

## 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 \$400 million for school construction and renovation projects for FY 2021 to provide the State's share of approved projects to build, renovate, and improve schools.
- ✓ **Supports** continued improvements to the state school construction program, including the provisions of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Facilities Act of 2018, which are consistent with MABE's adopted resolutions and legislative positions.
- ✓ **Supports** continued state and local investments in projects to enhance school safety and security and support the programs and services mandated in the Safe to Learn Act of 2018.
- ✓ **Supports** the pursuit of innovative construction and financing strategies to maximize the capacity of State and local bonding authority in support of high-quality school facility project funding.
- ✗ **Opposes** any State-mandated school sizes or prototypes or other proposals which limit local authority over school facility design, construction, procurement, maintenance, 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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. MABE supported the 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Facilities Act of 2018 because it reflects local school system priorities for increased funding and process reforms to enhance state and local efficiency and flexibility while ensuring quality and accountability. The Act also reformed the structure and operation of the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC) in governing the public school construction program and eliminated the role of the Board of Public Works.

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

MABE appreciates the State's investments in the annual capital budget and targeted investments to support school safety projects, heating ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) projects, and energy efficiency projects. In 2018 and 2019 additional funding was provided for school safety, HVAC, and school systems with significant enrollment growth. Importantly, the State is fulfilling the initiative to provide additional 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 and learning environments for all students.

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