



Meeting Minutes – July 17, 2025

Call to Order:

Chair Edward Kasemeyer called the video-conference meeting of the Interagency Commission on School Construction to order at 9:00 a.m.

Members in Attendance:

Edward Kasemeyer, Appointee of the President of the Senate, Chair
Linda Eberhart, Appointee of the Speaker of the House, Vice-chair
Craig Curtis as designee for Secretary Atif Chaudhry, Maryland Department of General Services
Michael Darenberg, Appointee of the Governor
Chuck Boyd as designee for Secretary Rebecca Flora, Maryland Department of Planning
Gloria Lawlah, Appointee of the President of the Senate
Krishnanda Tallur as designee for Dr. Carey M. Wright, State Superintendent of Schools

Members Not in Attendance:

None.

Revisions to the Agenda:

None.

Public Comment:

None.

IAC Correspondence:

None.

1. Executive Director's Report – **[Informational Only]**

Executive Director Alex Donahue gave an update on two matters. He first informed the Commission that Allegany County Public Schools (ACPS) is making progress on the restoration of the first floor of Westernport Elementary School, which was damaged by storm-related flooding in May of this year. ACPS is planning to open the second and third floors of the school in August while contractors continue work during fall of 2025, with the first floor being back in service by January of 2026 at the latest. Executive Director Donahue stated that all costs are anticipated to be covered by insurance, per ACPS, and that IAC and partner agency staff are prioritizing reviews associated with the project so the timeline is expedited while still meeting all applicable State requirements. He also stated that, although ACPS does not anticipate requesting funding from the IAC, the IAC does have some emergency funding available to support the project if needed.

Additionally, Executive Director Donahue stated that the IAC's staff is working with all LEAs to collect information on capital plans for the next 10 years to better estimate total capital funds needed annually to achieve desired outcomes for school districts.

2. Consent Agenda – **[Motion Carried]**

Upon a motion by Ms. Lawlah, seconded by Mr. Darenberg, the IAC voted unanimously to approve the consent agenda.

a. **June 12, 2025 Meeting Minutes**

To approve the draft June 12, 2025 IAC Meeting Minutes, as presented.

b. **Contract Awards**

To approve contract procurement as presented.

c. **Revisions to Previously Approved Contracts**

To approve the revisions to previously approved contract awards as presented to accurately reflect the adjustments to the State and local participation in the contract amounts, reversions of funds, and/or corrections to project allocation information.

d. **Property Transfer – Garrett County Public Schools – North Eighth St. Property**

To approve the transfer of 1.3 acres at 102 North Eighth St., Oakland, MD 21550 from the Garrett County Board of Education to the Board of County Commissioners of Garrett County. Garrett County shall obtain IAC approval before transferring any right, title, or interest to any portion of the property.

e. **Reversion Correction – Howard County Public School System – Dunloggin Middle School (PSC L13F001)**

To correct the rescission amount shown for the FY 2024 Capital Improvement Program Dunloggin Middle School (PSC L13F001) renovation/addition project from \$22,840,000 to \$1,994,000.

f. **FY 2022 Aging Schools Program Reimbursement Extension – Queen Anne’s County Public Schools – Centreville Elementary School (PSC L17F005) Public Address System**

To approve the request from Queen Anne’s County Public Schools (QACPS) to extend the reimbursement deadline for the FY 2022 Aging Schools Program (ASP) Centreville Elementary School (PSC L17F005) Public Address (PA) System project until September 30, 2025.

g. **FY 2026 Capital Improvement Program Amendment – Wicomico County Public Schools – Fruitland Primary School (PSC L22F016 Replacement Project)**

To transfer \$8,339 from the Wicomico County Public Schools’ (WCPS) reserve fund account to the FY 2026 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Fruitland Primary School (PSC L22F016) replacement project, increasing the total award from \$12,033,566 to \$12,041,905.

h. **Cancellation of Amendment and Reversion – Anne Arundel County Public Schools – Northeast Middle School (PSC L02F004) Doors Project**

To cancel the project award amendment and reversion of \$25 from the Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) Northeast Middle School (PSC L02F044) doors project to the LEA’s reserve account.

