Meeting Minutes – October 8, 2026

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
Secretary Rebecca Flora, Maryland Department of Planning
Manish Kothari, Appointee of the Governor
Dr. Carey M. Wright, State Superintendent of Schools

Members Not in Attendance:
Gloria Lawlah, Appointee of the President of the Senate

Revisions to the Agenda:
None.

Public Comment:
None.

IAC Correspondence:
None.

Agenda Items:

1. **Executive Director's Report** – [Informational Only]
   Executive Director Donahue gave a presentation on five items. His first item was to thank the IAC's Statewide Facilities Assessment (SFA) team on another successful year of facilities assessments. He stated that the statewide average condition level is 52% depleted, similar to last year's average, indicating that conditions have neither improved nor deteriorated further. Second, Executive Director Donahue thanked the entire staff of the IAC for contributing to the IAC's annual report, which serves as a powerful reference document for those looking to cite data and find key statistics all in one place. Third, Executive Director Donahue stated that the IAC recently executed a MOU with the Maryland Energy Administration for $18.85 million in funding from the Strategic Energy Investment Fund for upgrades to HVAC systems in Baltimore City Public Schools. He stated that this funding was made available to City HVAC repairs and replacements in facilities experiencing urgent needs for this. He thanked MEA staff for their assistance in expediting the MOU to provide the program procedures at this meeting. Fourth, Executive Director Donahue reported that an error was discovered in the August calculations of the projected funding allocations to the 12 eligible LEAs for the FY 2028 Enrollment Growth and Relocatable Capacity funding program. He stated that while the figures added up to the correct total of $80 million, and the correct LEAs were identified as eligible, the figures for each of the

12 LEAs was incorrect with five having been overstated and seven having been understated. He added that the CIP Notice has been republished with the correct figures, and took steps to ensure that the error will not happen in the future. Finally, Executive Director Donahue stated that he presented on school construction needs to the State Capital Debt Affordability Committee (CDAC) and the Task Force to Modernize County and Municipal Revenue Structures chaired by Comptroller Lierman. He presented slides that demonstrated the increased cost of school construction in Maryland since 2003, demonstrating an increase of 222%. He stated that there is no indication that these numbers are likely to slow or decrease in the coming years, and that it's likely that school construction costs would double again in 17 years, cutting LEA purchasing power in half again by 2043. He stated that Maryland's school districts spent only 60% of the recommended total to be spent on deferred maintenance and capital renewals, and that the responsibility to make up this gap is a shared county-State responsibility. He added that while for FY 2027 the General Assembly has appropriated roughly the expected $500 million, it's not enough to deliver the State shares of needed projects in a timely manner to LEAs, and that IAC staff anticipate at least another $300 million is needed.

Mr. Darenberg asked if the City HVAC program has begun already. Executive Director Donahue stated that the program procedures are on this agenda as Item 8, and if approved, staff can activate the program within the next two weeks for applications and following award City Schools will have access to funds.

Chair Kasemeyer asked who sits on CDAC. Executive Director Donahue stated that the Maryland State Treasurer is the Chair of the committee, and the Comptroller of Maryland sits on it as well as several other members, including the Secretary of DBM, and at least one member of the public. The committee takes a look at capital funding needs and the overall debt ceiling.

Secretary Flora stated that the construction cost graphs are astounding and asked if the variance between the national inflation rate and Maryland is based on building cost per square foot amount. Executive Director Donahue stated that this is correct. Secretary Flora then asked if the Maryland costs were based on new construction or renovations. Executive Director Donahue stated that the amount is determined mostly from New and Replacement amounts, as renovation costs are harder to average because they are so specific to individual facilities. He also noted that in Maryland there are more stringent regulations on construction as opposed to other states in the country for things such as stormwater management and energy efficiency. In addition to these environmental regulations, school construction is more expensive per square foot than other types of construction due to the specific educational sufficiency requirements and the need for the longevity of the facility, since buildings have to last potentially 60 years. He noted that some LEAs also have greater access to contractors and more competition in their local markets for supply and might be able to get better pricing. Secretary Flora asked if it is possible to break out the costs of construction in different states as well to compare such as neighboring states like Virginia and Pennsylvania. Executive Director Donahue stated that it's possible to look at data for a larger regional comparison, but that the IAC has not had staff capacity to do so, and asked if there were any specific questions the Secretary wanted answered using that data. Secretary Flora stated that she could follow up at a later date on specifics, but wanted to look at economic competitiveness, in particular, how it relates to housing construction, commercial construction, and other types of construction, in addition to school construction.

