

Adequate School Facility Funding

(Adopted 1999; amended 2001, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2011)

WHEREAS, the Maryland Constitution requires that the state provide a “thorough and efficient” system of public education, and providing a “thorough and efficient” system of public education requires adequate public school facilities; and

WHEREAS, all 24 school districts are in urgent need of adequate capital funding and annually request state and local funding to construct, renovate, and maintain school facilities; and

WHEREAS, adequately maintaining school facilities requires significant investments from both state and local governments; and

WHEREAS, needs and uses of public schools are dynamic, and local boards of education must be able to adequately address and finance the range of facility needs in capital projects; and

WHEREAS, current IAC regulations exclude state funding of specific costs related to facilities, such as land acquisition and architectural and engineering fees; and

WHEREAS, the Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act of 2002 mandates that all local school systems provide by 2007 universal full-day kindergarten and targeted pre-kindergarten programs for all economically disadvantaged four-year-olds; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force to Study Public School Facilities was created by the Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act of 2002; and

WHEREAS, the task force conducted a statewide facilities needs assessment and recommended revisions to the state school construction program which were included in the School Facilities Act of 2004; and

WHEREAS, the survey of school facility needs focused on 31 minimum standards deemed essential for complying with current federal and state facility requirements regarding fire safety, mechanical systems, instructional programs including full-day kindergarten, security, air conditioning and indoor air quality, and student capacity; and

WHEREAS, the survey found that statewide facility needs total \$3.85 billion, representing current failures to meet basic standards as well as the state's share of costs to construct schools to meet student capacity by 2007; and

WHEREAS, the school facilities act revised state and local cost share formulas, reduced the state rated capacity for grades 1 to 5 from 25 to 23 students per classroom, enhanced opportunities to use alternative financing methods to fund projects, and adopted the goal of providing \$3.85 billion by FY 2013; and

WHEREAS, school construction costs are escalating rapidly, resulting in project costs that dramatically exceed the task force's projected cost estimates and the anticipated state and local appropriations for pending projects; and

WHEREAS, in 2007 the General Assembly enacted the High Performance Buildings Act, which requires that all new school buildings be constructed to meet or exceed the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) criteria for a silver rating or satisfy a comparable numeric rating approved by the Board of Public Works; and

WHEREAS, the High Performance Buildings Act will result in increased school construction costs, and requires the state to fund 50% of the local share of such increased costs in fiscal 2010 through 2014;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that MABE urges a continued commitment by the Governor and General Assembly in future years to provide the state's share of the more than \$4 billion needed to address the school facility needs identified in the school facilities task force report; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that MABE supports legislation to exempt school construction from prevailing wage requirements, or to raise the state funding threshold from 50% to 75% to limit the application of prevailing wage rates to school construction projects, in order to reduce construction costs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that MABE shall make every reasonable lobbying effort supporting sufficient state and local funding for school construction and renovation projects and building maintenance to ensure quality school facilities for all Maryland students; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that MABE urges the Governor and the General Assembly to take steps to ensure that state funding for public school facilities is allocated equitably.