investing in every student in St. Mary's County. We want to be a partner in making our county's schools the best they can be, and HB1430 gives us the solid ground we need to do that.

There's also a practical, financial side to this that we just can't ignore. This bill would make Maryland eligible for a federal grant that could bring up to \$10 million a year to our state for school facilities. But to get that money, we need a statewide program. The proposed \$800 per-pupil funding is the key that unlocks that federal match. To go any lower would be to leave money on the table—money our kids desperately need.

At an estimated cost of about \$20 million a year, which drops to just \$10 million with the federal match, this is one of the smartest investments Maryland can make in our children's future. And let me be clear: this is *new* money. It doesn't take a single dollar away from any other school construction project. That's why the proposed amendment to exclude some charter schools is deeply concerning.

It's fundamentally unfair to punish our children for district-level decisions they had nothing to do with. Beyond that, it would disqualify our state from receiving any of the federal matching funds. A partial program means we get nothing. That's a compromise that hurts everyone.

The 540 students at our charter school are public school students. They are *Maryland* students. They deserve the same support as any other child in our public school system. Studies have shown that charter schools are often in older buildings and that a huge portion of their budgets goes to just keeping the lights on. We are already paying our share; this bill simply ensures that more of that money goes where it belongs: to our students.

HB1430 is a common-sense, fiscally responsible bill that will bring federal dollars to Maryland and give schools like ours the resources we need to do even more for our kids. For my family, it means more opportunities and a brighter future. For St. Mary's County, it means a stronger partner in education, ready to help lift every student in our community.

I urge our lawmakers to pass this vital piece of legislation.

Very Respectfully Submitted,

Gary B. Obenski
24407 FWD DR
Hollywood, MD 20636

HB1430 Letter of Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Katherine Dibbern

Position: FWA

Dear Delegates,

I am writing to you today as a parent from Chesapeake Public Charter School in Great Mills, MD. I am writing in support of HB1430, as this bill has the potential to be a turning point for our school and other charter schools in Maryland.

I am asking you for the following:

1. Maintain the \$800 per pupil facilities funding level
2. Remove the amendment excluding charter schools in districts that have closed 50 or more schools
3. Ensure Maryland can access up to \$50 Million in federal School Facilities Incentive Grant (SFIG) funding

Right now, Chesapeake Public Charter School stretches every dollar we have to meet our goals, and a significant portion of our operating budget goes toward facility costs that other public schools in our county do not have to fund in the same way. In a very real sense, that means less funding for other educational programs, less for enrichment activities, and less for initiatives that make a real difference in our children's education.

HB1430 changes that by providing dedicated facilities funding. This bill would free up dollars the school can send directly to student programs, grow existing initiatives, expand support services, and create lasting impact. The effects would be immediate and real – increased educational opportunities for Maryland students.

But here's what's truly transformational about this bill: the opportunity doesn't stop at our school doors. As a charter school, we have the unique ability to serve as a model to pilot initiatives, measure what works, and bring those findings back to our broader community. What we build with this additional flexibility can inform and inspire what happens for all students in St. Mary's County. We see ourselves as partners in the larger mission of education in this county, and HB1430 gives us a stronger foundation from which to do that.

The federal State Charter School Facilities Incentive Grant (SFIG) provides up to \$10 million per year for up to five years but it requires a statewide, per-pupil facilities program. The \$800 per-pupil level is what unlocks that federal match. Anything lower leaves Maryland money on the table that we simply cannot afford to forfeit. As education budgets continue to shrink, the matching funds from the federal government become even more important. In St. Mary's County, we are funded 23rd out of 24 counties – this bill can help our school and our county bridge that gap.

At \$800 per pupil, the estimated annual cost to the state is approximately \$20 million. With SFIG matching funds, the effective state share drops to roughly \$10 million per year. This is a cost-effective investment the state can make in public education. HB1430 does not redirect or reduce any existing school construction funding. It creates a new appropriation and increases the IAC budget. Capital Improvement Program funding and all existing school construction dollars remain fully intact. This is new money filling a documented gap, not a reallocation!

The amendment that excludes charter schools in districts that have closed 50 or more schools must be removed. Beyond the fundamental inequity of penalizing our students and families for decisions made at the district level, decisions entirely outside of their control, this exclusion would disqualify Maryland from receiving any SFIG funding at all. The federal program requires a statewide, uniform program with no carve-outs. A partial program means \$0 in federal matching funds. That is not a compromise anyone can afford!

The 540 students at our charter school are public school students. They deserve the same baseline of support as any other child in a Maryland public school. An IAC study found that charter school facilities average 56 years in age, that schools spend up to \$2,400 per pupil on facilities costs, and that up to 40% of operating funds go toward buildings. We are already paying, but this bill would ensure that more of our operating budget can go where it truly belongs — to our students!

HB1430 is a fiscally responsible, equity-driven bill that brings federal dollars to Maryland and gives schools like ours the foundation we need to do more for the students both inside and outside of our building. For Chesapeake Public Charter School, it means more programs, more opportunities, and more impact. For St. Mary's County, it means a proven partner ready to share what works and help lift outcomes for every student in our community.

Thank you for your time, and for considering our students FIRST.

Respectfully,

Katherine L. Dibbern

AFC®, ChFC®, MQFP®, CFP® Candidate & CPCS Parent

240-446-2088

Written Testimony HB1430– Senate Budget & Taxation

Uploaded by: Kathy Lane

Position: FWA



Written Testimony – Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

HB1430 – Maryland Public Charter School Program – School Facilities – Funding Position: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

Dear Chair and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee,

I respectfully urge your support for HB1430 with two important amendments:

- (1) **increase the per-pupil facilities funding level to at least \$1,000**, and
- (2) **remove the provision excluding charter schools in districts that operate more than 50 charter schools.**

This bill addresses a long-standing structural inequity in Maryland's public education system. Public charter school students are public school students. Yet, unlike their peers in district-operated schools, charter schools must pay for rent, maintenance, utilities, and capital needs out of their operating budgets—diverting critical resources away from instruction and student supports.

1. **\$1,000 Per Pupil Is a More Accurate and Still Modest Investment**

While \$800 represents meaningful progress, it does not fully reflect the actual burden charter schools carry.

At **New Village Academy Public Charter School (NVA)**, facility costs alone represent approximately 20% of our total per-pupil expenditures—a substantial diversion of funds intended for teaching and learning.

Statewide data further underscores this reality:

- Charter schools can spend **up to \$2,400 per pupil on facilities**
- In some cases, **up to 40% of operating budgets** are consumed by facility costs

A **\$1,000 per pupil level**:

- More accurately reflects real-world costs
- Provides meaningful relief without overreach
- Remains fiscally responsible relative to total education spending

Even at this level, Maryland would still be providing only **partial support**, not full parity with district-funded facilities.