Mr. Kothari added that due to Maryland being part of the DMV area, there is significant competition among contractors for projects, and Federal project opportunities with higher wage requirements may be more enticing to construction firms compared to State projects. He added that the increase in competition and costs has been seen across the construction industry, and when you compare areas

of Maryland to Delaware or Northern Virginia, costs are still higher. He stated that it's possible some communities may not be able to pay these increased construction costs.

2. **Consent Agenda – [Motion Carried]**
   Upon a motion by Craig Curtis, seconded by Mr. Darenberg, the IAC voted unanimously to approve the consent agenda.
   a. **September 10, 2026 Meeting Minutes**
      To approve the draft September 10, 2026 IAC Meeting Minutes, as presented.
   b. **Contract Awards**
      To approve contract procurement as presented.
   c. **Contract Revisions**
      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.

3. **FY 2026 Statewide Facilities Assessment Annual Report — [Motion Carried]**
   Assessment Data Coordinator Ben Kaplan presented the IAC's FY 2026 Statewide Facilities Assessment report. He stated that the report presents objective data on the condition of facilities at the system, facility, LEA, and Statewide levels.

   Upon a motion made by Mr. Kothari seconded by Vice-chair Eberhart, the IAC voted unanimously to approve the Statewide Facilities Assessment FY 2026 Annual Report for presentation to the Governor and General Assembly on the status of school facility conditions in the State of Maryland, pending non-substantive edits by staff.

4. **FY 2026 Interagency Commission on School Construction Annual Report — [Motion Carried]**
   Administrative Services Manager Hannah Sturm presented the IAC's FY 2026 Annual Report. She stated that this is the fifth year the IAC has published a general annual report for the agency, and the report details newly opened school facilities, the MEA and SFA assessments for the year, legislative updates, data on funding awards, and a deep dive on the level of need for school construction support and funding in the State.

   Chair Kasemeyer thanked Ms. Sturm and the IAC staff for the development of this report each year.

   Upon a motion made by Mr. Darenberg seconded by Vice-chair Eberhart, the IAC voted unanimously to approve the final draft of the comprehensive IAC Fiscal Year 2026 Annual Report, pending non-substantive edits by staff.

5. **FY 2027 Nonpublic Aging Schools Program Procedures — [Motion Carried]**
   Myron Mason, Program Manager of the Nonpublic Aging Schools Program with the Maryland State Department of Education's Office of School Facilities presented the administrative procedures guide for the FY 2027 Nonpublic Aging Schools Program to reflect changes in policy, updated information for the current fiscal year, and for accessibility and formatting.

   Mr. Darenberg asked if the list of schools participating in the program is consistent across years. Mr. Mason stated that typically the same schools apply year to year, but in some years a given school doesn't apply for funding. Mr. Darenberg asked if we get new schools each year applying. Mr. Mason stated that we typically do.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Darenberg, seconded by Vice-chair Eberhart, the IAC voted unanimously to approve the updated Administrative Procedures Guide (APG) for the Nonpublic Aging Schools Program for FY 2027.

6. **Emergency Funding – St. Mary's County Public Schools – George Washington Carver Elementary School (PSC L18F032) Roof** — [Motion Carried]

Lead Capital Projects Manager Lisa Vaughn presented a request for emergency funding from St. Mary's County Public Schools (SMCPS) for emergency repairs needed to the roof of George Washington Carver Elementary School. Ms. Vaughn stated that a leased roof solar array was removed from the facility at the end of the 15 year contract with the company, and during the removal it was discovered that the removal was causing significant damage to the roof. SMCPS directed the vendor to leave remaining pieces of the solar panel framing system to prevent further damage. The roof was tested for leaks and showed penetration resulting in wet insulation and water damage to the top coating membrane, and it was determined that the roof was compromised as a result of extensive water infiltration in the insulation throughout the roof. Ms. Vaughn stated that SMCPS is seeking financial restitution with the solar company and intends to pursue a legal claim if they are not responsive, but requires immediate funding for repairs. SMCPS Facilities Director Kim Howe was available for comments and questions from the commission.

Ms. Howe thanked the IAC for their continued support and working with SMCPS when it became clear that the roof of George Washington Carver Elementary was an emergency that needed an immediate response. She stated that SMCPS is in the process of looking into possible restitution, and stated that if possible, they understand that the district would have to return funding to the State following any recuperated funding from the contractor.