3. FY 2027 & 2028 LEA State Cost Share Percentages – **[Motion Carried]**

Executive Director Donahue began the presentation of this Item by giving background on the formula used to determine the State cost share for each LEA. He stated that after reviewing the seven factors used to calculate the State cost share for LEAs, only one factor was found to require adjustment. He stated that the Tier 1 county criterion relating to unemployment should be adjusted, due to the most recent data showing that no counties currently qualified for the unemployment-related factor. Executive Director Donahue stated that staff recommend removing the 5% add-on for unemployment-related factors from the State cost share formula, and instead provide one 10% adjustment to all counties that qualify for Tier 1 status based on either median household income or unemployment. Deputy Director Cassandra Viscarra then presented the State cost shares for the

individual LEAs, noting that the minimum required cost share is 50%, that reductions from one cycle to the next are not to exceed 5%, and that reductions of 4% or greater be phased over two years, resulting in increases of no more than 3% in a given year. She additionally noted that statutory changes require the Maryland School for the Blind to receive a 100% State cost share, rather than the 93% that was previously adopted in COMAR 14.30.02.06.F. She added that there is a provision of statute that increases the State cost share to that of a neighboring county for any county with a calculated cost share of 50% and a median household income in the bottom quartile of the State. The only qualifying LEA is Garrett County, which has been adjusted to have the same State cost share as calculated for neighboring Allegany county.

Chair Kasemeyer asked specifically about Somerset County and their State cost share. Ms. Viscarra stated that Somerset benefitted from the Tier 1 change, and that they had previously received a 5% increase, but would now receive a 10% increase. She added that their guaranteed tax base add-on decreased from 8.4% to 7%, that their Free and Reduced Priced Meals add-on decreased from 6.9% to 4.3%, and that their local debt and PAYGO factor add-on went from 7.3% to 0%, stating that there was a significant decrease in PAYGO in the last cycle toward school construction. She stated that with all of this taken into account, they are seeing a 5% reduction in their State cost share.

Mr. Darenberg asked for clarification regarding the phase-in process of State cost share decreases. Ms. Viscarra stated that no counties may receive a decrease of greater than 5% in a given cycle. If calculations determine that a decrease over 5% should be applied, the county is still capped at 5% for the two-year period. She also added that any decrease over 4% is phased in over the two year cycle, resulting in a given year's decrease being no more than 2% in the first year and no more than 3% in the second year. Mr. Darenberg clarified that Somerset and Calvert were the only counties that are impacted by this change, which Ms. Viscarra confirmed.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Lawlah, seconded by Vice-chair Eberhart, the IAC voted unanimously to modify COMAR 14.39.02.06.D to provide a ten-percentage-point State cost-share increase where the LEA is located in a Tier 1 county; and approve amendments to COMAR 14.39.02.06.F to reflect the FY 2027 and FY 2028 State Cost-Share Percentages as presented in this Item and statutory changes to the State Cost share for the Maryland School for the Blind, pursuant to Education Article § 5-303(k)(6), Annotated Code of Md. The proposed COMAR revisions will be published in the Maryland Register and will be open for public comment for a period of at least 30 days before returning to the IAC for final approval.

4. 2026 Cost per Square Foot for School Construction – [Motion Carried]

Capital Projects Manager Gene Shanholtz presented proposed changes to the cost per square foot for school construction for 2026, which is required to be updated each year. He stated that the figure of \$431 per square foot is reached based on bids received in the past year as well as industry sources, and that this figure is a conservative increase of 3.5% to avoid contributing to inflation, since the IAC has authority under 14.39.02.08 to increase the cost per square foot on a case by case basis for projects when needed. He added that new construction projects that require site development receive an additional 19%, resulting in a total cost per square foot of \$513. Lastly, Mr. Shanholtz stated that the figure would apply to any project that receives its first year of funding in the FY 2027 CIP cycle, or any project that bids from January 1 to December 31, 2026.

Mr. Darenberg asked which cost per square foot would be applied in circumstances where an LEA is forward funding a project and later asking for State reimbursement. Mr. Shanholtz stated that projects

that bid between January 1 and December 31, 2026 are locked in to this cost per square foot for building. Projects eligible for the 19% site add on would receive the \$513 cost per square foot.

Chair Kasemeyer asked how staff determined the number for the cost per square foot, and how staff determined a 3.5% increase versus a higher or lower amount. Mr. Shanholtz stated that the industry sources reviewed had a nominal 2-5% increase with an average of around 3.5%.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Boyd, seconded by Vice-chair Eberhart, the IAC voted unanimously to adopt the Calendar Year 2026 Statewide per-square-foot school construction cost of \$431 for building only.