2. Federal Leverage Makes This Investment Highly Efficient

HB1430 enables Maryland to access the federal **State Charter School Facilities Incentive Grant (SFIG)**:

- Up to **\$10 million annually**
- Up to **\$50 million over five years**

Even at a \$1,000 per pupil level, the State benefits from significant federal cost-sharing, making this a high-leverage investment.

Critically:

- This funding does not divert existing IAC capital funds
- It establishes a new, dedicated appropriation
- It brings new federal dollars into Maryland

3. The District-Based Exclusion Undermines Both Equity and Federal Eligibility

The current amendment excludes charter schools located in districts that operate more than 50 charter schools.

This provision raises two major concerns:

Equity:

It treats public school students differently based on the structure of the district in which they reside—an outcome that is inconsistent with the principle that all public school students should be supported fairly.

Federal Compliance:

SFIG requires a statewide, uniform facilities funding program at the district level.

If Maryland:

- adopts a lower per-pupil funding level, or
- excludes certain districts from participation,

the State risks becoming ineligible for federal funding altogether.

That would mean forfeiting up to \$50 million in federal support, significantly increasing the net cost to Maryland taxpayers.

4. This Is a Targeted, Fiscally Responsible Policy Solution

HB1430 addresses a specific and well-documented gap:

- Charter schools receive no dedicated facilities funding

- They must fund buildings using operating dollars intended for students

Even at \$1,000 per pupil:

- The total statewide investment remains modest relative to overall education spending
- The cost is still less than a single large school construction project
- The return on investment is amplified through federal matching funds

HB1430 represents a thoughtful, fiscally responsible opportunity to:

- Advance equity for all public school students
- Reduce the diversion of classroom dollars to facilities
- Leverage significant federal funding
- Do so without impacting existing school construction funding

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a **favorable report** on HB1430 with the following amendments:

- **Increase funding to at least \$1,000 per pupil**
- **Remove the district-based exclusion to ensure statewide eligibility and maximize federal funding**

Thank you for your consideration and for your leadership on Maryland's fiscal priorities.

Sincerely,

Kathy Lane
Owner's Representative and Founding Consultant
New Village Academy Public Charter School
Anne Arundel County, Maryland

Medema Written Testimony MD HB1430.pdf

Uploaded by: Mark Medema

Position: FWA

WRITTEN TESTIMONY (CHARTER SCHOOL FINANCE PROFESSIONAL)

HB1430 – SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

Maryland Public Charter School Program – School Facilities – Funding

Dear Chair and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee,

I am writing as a national charter school financing professional to encourage your support for **HB1430**, with two important considerations: maintaining the funding level at \$800 per pupil and removing the amendment that excludes certain charter schools based on district-level school closures.

We have heard how public charter school students must use operating funds that should be used for teaching and learning to pay for facility costs. We need to keep more school dollars *in* the classroom, not pay *for* the classroom. The standard operating funds should be spent on teachers, not floors and ceilings.

The proposed \$800 per pupil funding level is reasonable and in-line with other states. And it can be partially paid for by the federal government. This funding formula would allow Maryland to apply for a federal funding program that is often overlooked. The federal **State Facilities Incentive Grant**, could provide matching funds around **\$10 million per year for five years**. Few states apply for this funding – states like California know how to access this money. There is no reason Maryland can't figure out how to access it, too.

You already know this funding allows charter schools to pay for their buildings. Here's the secret. That means any charter school that wants to lease space from a traditional school district, can now have funding to lease that space. The money ends up supporting the charter school – and ends up supporting the landlord who is leasing the charter school the space.

The money also can be used to pay to make renovations to a school building. We all know that school building renovations are an important topic. This is more money for school buildings.

To be eligible, it's important that the amendment excluding charter schools in districts that have closed 50 schools be removed. The federal funding requires a statewide, uniform facilities program. We don't want Maryland to risk losing their eligibility for up to \$50 million.

This is good policy – it leverages federal funds to help pay for school buildings and renovations. It allows more operating funds be used to pay teachers.

I encourage the Committee to support HB1430 with the \$800 per pupil funding level and to remove the exclusion amendment.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Mark Medema

Alexandria, VA

HB1430 – Maryland Public Charter School Program –

Uploaded by: McKenzie Allen

Position: FWA

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

HB1430_Testimony_Morgan_Horvath.pdf

Uploaded by: Morgan Horvath

Position: FWA

HB1430 – SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

Maryland Public Charter School Program – School Facilities – Funding

Dear Chair and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB1430, with two critical considerations: maintaining the funding level at \$800 per pupil and removing the amendment that excludes certain charter schools.

I am both a Maryland nonprofit leader in early childhood education and a parent of two children who attend Baltimore Montessori Public Charter School. Our school community is deeply important to our family. My children benefit every day from a Montessori approach that fosters independence, curiosity, and a genuine love of learning. Just as important, they are part of a diverse, supportive community where they feel known and valued.

However, like many charter schools, our school faces ongoing challenges related to facilities funding. Updated, safe, and functional facilities are not a luxury. They are a basic foundation for effective teaching and learning. When buildings are outdated or under-resourced, it directly impacts students' daily experiences and opportunities.

Currently, charter schools must use a portion of their per pupil funding to cover facilities costs. This means fewer resources are available for teachers, classroom materials, and student supports. In contrast, other public school students benefit from dedicated facilities funding. This creates an inequitable system where charter school students do not receive the same level of financial investment.

HB1430 helps correct this imbalance. The proposed \$800 per pupil funding level is a thoughtful and fiscally responsible approach. It would also allow Maryland to access up to \$50 million in federal funding through the State Charter School Facilities Incentive Grant, ensuring the State maximizes available resources rather than leaving federal dollars on the table.

Importantly, this bill does not take funding away from existing school construction programs. It creates new funding to address a longstanding gap.

It is also essential that the exclusion amendment be removed. Excluding certain charter schools based on district-level decisions creates inequity among public school students and jeopardizes Maryland's eligibility for federal funding, which requires a statewide, uniform approach.

At its core, this bill is about fairness. Charter school students are public school students. They deserve learning environments that are safe, functional, and fully supported, without sacrificing classroom resources to pay for buildings.

I respectfully urge the Committee to support HB1430 with the full \$800 per pupil funding level and to remove the exclusion amendment so that all public school students in Maryland are treated equitably.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Morgan D. Horvath". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M" and "H".

Morgan D. Horvath, M.Ed.
Baltimore City Resident & Charter School Parent

HB1430.pdf

Uploaded by: Myriam Frederick

Position: FWA

HB1430 – SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

Maryland Public Charter School Program – School Facilities – Funding

Dear Chair and Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee,

I am writing to you as a concerned mother and community member in Maryland to earnestly advocate for your support of HB1430, emphasizing two critical considerations: sustaining the per-pupil funding level at \$800 and eliminating the amendment that unjustly excludes certain charter schools based on district-level school closures.

