
TO: Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

BILL: House Bill (HB) 1430 – Maryland Public Charter School Program - School Facilities - 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.