5. FY 2027 Capital Improvement Program Instructions and Schedule – [Motion Carried]

Funding Programs Manager Arabia Davis presented the proposed FY 2027 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) instructions and schedule. Ms. Davis indicated that the proposed schedule would set the deadline for submission of CIP requests as October 6, 2025 and the deadline for final amendments to CIP requests and letters of support from the local government as November 28, 2025. Ms. Davis added that while prior year CIP instructions included all related policies, rules, and regulations that govern the program, recent updates to the IAC's Administrative Procedures Guide has allowed for the CIP instructions to be streamlined and to serve as a resource for LEAs on the application process and supporting documentation required to be provided via the Business Management System. Ms. Davis stated that the estimated allocations for the FY 2027 for the Enrollment Growth or Relocatable Classrooms (EGRC) supplemental capital grant program were also included in the Item, and that LEAs are eligible for funding via the EGRC if they have enrollment growth that exceeds 150% of the statewide average over the past 5 years, or if the number of relocatable classrooms in a given school district averages 250 or more over the past five years. FY 2027 also sees an allocation increase of State funds for this program from \$40 million to \$80 million, as required by Education Article § 5-313(e)(3).

Upon a motion made by Ms. Lawlah, seconded by Mr. Darenberg, the IAC voted unanimously to approve the FY 2027 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) schedule and the revised CIP instructions as presented.

6. FY 2027 Capital Improvement Program LEA Target Allocations – [Motion Carried]

Executive Director Donahue presented the FY 2027 Capital Improvement Program LEA target allocations. He stated that the IAC has routinely approved LEA target allocations for the purpose of establishing estimates of State funding support to allow LEAs to pre-plan, maintain, and complete projects in an efficient and cost effective manner. He stated that while these numbers are not a guarantee or commitment to a certain funding level, they are calculated to be the most equitable division of anticipated State construction funding possible. Executive Director Donahue stated that while previously the IAC factored in the average funding level for each LEA over the previous 10 years, this is not the case for FY 2027 as many LEAs had pointed out that LEAs with large, recent projects would receive greater funding than those that had previously lacked the local resources to execute larger projects. He stated that the calculated LEA target allocations were based on a preliminary budget of \$280 million minus \$5 million which is recommended to be held in the Statewide reserve fund account to address unanticipated school construction needs, and an increase to target allocations for critical ongoing large projects in Cecil and Garrett Counties and the Maryland School for the Blind and their cash flow requirements, which totals \$14.7 million. Additionally, the minimum allocation amount is set at 1% of the total funding (a minimum of \$2,750,000 per LEA).

Mr. Tallur stated that MSDE commends the IAC on the phasing out of the ten year average, remarking that it would help smaller counties. Mr. Darenberg asked how the total funding amounts and State and LEA budgets compare in the past 10 years, FY 2017 to FY 2027. Executive Director Donahue stated that staff did not have the 2017 numbers on hand but could provide them at the next IAC meeting. Mr. Darenberg also asked about the enrollment amounts and the average age of school buildings over the same time period. Executive Director Donahue indicated that all the information could be presented at the next IAC meeting.

Chair Kasemeyer asked if there was a trend of costs increasing each year, and if it was expected to continue or slow down soon. Executive Director Donahue stated that due to the average age of Maryland school facilities sitting at 31 years, there are updates frequently required for buildings of this age including roof repairs, new HVAC systems, and renovations. Additionally, he stated that high construction costs and inflationary pressures indicate that a 3.5% increase each year in the long term is expected for school projects due to their significant size and scope.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Darenberg, seconded by Vice-chair Eberhart, the IAC voted unanimously to approve the FY 2027 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) LEA target allocations as presented.

7. School Safety Grant Program Administrative Procedures Guide – [Motion Carried]

Ms. Viscarra presented the Administrative Procedures Guide (APG) draft for the School Safety Grant Program (SSGP). Ms. Viscarra stated that in prior years, the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) had administered the SSGP under an MOU with the IAC, but for the FY 2026 cycle and onward, the agency has declined to continue administering the program. The IAC will resume administration of the program, and staff have developed the presented draft APG which contains allocations for each LEA, a new program schedule, project eligibility, and guidelines on administration.

Chair Kasemeyer asked about the scope of work of MCSS now that they will no longer be administering the program. Ms. Viscarra stated that the agency manages several other grant programs and provides safety expertise and advice, as well as reporting to the school safety subcabinet, which Executive Director Donahue sits on. Chair Kasemeyer asked what the frequency of the meetings is, and Executive Director Donahue stated that typically meetings occur monthly and that many agencies participate in the subcabinet. Mr. Tallur noted that the subcabinet allows for interagency collaboration, and that MCSS is very involved in communicating information regarding school safety programs.