It is essential to recognize that public charter school students are, in fact, public school students. However, unlike their counterparts in district-operated schools, charter schools frequently face the burden of covering expenses associated with rent, maintenance, utilities, and facility costs - expenses that are typically funded through classroom budgets. This disparity creates a significant and persistent inequity in educational funding.

The proposed \$800 per-pupil funding level is not only equitable but also fiscally prudent. Based on current enrollment figures, this would translate to an estimated annual cost of around \$20 million. Importantly, the successful passage of this bill would enable Maryland to tap into the federal State Charter School Facilities Incentive Grant (SFIG), which can provide up to \$10 million per year for five consecutive years. With this federal match, the effective annual cost for the state would decrease to approximately \$10 million.

To put this funding into perspective, this amount is markedly less than the expense associated with a single new school construction project funded by the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC), which often exceeds \$40 million. Moreover, this bill does not divert or diminish existing school construction funding. Instead, it establishes a new, dedicated appropriation and enhances the IAC budget to facilitate the program's administration.

Additionally, it is paramount to remove the amendment that excludes charter schools in districts that have closed 50 or more schools. This provision fosters inequity among public school students and undermines the overarching mission of a statewide program. More critically, the SFIG funding necessitates a uniform facilities program across the state. Exclusion of any group of charter schools jeopardizes Maryland's eligibility for these federal funds, which could lead to a potential loss of up to \$50 million over the next five years.

Ultimately, this bill represents a sensible, balanced approach. It offers modest, reliable support to public charter schools, ensures that more funding is directed to classrooms, and positions Maryland to leverage substantial federal resources that could otherwise benefit other states.

I respectfully urge the Committee to support HB1430, maintaining the \$800 per-pupil funding level, and to remove the exclusion amendment to guarantee equitable treatment for all public school students while allowing Maryland to fully access available federal funding.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Myriam Frederick, LMSW

Upper Marlboro, Prince George's County

To Whom It May Concern.pdf

Uploaded by: Nancy Norris

Position: FWA

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to you today as a parent from Chesapeake Public Charter School in Great Mills, MD. I have to tell you that I am genuinely excited about HB1430! This bill has the potential to be a turning point for all charter school students.

I am asking you to:

- Maintain the \$800 per-pupil facilities funding level
- Remove the amendment excluding charter schools in districts that have closed 50 or more schools
- Ensure Maryland can access up to \$50 million in federal School Facilities Incentive Grant (SFIG) funding

Right now, Chesapeake Public Charter School stretches every dollar we have to meet our goals. A *significant* portion of our operating budget goes directly toward facilities costs that public schools in our county simply do not have to bear in the same way. That means less for programs. Less for enrichment. Less for the initiatives that make a real, meaningful difference in a child's education and life.

HB1430 changes that. By providing dedicated facilities funding, this bill frees up dollars that we can then redirect directly to our students to launch new programs, grow existing initiatives, expand support services, and create opportunities that have real and lasting impacts on our students' education. The impact on what we can offer our families would be immediate and real.

Here is what truly excites me: the opportunity doesn't stop at our school doors. As a charter school, we have the unique ability to serve as a model to pilot initiatives, measure what works, and bring those findings back to our broader community. What we build with this additional flexibility can inform and inspire what happens for all students in St. Mary's County. We see ourselves as partners in the larger mission of education in this county, and HB1430 gives us a stronger foundation from which to do that.

The federal State Charter School Facilities Incentive Grant (SFIG) provides up to \$10 million per year for up to five years but it requires a statewide, per-pupil facilities program. The \$800 per-pupil level is what unlocks that federal match. Anything lower leaves Maryland money on the table that we simply cannot afford to forfeit.

At \$800 per pupil, the estimated annual cost to the state is approximately \$20 million. With SFIG matching funds, the effective state share drops to roughly \$10 million per year. This is a cost-effective investment the state can make in public education. HB1430 does not redirect or reduce any existing school construction funding. It creates a new appropriation and increases the IAC budget. Capital Improvement Program funding and all existing school construction dollars remain fully intact. This is new money filling a documented gap, not a reallocation!

The amendment that excludes charter schools in districts that have closed 50 or more schools must be removed.

Beyond the fundamental inequity of penalizing our students and families for decisions made at the district level, decisions entirely outside of their control, this exclusion would disqualify Maryland from receiving any SFIG funding at all. The federal program requires a statewide, uniform program with no carve-outs. A partial program means \$0 in federal matching funds. That is not a compromise anyone can afford!

The 540 students at our charter school are public school students. They deserve the same baseline of support as any other child in a Maryland public school. An IAC study found that charter school facilities average 56 years in age, that schools spend up to \$2,400 per pupil on facilities costs, and that up to 40% of operating funds go toward buildings. We are already paying, but this bill would ensure that more of our operating budget can go where it truly belongs — to our students!

HB1430 is a fiscally responsible, equity-driven bill that brings federal dollars to Maryland and gives schools like ours the foundation we need to do more for the students both inside and outside of our building. For Chesapeake Public Charter School, it means more programs, more opportunities, and more impact. For St. Mary's County, it means a proven partner ready to share what works and help lift outcomes for every student in our community.

Respectfully,

Nancy Norris

HB1430-BT_MACo_SWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Sarah Sample

Position: FWA



House Bill 1430

Maryland Public Charter School Program - School Facilities - Funding

MACo Position: **SUPPORT WITH
AMENDMENTS**

To: Budget and Taxation Committee

Date: April 1, 2026

From: Sarah Sample

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 1430 **WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill, starting in fiscal year 2028, requires the Governor to include funds in the annual budget for the maintenance and operations of public charter schools. Additionally, it mandates those funds to be distributed directly to the charter school rather than through the local government or school system.

Counties and school systems well know that the costs of maintaining safe, modern schools have risen sharply as materials, labor, and inflation drive project budgets higher. The level of need in public charter schools is comparable to traditional schools and deserving of resources so that every child can learn in an educationally sufficient environment. But, while project demand is similar, they often function in a very different manner than traditional schools. The provisions of HB 1430 recognize this by creating a separate category of funds for addressing those needs swiftly and with maximum autonomy for those schools. Additionally, it streamlines the process and minimizes the workload for county governments and school systems to pass funds through to these programs.

Though counties do not object to this structure, MACo would, however, suggest one important amendment to clarify the independence this bill seeks to provide for public charter schools. When operating freely, and without school systems or county government oversight for projects, no other primary entity, other than the particular public charter school, would have knowledge of the scope, quality, and long-term financial impacts of any updates, new contracts, or ongoing maintenance undertaken. As such, an amendment to HB 1430 should clarify that school systems and county governments may not be held responsible for any debt service, as well as initial or recurring payments for public charter school contracts, that have been funded through the mechanism established by HB 1430.

This simple change clarifies the autonomy and obligations of the local public charter school while not overburdening school systems and county governments, who likely will have no working knowledge of the debts and ongoing expenses being undertaken through this new funding mechanism. Accordingly, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report for HB 1430.

