



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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January 23, 2020

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh, Chair
Appropriations Committee
House Office Building, Suite 121
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: **TESTIMONY OF SUPPORT**: HB 1 – Built to Learn Act of 2020

Dear Chair McIntosh,

Howard County Government and the Howard County Public School System have a longstanding history of prioritizing education and school construction funding to make us one of the nation's leading school systems. My Administration supports this proposal for a historic investment in school construction, not only for Howard County, but for jurisdictions across the state.

Despite our perceived affluence in Howard County, there is a significant need for increased capital investment in our schools. We are in dire need of extensive renovations of our older schools and the construction of new ones to keep pace with our rising student enrollment. We have more than \$500M in deferred maintenance, we currently utilize nearly 200 relocatables and have the need for replacement of many HVAC systems we are currently paying more to repair than the cost of a full replacement. Our school system has estimated more than \$145M in funding needs from the state over the next five years to keep our critical projects on schedule and relieve our schools, many of which have surpassed capacity. As the Built to learn formula currently stands, it is estimated that Howard County would receive 6.6% of the proposed \$2.2B to be dispersed amongst all jurisdictions in Maryland.

There is a significant need for adequate infrastructure to continue serving our teachers and students and ultimately, fulfil the innovative vision set forth by the Kirwan Commission. Howard County is grateful that our state aid will increase based on recommendations from the commission and in challenging fiscal times, we know that every penny counts. Last session, my Administration and the Howard County Council expressed support of Kirwan and funding innovative investments to transform our educational delivery system. We are encouraged by the policy priorities put forth by the Commission and the recommendations outlined. Just as we will continue to invest in our school system with the funding it needs, typically above maintenance of effort, Howard County will continuously strive for equity in our school system so that all children can thrive.

We recognize the importance of providing a local county match and are committed to doing so. I am encouraged to see school construction as the number one priority for our House and Senate leadership and implore other state leaders to work together to ensure a school construction budget that invests in the growth of all jurisdictions.

I look forward to working with you to champion investments in public education *and* infrastructure. I urge your support and favorable report on HB 1.

Sincerely,

Calvin Ball
County Executive