Secretary Flora asked if it's known at this time if the same contractor has installed arrays on other school buildings. Ms. Howe clarified that the current holder of the contract is not the original installer of the panels, and that the contract has changed hands many times since initial installation. Secretary Flora clarified that she was curious about the original installer in particular, due to a concern that there may be other schools that could potentially face this same emergency.

Mr. Darenberg stated that on prior emergency funding requests, there were instances where the LEA required additional funding due to permitting requirements. He asked if all required permits have been granted at this time. Ms. Howe stated that all permits were granted, that the company performing repairs is ready to begin work, and if approved today they will immediately notify the company that work can begin, stating that delays would only be due to weather conditions. Executive Director Donahue added that emergency funding requests of this type are required to comply with emergency repair regulations, and that staff found that all criteria have been satisfied. He stated that the project clearly qualifies as urgent, and that there would be a high return on investment as many additional years of lifespan will be added to the roof of the facility, conserving comfort and functionality.

Upon a motion made by Vice-chair Eberhart seconded by Mr. Darenberg, the IAC voted unanimously to approve emergency project funding totaling $538,817, consisting of $438,708 from the IAC's Emergency Repair Fund and an additional $100,109 from unrestricted Statewide reserve funds, for the St. Mary's County Public Schools George Washington Carver Elementary School emergency roof repair project; and, to make funding contingent upon SMCPS pursuing a legal claim against the solar panel vendor, and to further require that if a claim is successful that the IAC be repaid a proportional share based upon the State cost share of the project.

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7. **FY 2025 and 2026 Capital Improvement Program Rescission and Amendment – Howard County Public School System – Bryant Woods Elementary (PSC L13F079) Security Vestibule Project — [Motion Carried]**
   Funding Programs Administrator Sheron Johnson presented a request from the Howard County Public School System to rescind $130,000 from the Bryant Woods Elementary School security vestibule project to the FY 2026 CIP. She stated that bids opened on February 3, 2026 and all bids received exceeded the approved budget, and despite value engineering and redesign efforts the LEA was unable to award a contract for the project. Ms. Johnson stated that the LEA anticipated rebidding the project in the summer of 2027 following approval of this rescission and amendment into the following year's CIP to allow additional time for project execution.

   Upon a motion made by Dr. Wright seconded by Vice-chair Eberhart, the IAC voted unanimously to rescind $130,000 awarded through the FY 2025 Capital Improvement Program for Howard County Public School System's Bryant Woods Elementary security vestibule project and transfer the funds to HCPSS's reserve account, and to amend the FY 2026 CIP to include the Bryant Woods Elementary security vestibule project.

8. **FY 2027 Baltimore City HVAC Program Procedures — [Motion Carried]**
   Deputy Director Cassandra Viscarra presented the administrative procedures guide for the FY 2027 Baltimore City HVAC Program, a new funding program for the 2027 fiscal year. Ms. Viscarra stated that the program funding is a one-time appropriation of $18.85 million for HVAC projects in Baltimore City, with a goal to complete projects that will prevent schools from shutting down due to HVAC related issues as soon as possible.

   Chair Kasemeyer asked if this program was using funding from the Strategic Energy Investment Fund (SEIF). Ms. Viscarra stated that it was.

   Upon a motion made by Vice-chair Eberhart seconded by Mr. Kothari, the IAC voted unanimously to approve the FY 2027 Baltimore City HVAC Program Administrative Procedures Guide as presented and to allow staff to make non-substantive revisions to the FY 2027 Baltimore City HVAC Program Administrative Procedures Guide as needed.

Announcements:

Chair Kasemeyer stated that Mr. Darenberg had recently attended some school openings and wished to discuss his observations.

Mr. Darenberg stated that he had recently attended ribbon cuttings at the new Lansdowne High (PSC L03F149) and Deer Park Elementary (PSC L03F170) schools in Baltimore County. He stated that the Lansdowne project was a 10 year process and cost $170 million. Upon speaking with staff attending the event, he learned that if the project was started today, the price would likely be 30% higher, closer to $225 million. Deer Park is a net-zero school and a very impressive facility, which cost around $688 per square foot to build. Mr. Darenberg stated that $370 million in Built to Learn funding was appropriated to BCPS, and these two schools used $130 million of that funding. He stated that this means that with the amount of funding required, other sources of funding to build schools must be sought, or facilities must be strictly maintained in such a way to extend their lifespans.

Adjournment:

Upon a motion by Craig Curtis seconded by Vice-chair Eberhart, the IAC voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:48 am.