HB 1430_SB 960_ Maryland Public Charter School Pr

Uploaded by: Trudy Tibbals

Position: FWA

HB 1430/SB 960: Maryland Public Charter School Program - School Facilities - Funding: Please **SUPPORT** this bill **WITH AMENDMENTS**.

Dear Budget & Taxation Committee:

I am writing as a resident of Maryland to express strong support for **HB 1430/SB 960**. Providing dedicated, stable funding for public charter school facilities is an important step toward *ensuring all Maryland students have access to safe and adequate learning environments*, regardless of whether they attend a traditional public school or a charter school.

I urge you to support this bill **with a critical amendment** to reinstate the original funding level exactly as follows:

"an appropriation for the maintenance and operation of public charter school facilities that is equal to the total aggregate student enrollment in the Maryland Public Charter School Program for the prior fiscal year multiplied by \$1,600."

The reduced amount that appears **in the current version of HB 1430 is insufficient** to meaningfully address the serious facilities challenges faced by charter schools. The original per-pupil formula of "equal to the total aggregate student enrollment in the Maryland Public Charter School Program for the prior fiscal year multiplied by \$1,600" provides a more realistic level of support that better enables charter schools to maintain safe buildings, cover lease or mortgage payments, and *create appropriate learning spaces without diverting essential operating dollars away from classroom instruction*.

Restoring the per-pupil formula of "equal to the total aggregate student enrollment in the Maryland Public Charter School Program for the prior fiscal year multiplied by \$1,600" ensures the bill delivers real impact for students and families who choose public charter schools while maintaining fairness and accountability in how the funds are used.

I respectfully ask you to **vote in favor of HB 1430/SB 960 with the amendment restoring the full per-pupil funding formula "equal to the total aggregate student enrollment in the Maryland Public Charter School Program for the prior fiscal year multiplied by \$1,600"**. This change will make the legislation far more effective at supporting high-quality educational options across Maryland.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of my amendment request to this important education legislation.

Respectfully,

Trudy Tibbals

HB1430 - UNF - City Schools .pdf

Uploaded by: Alison Perkins-Cohen

Position: UNF

UNFAVORABLE – House Bill 1430
Maryland Public Charter School Program – School Facilities – Funding

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
April 1, 2026

Alison Perkins-Cohen
Chief of Staff

Good afternoon, Chair Guzzone, and members of the committee. I am Alison Perkins-Cohen, Chief of Staff for Baltimore City Public Schools, here today in opposition to House Bill 1430.

In addition to serving for the past ten years as Chief of Staff for City Schools, I previously served as the Executive Director of Baltimore City's largest charter operator. I share this to say I have sat in many seats on all sides of this issue and have always taken seriously the responsibility to ensure fair and equitable funding amongst charter and traditional schools alike.

With charter students making up 20% of our City Schools population, we have more charters in Baltimore City than all the other jurisdictions in Maryland combined. We value our charters, are committed to them, and stand ready to serve as a model on how to ensure they flourish.

Unfortunately, the bill before you today seeks to move Maryland away from the core tenets of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future which provides per pupil funding based on student need, and away from the original charter statute's commitment to commensurate funding. HB1430 would establish a per pupil funding allocation – **for charter students only** – to support the maintenance and operations of school facilities despite the fact that no other students in the State receive a per pupil allocation for such costs, nor are there any requirements for review or approval of projects paid for via these funds as required for all LEAs for any funding provided by the IAC.

Despite what may be implied in today's testimony from the bill's proponents, no such allocation currently exists for traditional school students nor is it the case that they don't have such costs. In all our schools, support for maintenance and operations must be pulled from already limited foundation funds. In fact, in Baltimore, the costs of facilities maintenance and operation is already addressed via our funding formula whereby traditional schools receive a per pupil allocation considerably lower than that received by charters in part because the cost of maintaining and operating their facilities is removed before they receive their per pupil while

charter schools already receive a higher per pupil to address this very cost. Facility costs are a challenging reality with which all schools struggle.

To suggest that only a select group of students is deserving of funding to support maintenance and operations of school facilities runs counter to the State's commitment to equity, the principles laid out in the Blueprint and our state's commitment to recognizing charter students as part of our public school ecosystem. If the legislature wishes to establish a new per pupil allocation in recognition of the rising costs of maintenance and operations of school facilities, this must be afforded to all students rather than carving out a select few.

While we appreciate the House's adoption of an amendment that recognizes our unique position in Baltimore City both with our volume of charter schools and the mandate requiring us to close school buildings and make them available to charter schools, we remain opposed to the overarching purpose of the bill, which is to deem one student population as more deserving than another, while diverting critical funds away from prioritized projects that have long been in our queue with the IAC.

To that end, it is important to acknowledge the state's bleak outlook as it relates to school facility funding in general. In a briefing to the House Appropriations Committee earlier this session, the IAC's Executive Director shared alarming statistics on the state's growing school construction needs in contrast to the IAC's funding limitations. Specifically, the cost of construction has doubled in the last 13 years and tripled since 2003, while local state and capital budgets have not increased at anywhere near the same rates. This imbalance has forced school districts to defer needed maintenance and capital work, which only serves to drive down the average condition of school facilities.

In Baltimore City alone, our current maintenance and capital budget is approximately \$375M less than what is needed by industry standards. What's more, our current list of *unfunded* IAC projects totals nearly \$100M – a cost that would be higher had the IAC not requested that LEAs not send so many projects given they were not going to be funded. These are projects we've deemed most pressing across the district – and charter schools are amongst them. Indeed, roughly half of charter schools in Baltimore chose to locate in district buildings and, accordingly, are part of our annual prioritization process. In fact, the only charters who are not part of our district's prioritization process are those who decided not to locate in one of our buildings when offered, often deeming them subpar, and instead opting to pursue private facilities, which come with significant costs that they chose to take on and knew would not be part of City Schools' CIP prioritization process.

Given the tremendous funding gaps that already exist, it is unthinkable to imagine that a select group of students would now divert funds away from students who have waited, often for years,

in a queue of prioritized projects that are awaiting funding. We encourage the committee to preserve our precious but limited existing funds and respectfully urge an unfavorable report of HB1430.

BTU Testimony HB1430 2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Cristina E Duncan Evans

Position: UNF



AFT 340 AFL-CIO
Seton Business Park
5800 Metro Drive, 2nd Floor
Baltimore, MD 21215-3209

**House Bill 1430 – Maryland Public Charter School Program - School Facilities - Funding
Budget and Tax Committee
April 1, 2026, 1:00pm**

UNFAVORABLE

On behalf of the Baltimore Teachers Union, I respectfully urge you to issue an unfavorable report on House Bill 1430, which would allocate \$200 per pupil to charter schools for facilities costs.

We want to be clear at the outset: we strongly support every public school student’s right to learn in a safe, healthy, and well-maintained environment. This includes students in traditional public schools and public charter schools alike. Across our state, the need for investment in school facilities is significant and urgent. Many districts are struggling with aging buildings, deferred maintenance, overcrowding, and health and safety upgrades that cannot wait.

