



House Bill 1329

Education - Public School Construction - Funding

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Appropriations Committee

Date: March 11, 2026

From: Sarah Sample

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 1329. This bill seeks to adjust the State's funding requirement for public school construction beginning in fiscal year 2027. It increases the annual minimum contribution for the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) by almost \$100M. While this would still be about \$75M less than what the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC) reports is needed immediately, it is an important step in the right direction for the State to catch up on vital school construction projects.

The cost of building and maintaining safe, modern schools has risen sharply as materials, labor, and inflation drive project budgets higher. Temporary programs like Built to Learn helped bridge gaps, but those funds are expiring while project backlogs grow. Counties face mounting pressure to get the existing inventory in good repair and take on significant renovations to implement capital mandates necessitated by the State's visionary education plan, the Blueprint for Maryland's Future (Blueprint).

While the State is statutorily required to be a funding partner to the counties in school maintenance and construction, the contributions have fallen short as needs continue to outpace available resources. Even projects that secure state approval often wait years for funding matches. The longer these plans sit in the pipeline, the more costly they become. A state-level investment that recognizes the needs and realities of Maryland schools now, will support learning for future generations in the years to come.

Maryland must renew its commitment to shared school construction funding and reestablish a balanced partnership with counties. The changes proposed by HB 1329 can facilitate those goals. Accordingly, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE** report.