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**PUBLIC SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION IN MARYLAND  
THE INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION  
Report to the Education and Economic Development Subcommittee  
House Appropriations Committee  
Delegate John L. Bohanan, Chair  
Delegate Heather R. Mizeur, Vice-Chair**

David Lever  
Executive Director, Public School Construction Program  
January 31, 2012

Thank you for your past support for public school construction in Maryland, and for the opportunity to report today on the operating budget of the Interagency Committee on School Construction (IAC). In this report we will respond to the analyst's questions and recommendations, and provide additional information that may be of interest to the members of the committee.

**INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION – OPERATING BUDGET**

With a current active staff of 17,<sup>1</sup> the Public School Construction Program manages the State financial contribution for approximately 1,035 projects with a total State contribution of \$1.9 billion. In the financial management arena, the agency is responsible for the following actions:

- Capital Programming and Funding:
  - Development of the annual Capital Improvement Program recommendations to the Interagency Committee and the Board of Public Works
  - Recommendations for approval of projects in the Aging School Program (ASP), the Qualified Zone Academy Bond (QZAB) program, and special programs such as the FY 2012 Supplementary Appropriation program.
- Financial Transactions:
  - Recommendations for contract awards to the Interagency Committee
  - Processing of payment requisitions for State-funded projects
  - Auditing of construction expenditures and procedural compliance
  - Periodic reporting on all funding programs
- Maintenance Inspection Program: Annual maintenance surveys of approximately one-sixth of the schools in the state, and submission of an annual report to the Board of Public Works
- Regulatory Compliance:
  - Monitoring of LEA procurements for compliance with Minority Business Enterprise requirements and regulations for alternative project procurement, delivery, and financing arrangements
  - Recommendations for new policies, procedures and regulations to improve the design, construction, and project delivery of public schools

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<sup>1</sup> The PSCP has one frozen administrative support position. One other administrative support position is currently vacant due to a recent resignation, and is in the process of being re-classified to assist with the Maintenance Inspection Program.

- Other:
  - Maintenance of a database of all school facilities in the state, with plans to expand the utility and comprehensiveness of the database
  - Regular meetings and consultation with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Maryland Department of Planning (MDP), and Department of General Services (DGS), all of which have personnel assigned to the School Construction Program
  - Annual reports on the use of alternative project procurement, delivery, and financing methods (statutory), and periodic reports on high performance building initiatives in Maryland schools (voluntary)
  - Participation in PlanMaryland, in the Smart Growth Coordinating Council of the Smart Growth Sub-Cabinet, and in the Sustainable Growth Commission; coordination of three Smart Site projects at schools
  - Technical assistance to the local educational agencies, particularly in the areas of project procurement and Minority Business Enterprise participation
  - Investigation of special topics, e.g. emergency electrical power for schools designated as emergency shelters, asbestos containing materials in school facilities, high performance building design and technologies.
  - Tri-annual facility planners meetings to discuss legislation and PSCP procedures, and to disseminate best practices
  - Archiving of materials dating back to the beginning of the program in 1971

#### **I. MAINTENANCE SURVEYS OF SCHOOLS**

***IAC should comment on how maintenance surveys are progressing for fiscal 2012 and whether it expects to meet the 230 survey benchmark in fiscal 2012*** (D25E03, page 4).

**The IAC expects to complete 230 surveys in fiscal 2012, but not before the end of the school year in mid-June 2012.** As of January 26, 2012, our maintenance inspectors had completed 114 inspections out of a total of 230, as well as five re-inspections of schools inspected in FY 2011. Barring unforeseen delays caused by snow during February and early March, we will complete 230 inspections in FY 2012, plus a number of further re-inspections. Our inspectors have indicated, however, that the inspections cannot be completed by mid-June, that is, while schools are still in session. Some inspections will need to be completed in late June. Three factors have contributed to this delay: 1) a greater number of the FY 2012 schools have large floor areas, requiring more time per inspection, than in recent past years; 2) additional time was scheduled between blocks of inspections to allow for completing necessary reports and paperwork; and 3) many of the schools inspected this year are replacement or new/newer school buildings, which we have found require more stringent inspections and reporting than older schools. The first factor is related to the schedule that we develop so that every school in the State will be surveyed before the inspectors begin a new round of inspections. The second factor is based on our growing experience with the actual time that is required to perform the in-office paperwork functions that follow after the inspections are completed. The third factor has become significant in recent years, as we have learned that some relatively new schools are not being maintained as well as they should be, potentially jeopardizing the large State and local investment that has been made in the last decade.

Conducting inspections outside of the school year is less than desirable. Summer cleaning operations often begin almost immediately after schools are vacated by students in June, and it then becomes difficult to observe the actual operating conditions of the schools when they are occupied by young people. However, due to the factors cited, we have no option but to extend the schedule of inspections into the early summer in order to complete 230 inspections.

After five complete years of operating the maintenance inspection program, we believe that it is an exceptionally effective method for determining that schools in Maryland are safe and that the State investment in capital projects is well looked after by the local school districts. By highlighting the issue of maintenance, the program has brought renewed attention to the importance of semi-annual roof inspections and to the recurrent issue of safety in schools, particularly with regard to power wire management, blocking of egress doors, improper storage of combustible materials and chemicals, and the proper inspection of fire extinguishers. We believe that as a result of our persistent efforts, schools are becoming safer environments for our students. The reclassification and filling of a recently vacated position to provide full-time home office support to the maintenance inspection program will help to overcome the administrative, report analysis and report production burden of the program, which we have discovered requires as much or more time than the actual physical inspections of the schools. The lack of administrative support has contributed to the delay in issuing the annual FY 2011 report, as noted in the Analyst's report, as well as the individual FY 2011 and FY 2012 LEA survey reports.

**II. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS (D25E03, page 2)**

We concur with the Governor's allowance for the IAC budget.