However, this bill does not address those needs in a fair or equitable way.

First, the capital needs of our traditional public schools are immense and well-documented. Districts must maintain and upgrade facilities that serve the vast majority of students, often with limited local tax capacity and long backlogs of critical repairs. These needs are typically addressed through established public processes that prioritize projects based on urgency, safety, and community impact.

Second, this proposal creates an inherent inequity by allowing charter schools to effectively “skip the line” for facilities funding. While districts must wait their turn and compete for scarce capital dollars, this bill would provide a dedicated, per-pupil funding stream to charter schools outside of those established prioritization systems. This undermines the principle that public funds for facilities should be allocated based on need, not school type.

Third, diverting additional funds in this manner risks exacerbating existing disparities. Every dollar directed through a separate funding stream is a dollar not available to address the most critical infrastructure needs across the broader public school system. At a time when many students are learning in buildings that require urgent repairs or modernization, we should be strengthening equitable, need-based capital funding—not creating parallel systems that advantage some schools over others.

We urge the Committee to focus on comprehensive, equitable solutions that ensure all public school students—regardless of where they are enrolled—have access to safe and healthy learning

environments. This means investing in facility funding systems that are transparent, needs-based, and fair to all.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge an unfavorable report on House Bill 1430.

Thank you for your consideration.

4.1 - HB1430-B&T_Public Charter School Prg - Schoo

Uploaded by: Gail Sunderman

Position: UNF



TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE BUDGET & TAX COMMITTEE

HB1430 - Maryland Public Charter School Program - School Facilities - Funding

Position: Unfavorable

By: Linda T. Kohn, President

Date: April 1, 2026

The League of Women Voters of Maryland (LWVMD) is a non-partisan organization that supports policies that provide an equitable, quality public education for all children from pre-K through grade 12. *HB1430 - Maryland Public Charter School Program - School Facilities - Funding* provides an annual per-pupil appropriation for the maintenance and operation of public charter school facilities distributed by the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC) directly to the public charter school. The bill does not clearly identify whether the funds can be used to support capital projects or just to subsidize annual operating budgets. **LWVMD opposes HB1430** as amended because this lack of intent may lead to funding and cost burden inequities between non-charter public schools and public charter schools and inefficiencies in the allocation of capital funds.

Operating or Capital Funding? HB1430 lacks a sufficient description of the intended use or outcome of the funding. Although HB1430 states that the funding is for the maintenance and operation of public charter schools, it does not clarify whether the funds are intended for capital projects to build long term stability or just to subsidize annual operating expenses for public charter schools. The intent is important as the IAC develops and approves implementation policies, procedures, and regulations that ensure equity between public charter schools and public schools.

Operating Funding Issue: Public Charter Schools are funded through the local jurisdictions with a per-pupil allocation to support annual operating costs. The charter school per pupil allocation, calculated by the local education agency, includes an annual operating and maintenance appropriation.¹ To provide funding from the IAC would be an additional annual operating maintenance and operation allocation given to public charter schools that is not provided to non-charter public schools, creating inequity between public charter schools and public schools.

¹ Maryland State Department of Education (n.d.). *Steps to calculate per-pupil allocations for charter schools*. [Steps to Calculate Per Pupil Allocations for Charter Schools](#)

Capital Funding Issue: There is no provision in the Maryland charter school statute to provide annual facility capital funding for charter schools. Charter schools are expected to procure their own facilities and pay for maintenance and operations.² **HB1430 proposes that the annual budget bill include an appropriation equal to the total aggregate student enrollment in the Maryland Public Charter School Program** for the prior year multiplied by \$200 as amended by the House Appropriations Committee. IAC funding awards generally include regulations for the selection of capital projects and are allocated based on project costs and district needs, not a per-pupil allocation. Moreover, public schools do not receive an annual operating and maintenance allocation based on enrollment from the IAC.

The legislation creates cost burden inequities because it does not include requirements that investments between the public charter schools and public schools are equitable. Capital projects for non-charter public schools are invested in publicly owned properties ensuring a return on invested tax dollars. Charter public school buildings are not always publicly owned so a return on public investment is not guaranteed. Although the proposed funding could potentially unlock federal support, the federal funding is competitive and limited. In fiscal year 2025, three states were granted awards and since 2009, nine awards have been granted.³

The House amendments to exclude certain school systems from the provisions of this bill and reduce the per pupil amount are an admission of the inequities and costs this bill will impose on districts. ***This bill, if passed even as amended, would benefit about 18 public charter schools, thus creating a significant inequity for 1,300 or more public schools.***⁴

Providing for charter school facilities and operation expenses presents a series of complex policy considerations that include how to achieve both equity and efficiency in a mixed governance educational system. This bill does not address either of these, and instead provides an allocation not given to public schools and circumvents current processes and procedures in place for allocating capital funds.

LWVMD urges an **unfavorable** report on HB1430.

² Levin, J. et al. (December 2016). *Study of funding provided to public schools and public charter schools in Maryland*. Washington, DC: American Institutes of Research.
[StudyofFundingProvidedtoPublicSchoolsandPublicCharterSchoolsmd122016.pdf](https://www.aier.org/publications/StudyofFundingProvidedtoPublicSchoolsandPublicCharterSchoolsinMaryland.pdf)

³ U.S. Department of Education (n.d.). *State charter school facilities incentive grants*. [State Charter School Facilities Incentive Grants | U.S. Department of Education](https://www.ed.gov/state-charter-school-facilities-incentive-grants)

⁴ Maryland State Department of Education (December 2023). *Maryland's public charter schools:2023 Legislative Report*. <https://marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Documents/Charter-Schools/ReportsData/MDCharterSchools2023.pdf>

HB1430 OPPOSE Xfile.pdf

Uploaded by: Grace Wilson

Position: UNF



HB1430 – MARYLAND PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL PROGRAM – SCHOOL FACILITIES – FUNDING

April 1, 2026

BUDGET AND TAXATION

OPPOSE

Grace Wilson, Director of Legislation & Policy (410.440.1758)

Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) opposes **HB1430 – Maryland Public Charter School Program – School Facilities - Funding**. This bill requires the Interagency Commission on School Construction to distribute funds to a public charter school for the maintenance and operation of public charter facilities. Such funds are required to be disbursed directly to the public charter school and may not be paid to a local governing body or the county board. For fiscal year 2028 and each year thereafter, the Governor is required to include an appropriation that is equal to the total aggregate student enrollment in the Maryland Public Charter School program for the prior fiscal year multiplied by \$200.

AACPS opposes attempts to allow charter school operators to participate in Maryland's Capital Improvement Plan, especially given the many unmet capital needs of public school systems.

