

SCHOOL FACILITIES FUNDING FOR EQUITY & EXCELLENCE

MABE POSITIONS

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

- ✓ **Supports** a state capital improvement program of at least \$450 million in addition to the Built to Learn program to expand prekindergarten and career and technical education school facilities called for by the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and to provide the State's share of school construction and renovation project costs to guarantee high quality teaching and learning environments.
- ✓ **Supports** continued funding and implementation of the Built to Learn Act and its school construction program financed through the Maryland Stadium Authority.
- ✓ **Supports** continued funding of projects to improve the health and safety of school facilities.
- ✓ **Supports** the pursuit of innovative construction and financing strategies to maximize the capacity of state and local governments to fund high-quality school facility projects.
- ✗ **Opposes** any legislation or school construction program regulations or actions which would limit local authority over school facility design, construction, procurement, maintenance, 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 certain costs are ineligible for state funding, local jurisdictions actually pay a larger share of project costs than these percentages indicate.

The 21st Century School Facilities Act of 2018 addressed educational specifications and best practices and created a workgroup to make funding and policy recommendations based on a statewide school facilities assessment. MABE supported the Act and recommendations to enhance state and local efficiency and flexibility while ensuring quality and accountability. MABE strongly supports the workgroup's recommendation in HB 1290 (2022) which states the intent of the General Assembly that beginning in FY 2023 the State should provide at least \$450 million annually for school construction in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). MABE advocates that this \$450 million investment become the annual baseline to be supplemented by any other state funding programs, including the Built to Learn program.

The pandemic presented unforeseen challenges in the operation of school facilities including custodial and maintenance services, indoor air quality improvements requiring HVAC upgrades, educational technology upgrades required for distance learning. These initiatives have not only improved the condition of school facilities but also highlighted the need for increased state and local funding for school maintenance staff and building systems (heating/cooling/plumbing/roofing) to improve teaching and learning conditions. New schools and major renovations take years to plan and construct and our students and communities deserve solutions now.

Local boards appreciate the State's investments in the annual capital budget and targeted investments to support school safety projects, HVAC and lead remediation projects, energy efficiency projects, and designated funding for school systems with significant enrollment growth. In addition, the State is fulfilling the commitment to fund 21st Century school facilities in the Baltimore City Public School System, including net-zero schools. These initiatives demonstrate the State's commitment to investing in high quality school facilities and learning environments for all students. MABE urges the legislature to consider the impacts of any new facility standards in the context of the enormous challenges school systems confront to meet the current array of mandates, including the Blueprint requirement to provide full-day prekindergarten for four-year olds in FY 2025.

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