

SCHOOL FACILITIES FUNDING

MABE POSITIONS

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education, representing all local boards of education in Maryland:

- ✓ **Supports** a state funding level of at least \$350 million for school construction and renovation projects for FY 2019 to provide the State's share of approved projects to build, renovate, and improve schools.
- ✓ **Supports** improvements to the state school construction program, including those recommendations of the 21st Century School Facilities Commission which are consistent with MABE's adopted resolutions and legislative positions.
- ✓ **Supports** the pursuit of innovative funding policies and strategies to maximize the capacity of State and local bonding authority in support of school facility project funding.
- ✗ **Opposes** any State mandated school sizes or prototypes, or other proposals which limit local authority over school facility design, construction, maintenance, procurement, programs or operations.

BACKGROUND

For MABE and Maryland's 24 local school boards, the mission to provide all of Maryland's students with high performing school facilities conducive to learning is a top priority. The Maryland Constitution requires that the State provide a "thorough and efficient" system of public education; and MABE believes that this includes the duty to equitably provide safe, high quality school facilities in which all students can learn.

State and local governments share public school construction costs according to a formula based on a local jurisdiction's taxable wealth and other factors. The State's share of eligible project costs varies from 50% to 100%. However, because architectural, engineering, site development and other costs are ineligible for state funding, local jurisdictions actually pay a larger share of project costs than these percentages indicate.

In 2016, the Speaker of the House and President of the Senate established the Knott Commission on 21st Century School Facilities to: review existing educational specifications; identify best practices and efficiencies from the construction industry; identify a long-term plan for jurisdictions with growing or declining enrollment; identify innovative financing mechanisms including public-private partnerships and alternatives to general obligation debt; and evaluate the appropriate role for state agencies in the school construction process.

As the Knott Commission concludes its work in late 2017, MABE's key areas of concern include: sustaining a state school construction program capable of meeting demands for new construction and renovations to upgrade aging schools, increase capacity for additional students and prekindergarten, and improve learning conditions; providing local flexibility while ensuring quality and accountability; providing incentives to maintain school facility conditions; and approving local flexibility to use alternative sustainability standards to the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards. MABE also supports optimizing local flexibility to achieve cost savings and efficiencies through alternative methods of project delivery, alternative financing, and cooperative purchasing.

While MABE recognizes the need for the State to address the critical needs of schools with the greatest relative deficiencies, including facility condition, capacity, and educational functionality, state funding should also continue to support all school systems with approved projects.

MABE appreciates the State's investments in the annual capital budget and past investments of \$25 million for energy efficiency projects, \$25 million for school safety projects, and \$25 million for HVAC projects. Additional funding has also been provided for school systems with significant enrollment growth, totaling over \$60 million in FY 2018. Importantly, the State is fulfilling the initiative to provide more than \$1 billion in state and local funding for school facilities in the Baltimore City Public School System over a ten-year period. These initiatives demonstrate the State's commitment to investing in high quality school facilities for all students.

For additional information, see [MABE's Resolution on School Facility Funding](#).