In 2018, the Maryland General Assembly passed the 21st Century School Facilities Act, which made comprehensive changes to school construction funding and approval processes, including altering the role of the Interagency Commission on School Construction and establishing an annual goal to allocate at least \$400 million for public school construction and renovations projects to build, renovate, and improve public schools so as to provide high quality learning environments for students.

However, the increased State funding for public school facilities established by the 21st Century School Facilities Act has not kept pace with the capital needs of public schools, including the rising cost of construction. In fact, a September 2025 report from the Comptroller of Maryland revealed, "...a critical area of public education where the state has fallen behind is the physical condition of school buildings, despite increased state and county investment in recent years." This report found that just 20 percent of the State's school buildings are in satisfactory shape or better, while the other 80% would need repair, renovation or replacement to get to that level. The report concluded, "[f]or Maryland to maintain its position as a top-rated state for public school education and for the state to retain and attract middle class families that value affordability and quality public schools, the state and [local education agencies] must improve the physical conditions of schools. While increased capital improvements can be addressed through cost cutting measures, the ultimate solution will rely on statewide reimagining of funding formulas and revenue streams." AACPS unmet needs currently total \$95 million.

Allowing charter schools to participate in Maryland's Capital Improvement program is counterintuitive at a time when there is great need to identify increased capital funding to ensure public schools can provide students with high performing school facilities conducive to learning.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on HB1430.

HB 1430 - Oppose - Charter School Facility Funding

Uploaded by: Jessica Goff

Position: UNF



621 Ridgely Avenue, Suite 300, Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-5414 · 800-841-8197 · Fax: 410-841-6580 · MABE.org

BILL: House Bill 1430
TITLE: Maryland Public Charter School Program – School Facilities – Funding
HEARING DATE: April 1, 2026
POSITION: UNFAVORABLE
COMMITTEE: Budget and Taxation
CONTACT: Jessica Goff, Governmental Affairs Associate (jgoff@mabe.org)

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all the state’s local boards of education, **respectfully opposes House Bill 1430 – Maryland Public charter School Program – School Facilities – Funding.**

House Bill 1430 would require the Governor, beginning in fiscal year 2028, to include in the annual budget an appropriation for public charter school facility maintenance and operations equal to \$200 for each student enrolled in a charter school the year prior. The bill directs the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC) to distribute these funds directly to charter schools.

MABE supports efforts to ensure that all Maryland students learn in safe, modern, and well-maintained facilities. However, House Bill 1430 would establish a separate, per-pupil funding stream for charter school facilities outside of Maryland’s school construction funding framework. At a time when the State cannot even meet the facilities needs of traditional public schools, MABE cannot support legislation like HB 1430 that prioritizes charter facilities at the expense of traditional public schools. Per the IAC, local county boards have requested \$ 754,360,056 for school construction-related projects in FY 2027. However, the IAC is only able to fund \$ 362,755,007. This leaves **\$391,605,049 in unfunded, yet necessary, traditional public school construction projects for FY 2027.**

Maryland’s school construction program allocates capital funds based on demonstrated facility need rather than enrollment. Under current law, the Interagency Commission on School Construction administers State school construction allocations through an independent evaluation process in which local school systems submit capital improvement priorities and projects are assessed based on factors such as facility condition, age, capacity, and utilization. See Md. Code Ann., Educ. Art. § 5-302(c) (providing that the purpose of the IAC is to be “independent and merit-based” in its allocations). This framework allows limited capital resources to be directed to the highest facility priorities across hundreds of public school buildings. **House Bill 1430 would depart from this need-based system** by establishing a facilities funding allocation tied solely to student enrollment, creating a separate funding stream for charter school facilities that risks introducing inequity among public school facilities competing for limited State resources.

Charter schools are public schools operating under the authority of their local education agencies, and many operate in facilities owned and maintained by local boards of education. When charter schools are in school system-owned buildings, those facilities are already included in the local school system's Capital Improvement Program and are prioritized alongside other public school facilities. Creating a separate per-pupil facilities allocation for charter schools would provide additional funding for buildings that are already maintained through the existing capital planning process.

For charter schools operating in facilities not owned by a local school system, there are already mechanisms available to address facility needs. Charter operators can pursue independent financing arrangements or partnerships to support capital projects. In addition, the IAC adopted a policy in 2023 allowing State school construction funds to support capital improvements in leased public charter school facilities not owned by local school systems, provided the charter school has a long-term lease and a written guarantee from its school system authorizer.

Further, charter schools are also eligible for federal programs specifically designed to support charter school facility financing. The federal **Credit Enhancement for Charter School Facilities** program provides competitive grants (not available for traditional public schools) to help charter schools obtain facilities and to leverage financing for construction and renovation projects. See 20 U.S.C. § 7223. This grant is specifically intended to address facility financing challenges unique to charter schools, including costs associated with mortgages, leasing, and major improvements. **Importantly, the Credit Enhancement program does not require any amendments to State law for Maryland charter schools to be eligible.**

As school systems across Maryland face substantial unmet capital needs and rising construction costs, establishing a separate statewide funding stream for charter school facility maintenance would divert scarce resources from the broader pool of public school facilities competing for support while advantaging charter school facilities over district-run counterparts.

For these reasons, MABE opposes House Bill 1430 respectfully requests an unfavorable report.

HB 1430 xover - Charter School - School Facilities

Uploaded by: Mary Pat Fannon

Position: UNF



Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director
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BILL: HB 1430
TITLE: Maryland Public Charter School Program - School Facilities - Funding
DATE: April 1, 2026
POSITION: Unfavorable
COMMITTEE: Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four public school superintendents, **opposes** House Bill 1430.

This bill directs the Governor, for fiscal year 2028 and each fiscal year thereafter, to include in the annual budget bill an appropriation (to be distributed by the Interagency on School Construction [IAC]) for the maintenance and operation of public charter school facilities that is equal to the total aggregate student enrollment in the Maryland Public Charter School Program for the prior fiscal year multiplied by \$200.

PSSAM supports efforts to ensure all Maryland students learn in safe, modern, and well-maintained facilities; however, we oppose House Bill 1430 because it would establish a separate, per-pupil funding stream specifically for public charter school facilities outside of the State's existing school construction funding process.

This bill would depart from the State's school construction process (and underlying philosophy) that directs funding to schools based on need, toward a separate funding model that will create inequities among public school students. Under the current model, capital funds are granted through a rigorous evaluation process administered by the IAC. School systems and the Commission balance competing demands based on the age, condition, size, and use of every school building in a jurisdiction, ensuring that scarce dollars are targeted to the highest priorities. This proposal would bypass that longstanding process and its associated accountability safeguards.

Maryland's charter school law stipulates that charters are public schools under the auspices of their local education agency (LEA). It is important to recognize that charter schools already receive a higher per-pupil allocation because facilities costs are removed from traditional schools before allocation. Creating an additional, separate stream for facilities risks further distorting those allocations and exacerbating inequities between students.

