

**BILL:** House Bill 1290  
**TITLE:** Education - Public School Construction - Funding and Administration  
**POSITION:** SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS  
**DATE:** March 29, 2022  
**COMMITTEE:** Budget and Taxation  
**CONTACT:** John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) supports House Bill 1290, which would enact several meaningful reforms to the administration and financing of Maryland’s public school construction program. MABE’s top priorities for the 2022 legislative session relating to school facilities, include:

- ✓ Support for a state funding level of at least \$400 million for school construction and renovation projects for FY 2023 to provide the State’s share of approved projects to build, renovate, and improve schools;
- ✓ Support for continued funding and implementation of the Built to Learn Act and its \$2 billion school construction program financed through the Maryland Stadium Authority; and
- ✓ Support for continued funding of projects to improve the health and safety of school facilities.

House Bill 1290 is aligned with MABE’s legislative priorities, including the \$450 million baseline amount for annual investments in the State Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for school construction, renovation, and systemic projects in order to maintain a relatively stable number of funded projects in the CIP. Local boards have long understood that the conditions of classrooms and the physical amenities of our schools are integrally related to reforms and increased funding for operations. Today, Maryland is benefitting from the parallel launches of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future Act and the Built to Learn Act, landmark initiatives that demonstrate the State’s commitment to educational excellence.

MABE is joining local school systems in requesting amendments to strike lines 14-19 on page 8, in order to remove the provision which would impose confusing and counter-productive requirements regarding the role that underutilized space in adjacent schools should play in determining the size and capacity of a new school. Other clarifying amendments are being requested regarding the scope of projects available for financing through the revolving loan fund.

Maryland is poised to dramatically increase demands for State and local investments in school construction. First among these demands is for new and expanded elementary school facilities required to meet the demands of providing full-day prekindergarten to income-eligible 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds. Another Blueprint related program initiative impacting school construction is the need for technical high schools to meet student and community needs for high quality career and technical education for many more students than currently enroll in these programs. In addition, MABE anticipates the adoption of enhanced high performance building design and construction standards.

Local boards recognize the value of a high-quality state assessments of the condition and critical needs of each school facility in which teaching and learning occur. Such assessments should provide the comprehensive data to inform decision-making in each local school system, for each local government, and for the Governor and legislature as funding priorities are adopted.

Therefore, MABE endorses the comprehensive approach taken in House Bill 1290 to identify the many building attributes to needing to be assessed. House Bill 1290 reflects the work of the Workgroup on the Assessment and Funding of School Facilities, and MABE appreciates the opportunity to participate in the collaborative analysis and identification of areas for improvement in State and local school construction policies and financing systems. House Bill 1290 includes key provisions which MABE believes will advance the State's commitment to investing in high quality school facilities and learning environments for all students.

For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on House Bill 1290 with the amendments requested by local school systems and described above.