Vice-chair Eberhart asked if the subcabinet allows for schools to utilize money more quickly. Staff indicated that this was the case.

Chair Kasemeyer asked if new concepts arise during the subcabinet meetings regarding school safety and what happens in a meeting. Executive Director Donahue stated that there has recently been discussion regarding the technology for weapons identification and how to train staff to ensure safety and security in schools. Chair Kasemeyer followed up to ask whether there is uniformity across the State in school safety measures. Ms. Davis stated that regulations that come from the subcabinet are required to be followed by all schools and districts. Chair Kasemeyer asked if schools are permitted to engage in school safety activities individually. Ms. Davis stated that schools are permitted to do this.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Darenberg, seconded by Vice-chair Eberhart, the IAC voted unanimously to approve the Administrative Procedures Guide (APG) for the School Safety Grant Program (SSGP), including the FY 2026 program schedule and LEA allocations, as presented, and to delegate authority

to the IAC Executive Director to approve eligible projects within each total LEA allocation, with a report of project awards submitted to the IAC periodically at regularly scheduled meetings.

8. Late Healthy Schools Facility Fund Applications - Charles, Howard, and Somerset County Public Schools – [Motion Carried]

Ms. Davis presented three requests for extensions to the deadline for project request submissions for the FY 2026 Healthy Schools Facility Fund (HSFF) from Charles, Howard, and Somerset Counties. Ms. Davis noted that submissions from these LEAs were received between one and five days after the deadline. It was noted that the HSFF project submissions are under review and are anticipated to be brought to the August 2025 IAC meeting.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Lawlah, seconded by Vice-chair Eberhart, the IAC voted unanimously to approve the acceptance of late FY 2026 Healthy School Facility Fund (HSFF) applications.

9. FY 2026 Capital Improvement Program Award Adjustment and Maximum State Award Amendment - Charles County Public Schools - William B. Wade Elementary (PSC L08F028) PreK & K Addition Project – [Motion Carried]

Mr. Shanholtz presented a revision to the Maximum State Award for the Charles County Public Schools William B. Wade Elementary School PreK & K Addition, which would increase the MSA from \$5,911,230 to \$6,187,230. Mr. Shanholtz stated that the MSA was previously reduced based on an inaccurate ineligible figure used in the calculation. Mr. Shanholtz also stated that CCPS has \$1.9 million remaining in EGRC funding from the FY 2026 CIP of which \$276,000 can be used to increase the State support for the project.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Darenberg, seconded by Vice-chair Eberhart, the IAC voted unanimously to amend the Maximum State Award (MSA) for the Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) William B. Wade Elementary (PSC L08F028) Pre-K & K Addition project from \$5,911,230 to \$6,187,230, to apply \$276,000 of FY 2026 Enrollment Growth or Relocatable Classroom (EGRC) funds designated for CCPS to the project in the FY 2026 Capital Improvement Program (CIP), and to modify the previously approved construction contract approval for the project to apply the additional \$276,000 in FY 2026 EGRC funding, for a total State contract award amount of \$6,187,230.

10. FY 2024 & FY 2026 Capital Improvement Program Amendments - Baltimore City Public Schools – [Motion Carried]

Mr. Shanholtz presented a request from Baltimore City Public Schools for a total of \$26,389,500 to be rescinded from the FY 2024 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and awarded under the FY 2026 CIP instead. Mr. Shanholtz stated that in order to meet project timelines, and due to limited local funding availability due to unforeseen project cost increases associated with other projects, the LEA is unable to utilize 2024 funds for these 12 projects.

Mr. Darenberg asked if the change was due to the requirement to utilize funds within two years of award. Mr. Shanholtz stated that yes, since projects must be under construction contract within two years of award, the funds would need to be removed from the FY 2024 CIP and re-awarded within two years under a subsequent fiscal year CIP.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Boyd, seconded by Mr. Tallur, the IAC voted unanimously to rescind \$26,389,500 awarded to 12 projects funded through Baltimore City Public Schools' (City Schools) FY

2024 Capital Improvement Program (CIP), transfer the funds to the Local Education Agency (LEA) reserve account fund, and amend the FY 2026 CIP to include the awards as presented.