This proposal represents the first instance of an education funding formula and mandated appropriation that is allocated based on category alone, rather than student need. This approach runs counter to the core principles of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, which are grounded in directing resources to students who need them most. To date, no evidence has been presented to demonstrate that students in charter schools are faring worse than their peers in traditional public schools in a way that would justify this departure from a need-based framework.

If additional funding is available - and we were not aware that it was - those resources should first be directed toward well-established areas of need, such as special education, or toward Blueprint priorities, such as collaborative time, that have already been identified as critical but deferred due to fiscal constraints.

Many charters are located in underutilized or closed public school buildings. Since these buildings are owned by the local government or the LEA, requests for improvements are evaluated through the LEA's Capital Improvement Process (CIP) and prioritized alongside all other system needs. For those charters that have chosen to operate in non-publicly owned facilities, these decisions were made with an understanding of the associated costs and financing structures available to them.

There are other opportunities for charters to access State capital funding. For charters that are using non-government owned buildings, the law allows for these schools and their operators to use creative financing to complete capital projects, or work with other organizations to address their facility needs. Additionally, beginning in 2023, the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC) adopted a policy allowing state bond proceeds to fund capital improvements for leased public charter school buildings not owned by local school systems.

There are well documented insufficient State funds for existing capital needs. Maryland's funding for school construction has remained largely stagnant in recent years and does not include an inflationary adjustment. At the same time, every local school system faces significant unmet capital needs while construction costs continue to rise rapidly. As a result, projects are becoming more expensive and, in some cases, must be scaled back or delayed because available funding cannot meet the original scope.

The State is already unable to fully fund projects that have been vetted, prioritized, and, in many cases, waiting for years in the IAC pipeline. Creating a new funding stream for a subset of schools risks diverting limited resources away from these high-priority projects and disrupting an already strained queue.

Construction inflation has been particularly severe. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics *Producer Price Index* for New School Building Construction, costs rose from 157.5 in January 2018 to 224.7 in January 2024—**an increase of 42.7% in just six years.** The increase over a longer time horizon is even more striking. **In 2003, the State cost per square foot for school construction was \$139; in 2026, it is \$431.** Without adjustments to state funding levels, these rising costs continue to erode the ability of school systems to build and modernize facilities.

Maryland’s school infrastructure also faces a substantial backlog of aging and unreliable facilities. According to the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC):

- 46% (627 facilities) are considered unreliable and in need of major repair, and
- 34% (463 facilities) are rated as “OK” but occasionally unreliable.

Please see the chart below for the funding requested by each LEA in FY ‘27 in relation to the ultimate award. **For a list of school projects requested by each LEA, identifying projects awarded and those denied funding, please [visit this link](#).** It is also important to note that IAC asked districts to limit their requests in FY ‘27 due to the lack of expected funding. Therefore, both this chart and the accompanying document significantly understate the true needs in each LEA.

Local Education Agency	Current Year State	Total FY 2027 Awards
Allegany	\$ 7,220,575	\$ 2,831,319
Anne Arundel	\$ 76,304,989	\$ 27,658,733
Baltimore City	\$ 83,267,000	\$ 25,752,036
Baltimore County	\$ 50,193,255	\$ 36,815,384
Calvert	\$ 4,992,187	\$ 4,196,862
Caroline	\$ 5,389,000	\$ 2,750,000
Carroll	\$ 17,637,929	\$ 17,441,162
Cecil	\$ 27,491,002	\$ 6,000,000
Charles	\$ 27,429,000	\$ 16,428,569
Dorchester	\$ 10,000,000	\$ 2,750,000
Frederick	\$ 50,466,275	\$ 28,292,641
Garrett	\$ 7,093,638	\$ 4,953,745
Harford	\$ 26,328,040	\$ 13,656,520
Howard	\$ 27,925,597	\$ 18,070,320
Kent	\$ 16,818,000	\$ 2,750,000
Maryland School for the Blind	\$ 30,750,740	\$ 12,000,000
Montgomery	\$ 47,380,337	\$ 40,910,538
Prince George's	\$ 64,435,132	\$ 47,089,412
Queen Anne's	\$ 7,373,472	\$ 2,750,000
Somerset	\$ 29,658,517	\$ 2,750,000
St. Mary's	\$ 22,752,391	\$ 5,089,106
Talbot	\$ 2,340,000	\$ 2,340,000
Washington	\$ 20,873,550	\$ 12,519,766
Wicomico	\$ 84,689,931	\$ 14,684,021
Worcester	\$ 5,549,499	\$ 4,824,948
Statewide Reserve	\$ -	\$ 7,449,925
Grand	\$ 754,360,056	\$ 362,755,007
Total State Funding is a combination of the anticipated FY '27 appropriation reserve funds, and other sources		

Proponents of the bill have pointed to the *federal State Charter School Facilities Incentive Grants (SFIG) program* as a justification for establishing this per-pupil funding structure in Maryland. While it is true that this structure is required to access SFIG funds, it is important to fully understand what participation in the program entails. *The federal funding is temporary and over time, the state funding must supplant federal funding.* Within five years, there is not a single federal dollar invested in this program.

At a time when Maryland faces serious structural budget pressures, it is fiscally irresponsible to create a new and expanding State obligation - particularly one not driven by student need - that will displace longstanding, evidence-based priorities that have yet to be funded.

For these reasons, PSSAM **opposes** House Bill 1430 and respectfully requests an **unfavorable** committee report.

HB1430X_MSEA_Johnson_UNF.pdf

Uploaded by: Sean Johnson

Position: UNF

UNFAVORABLE
House Bill 1430
Maryland Public Charter School Program - School Facilities – Funding

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
April 1, 2026

Sean Johnson
Executive Director

The Maryland State Education Association opposes House Bill 1430, which would require the Interagency Commission on School Construction to distribute per pupil funding, for charter school students only, to public charter schools for the maintenance and operation of charter school facilities.

MSEA represents 76,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools and community colleges, teaching and supporting our almost 900,000 K-12 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA represents more than 44 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

MSEA supports Maryland's public charter schools and the students and educators who learn and work in their facilities. Maryland has found the right balance in demanding accountability and supporting the ability to replicate success stories in our charter school laws. Recent regulations by the State Board of Education have tried to settle disputes related to "commensurate funding" for charters, and MSEA has been actively involved in those conversations to ensure equity, predictability, and support for traditional and charter schools alike.

Like many in the General Assembly, MSEA is incredibly proud of the collective work that has gone into strengthening Maryland's public schools over the years. The Blueprint for Maryland's Future did not emerge in isolation—it built on decades of policy decisions grounded in a simple but powerful principle: we invest more where students have greater needs. That commitment has long guided our approach to funding students living in poverty, students receiving special education services, and multilingual learners. The Blueprint reinforced those commitments and expanded them, most notably through concentration of poverty grants designed to address the real barriers students face outside the classroom.

That is why this bill is so troubling.



