PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release:
April 19, 2016

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SENATE PRESIDENT AND HOUSE SPEAKER ANNOUNCE FIRST MEETING OF
21ST CENTURY SCHOOL FACILITIES COMMISSION

Interim work will focus on recommendations for innovative school construction techniques

Annapolis, MD – Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., and House Speaker Michael E. Busch announced today the first meeting and the membership of the 21st Century School Facilities Commission. Chaired by businessman Martin Knott, the membership reflects a broad array of stakeholders across the state, including private sector representatives from the construction services and development industry; local government and educational members; as well as State officials.

“It has been over a decade since we have taken a wholesale review of our school construction policies,” stated Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr. “We have a duty to our students, teachers, and taxpayers to ensure that we are using the most forward thinking and innovative approaches to school construction throughout our state.”

The first meeting of the Commission will be on April 28, 2016 in Annapolis, Maryland.

The last time the state undertook a comprehensive review of its school construction policies was in 2004. The Task Force to Study Public School Facilities, commonly referred to as the “Kopp Commission,” found that the total cost to bring schools up to the “minimum standards” was $3.85 billion dollars, including $2 billion in State funds. Since then, the General Assembly and several gubernatorial administrations have exceeded that goal, by investing almost $4 billion in State school construction across Maryland. However, the cost to construct an average elementary school has more than doubled since 2003.

“The children of this State are our future workforce and we must equip them with the best possible education to compete in a global economy,” said Speaker Busch. “Given the significant investment that the State makes in school buildings each year, we need to be sure that we are spending these dollars in the best possible way for our students.”

The Commission is charged with:

- Reviewing existing educational specifications for school construction projects and determining whether the existing specifications are appropriate for the needs of 21st century schools
- Identifying best practices from the construction industry to determine whether there are efficiencies that can be made in the construction of public schools and public charter schools
• Identifying a long-term plan for jurisdictions with growing enrollment, as well as maintaining facilities in jurisdictions with flat and declining enrollment
• Identifying areas where innovative financing mechanisms including public-private partnerships, as well as alternatives to traditional general obligation debt can be used for construction and ongoing maintenance
• Determining areas for efficiencies and cost-saving measures for construction and maintenance
• Evaluating the appropriate role for State agencies including the Maryland Department of Planning, Department of General Services, State Department of Education, Board of Public Works, as well as the appropriate statutory structure for the Interagency Committee for Public School Construction
• Reviewing the relationship between State agencies and local governments on school construction projects
• Reviewing the Kopp Commission findings and progress toward implementation

Members of the Commission include:

• Delegate Adrienne Jones
• Delegate Aruna Miller
• Delegate Jeff Ghrist
• Senator James E. DeGrange, Sr.
• Senator Nancy J. King
• Senator Andrew Serafini
• State Treasurer Nancy J. Kopp
• Barbara J. Hoffman, member of the Interagency Committee on School Construction
• Galen Clagett, President & CEO of Clagett Enterprises, Inc.
• John Bohanan, member of the Interagency Committee on School Construction
• Alex Szacknovic, Chief Operating Officer, Anne Arundel County Schools
• Andrew Roud, Regional Partner, St. Johns Property
• Brian Gibbons, Chairman of the Board & Chief Executive Officer, Greenberg Gibbons
• Don Manekin, Founding Member, Seawall Development
• Jan Holt, Chief Customer Officer, Chaney Enterprises
• Donna Edwards, Secretary-Treasurer, MD/DC AFL-CIO
• Dr. Clayton Wilcox, Superintendent, Washington County Schools
• Gary Brennan, Frederick County teacher
• Rowena Shurn, Prince George’s County teacher
• Greenbelt Mayor Pro Tem Judith “J” Davis
• The Honorable Jan Gardner, Frederick County Executive
• Kevin Maxwell, Superintendent, Prince George’s County Schools
• Pless Jones, P&J Contracting Company
• Prince George’s County Councilmember Mel Franklin
• Retired Brigadier General Warner Sumpter from Somerset County
• Rich Resnick, Attorney Sherman, Dunn, Cohen, Leifer & Yellig, P.C
• Steve Baldwin, Board Member, Monarch Academy Public Charter Schools

The Commission will report back to the Legislature by December 2016.