11. FY 2024 Healthy School Facility Fund Realignment - Howard County Public School System – [Motion Carried]

Capital Projects Manager Sean Vorsteg presented a request from the Howard County Public School System to reallocate funds from the Healthy School Facility Fund Statewide Reserve Account to the River Hill High School chiller replacement project and the Wilde Lake High School chiller and cooling tower replacement project, which received higher than anticipated bid results. HCPSS noted that these increases were due to unanticipated costs including for rigging and materials transport due to the locations of the cooling systems in the facilities.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Boyd, seconded by Vice-chair Eberhart, the IAC voted unanimously to amend the Maximum State Award for the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) FY 2024 Healthy School Facility Fund (HSFF) River Hill High School (PSC L13F053) chiller replacement project and award \$142,740 from the HSFF Statewide Reserve Account to the project, which increases the award from \$885,720 to \$1,028,460; and, amend the Maximum State Award for the HCPSS FY 2024 HSFF Wilde Lake High School (PSC L13F058) chiller and cooling tower replacement project and award \$150,610 from the HSFF Statewide Reserve Account to the project, increasing the total award from \$1,328,580 to \$1,479,190.

12. FY 2025 Healthy School Facility Fund Amendments - Anne Arundel County Public Schools – [Motion Carried]

Capital Projects Manager Lisa Vaughn presented a request from Anne Arundel County Public Schools to realign funding from the Sunset Elementary School roof project to the Crofton Woods Elementary School roof replacement project. Ms. Vaughn stated that the Crofton Woods project received higher than anticipated bids, and that favorable bids were received for the Sunset Elementary project.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Tallur, seconded by Ms. Lawlah, the IAC voted unanimously to revert \$94,357 of the FY 2025 Healthy School Facility Fund (HSFF) award to the Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) Sunset Elementary School (PSC L02F108) roof project to the HSFF Statewide Reserve Account, and transfer \$94,357 from the HSFF Statewide Reserve Account to the AACPS Crofton Woods Elementary School (PSC L02F115) roof project.

13. Pass Through Grant Amendments - Baltimore City Public Schools – [Motion Carried]

Mr. Shanholtz presented a request from Baltimore City Public Schools to amend their Pass Through Grant (PTG) application, cancelling funding awards for the Baltimore Polytechnic Institute and Western High Building limited renovation projects and increasing funds for the Baltimore City College renewal project. Mr. Shanholtz indicated that this was requested due to higher than anticipated bid results for the Baltimore City College renewal project. He noted that the realignment would apply an additional \$37,000,000 to the project, for a total of \$55,000,000 of PTG funds awarded to the project.

Chair Kasemeyer asked what the cause of the increase to the project was. Mr. Shanholtz stated that the higher than anticipated bid results were greater than the current project funding, and that the schools having funding removed were being awarded funds under the Built to Learn program and CIP.

Upon a motion made by Vice-chair Eberhart, seconded by Mr. Darenberg, the IAC voted unanimously to realign a total of \$37,000,000 of Pass-Through Grant (PTG) funds awarded to the Baltimore City Public Schools limited renovation projects at Baltimore Polytechnic Institute #403 (PSC L30F185) and

Western High Building #407 (PSC L30F227) to the renewal project at Baltimore City College #480 (PSC L30F110), thereby increasing the award from \$18,500,000 to \$55,500,000.

14. Adoption of Final 14.39.04 COMAR Revisions on Project Delivery Methods – [Motion Carried]

Policy Analyst Victoria Howard presented the Final Action on revisions to COMAR 14.39.04 which were originally approved at the April 10, 2025 IAC meeting and published in the May 16, 2025 Maryland Register. She noted that the IAC had received no public comments on the amendments and that the revisions would be effective 10 days after final approval publication in the Maryland Register.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Lawlah, seconded by Mr. Darenberg, the IAC voted unanimously to adopt the final COMAR revisions as published in the May 16, 2025 Maryland Register (Volume 52, Issue 10, Page 471).

15. Closed Session – [Motion Carried]

IAC Members met in closed session to discuss the performance evaluation of the Executive Director, and to obtain legal advice from the Assistant Attorney General, in compliance with General Provisions Article §§ 3-305(b)(1) and 3-305(b)(7), respectively.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Darenberg, seconded by Vice-chair Eberhart, the IAC voted unanimously to close the meeting to Executive Session at 9:55 am; and to fully adjourn the meeting from closed session.

Announcements:

None.

Adjournment:

Upon a motion by Mr. Darenberg seconded by Mr. Boyd, the IAC voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:22 am.