House Bill 1430 proposes what would effectively be the first new per pupil funding stream added to Maryland's education system since those major equity investments. But unlike those policies, this proposal is not driven by student need. It is driven by facility type. Even for those who believe charter schools require additional facility support—and we do not dismiss that concern—this bill asks the State to prioritize that need ahead of many others that remain unmet across our system.

As advocates for public education, we have been told nearly every day of this legislative session that the dollars to address hold-harmless counts for student enrollment drops, funds for deserving Nationally Board Certified teachers, revisions to how we fund special education, investments to address collaborative time, and so much more are not available today and must be paused to be addressed at a later time. Against that backdrop, the timing of this proposal is odd. At a time when members of this Committee are asking stakeholders to propose future relief to mandated Blueprint spending; to help identify a pressure-relief valve to out-year expenses, this proposal is introduced – and it creates a new, mandated operating funding stream that will grow over time and compete directly with the very priorities we are working to sustain. It is difficult to think of all of the unmet needs that the one that takes this priority and is determined to be this urgent is with charter school facilities.

Proponents of the bill have pointed to the federal State Charter School Facilities Incentive Grants (SFIG) program as a justification for establishing this per pupil structure in state law. While it is true that such per pupil funding is a requirement of the SFIG, it is important to be clear about what participation in that program entails. The federal funding is front-loaded, but it is not permanent. Over time, every federal dollar must be replaced with state funding. Within five years, the State assumes the full cost of the program.

In that context, securing a federal award may actually represent the worst-case scenario for out-year state budgeting, not the best. What begins as a relatively modest investment, particularly on this bill as passed in the House, quickly becomes a significant and ongoing obligation for the State—precisely at a time when we are already facing structural budget pressures.

There are also fundamental concerns about how this proposal fits within Maryland's broader school construction and maintenance framework. If this is a maintenance program, then school districts and charter schools alike are told that ongoing building maintenance expenses are calculated as part of the Foundation Program in the base school funding formula. Charter schools and traditional schools alike qualify for the same foundation amount. And as previously noted, at this very moment, the State Board of Education is in the



process of finalizing new regulations related to commensurate funding for charter schools, changes that are likely to increase operating allocations. Without fully understanding the fiscal impact of those changes, we should not be adding this per pupil amount on top of the growing share of formula dollars that charters will be receiving.

Finally, this bill raises practical concerns about the use of public dollars for facilities that may not be publicly owned. In cases where charter schools choose to operate in privately owned buildings, state investments could be used to improve assets that do not remain in public hands. If those schools close, there may be little to no long-term public return on that investment.

Charter schools are public schools, and they deserve thoughtful and equitable support. This bill, however, is not the right approach. It creates a new funding stream that is disconnected from student need, introduces long-term fiscal obligations, and competes with higher-priority investments at a time when resources are already constrained.

For all of these reasons, MSEA respectfully urges an unfavorable report on House Bill 1430.

MEC Statement - SB 960 - HB 1430.pdf

Uploaded by: Rick Tyler, Jr.-CoChair

Position: INFO



Maryland Education Coalition



Ellie Mitchell & Rick Tyler, Jr. – Co-Chairs

Web site - www.marylandeducationcoalition.org

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April 1, 2026

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 21st 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)

MEC Statement - SB 960 - HB 1430.pdf

Uploaded by: Rick Tyler, Jr.-CoChair

Position: INFO



Maryland Education Coalition



Ellie Mitchell & Rick Tyler, Jr. – Co-Chairs

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April 1, 2026

Senate Bill 960/House Bill 1430

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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.

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MEC Statement - SB 960 - HB 1430.pdf

Uploaded by: Rick Tyler, Jr.-CoChair

Position: INFO



Maryland Education Coalition



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April 1, 2026

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

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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 21st 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.

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Uploaded by: Rick Tyler, Jr.-CoChair

Position: INFO



Maryland Education Coalition



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April 1, 2026

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 21st 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)

HB 1430 - State Board & MSDE - LOI 4.1.26.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Stefan Redding-Lallinger

Position: INFO

TO: Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment

BILL: House Bill (HB) 26 – Public Schools - Open Enrollment - Policies and Funding

DATE: April 1, 2026

POSITION: Information

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) provides this Letter of Information regarding House Bill (HB) 1430 – *Maryland Public Charter School Program - School Facilities - Funding*, which establishes funding on a per pupil basis for Maryland’s public charter schools.

In the 2024-2025 school year, 50 public charter schools served 25,351 Maryland public school students in seven local education agencies (LEAs) within Maryland. There are 31 public charter schools in Baltimore City, one in Baltimore County, ten public charter schools in Prince George’s County, four in Frederick County, two in Anne Arundel County, one in St. Mary’s County, and one in Charles County. Charter schools are authorized by the LEA. Teachers and administrators are public school employees, represented by local bargaining units. The schools are open to all students in the jurisdiction in which the school is located.

Unique to Maryland, teachers and administrators in charter schools are public school employees represented by local bargaining units. Charter schools are open to all students in the jurisdiction where the school is located, but may have local priority groups and conduct lotteries when enrollment exceeds capacity at the Charter School. They participate in the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program and as such, are included in Maryland’s Accountability System.

Securing and maintaining facilities presents a significant challenge for public charter schools in Maryland. Education Article §9-109 establishes the principle that charter schools should receive funding commensurate with other public schools in the jurisdiction, but in practice the statute applies only to operating funds and does not extend to state or local capital funding used for school construction and major facility improvements. As a result, many charter schools must locate, lease or purchase, and renovate suitable facilities independently, redirecting operating dollars that would otherwise support instruction and student services to cover facility costs. In a 2022 study by the Maryland Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC), charter school operators reported facilities costs ranging from \$313 to \$3,522 per student.

HB 1430 as amended would provide a per pupil amount of \$200, only to charter schools that are located outside of Baltimore City.

MSDE respectfully requests that the following be considered.

- A state per pupil allocation should apply to all 25,351 public school students who attend public charter schools, and be provided to each public charter school.
- The establishment of a per pupil state allocation for expenses related to facilities would enable Maryland to be considered for a competitive federal fund grant program that could reduce the

cost to the State of providing facilities support to public charter schools. The total award depends on the amount appropriated by Congress, and the number, size, and quality of viable applications. This grant program is the *U.S. Department of Education Charter Schools Program – State Charter Schools facilities Incentive Grants*. MSDE is monitoring the Federal Register for the next announcement of funding availability. **However, if a per pupil state allocation is not available to all charter schools, Maryland would not be eligible to apply for these funds.**

- This legislation should specifically state that the per pupil funding amount may be utilized for costs related to operations, maintenance, and repairs; lease or mortgage payments; to build a capital reserve; and other costs related to the provision of a safe and secure learning environment.

MSDE respectfully requests consideration of these comments as **HB 1430** is discussed and deliberated. For further information, please contact Laurel Cratsley, Interim Executive Director of Government Affairs at laurel.cratsley@maryland.gov.