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Capital – Maryland State Department of Education

Maryland State Department of Education
Response to the Analyst’s Review and Recommendations

Capital Budget Subcommittee –
March 15, 2016

House Capital Budget Subcommittee –
March 16, 2016



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Interim Superintendent of Schools

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the capital budget analysis.

MSDE gratefully acknowledges the Legislation enacted in 2014 by the General Assembly to implement a wealth-based cost sharing formula for the Public Library Capital Grant Program. Under the new matching requirement, State share percentages in the formula are adjusted to account for the relative per capita wealth of the jurisdiction. As noted in the analysis, the new formula has resulted in an increase in both the number of projects and jurisdictions receiving awards, particularly to geographic areas with less wealth. While a number of renovation projects were completed across the State during the previous year, MSDE is especially pleased to report that two newly constructed libraries will open in Harford (Havre de Grace) and Somerset (Crisfield) Counties in the next few weeks.

MSDE should comment on why (previously awarded) funds have not yet been expended.

Since December 2015, MSDE has processed an additional \$600,000 in reimbursement requests for the program reducing the amount of unexpended funds from \$8.9 to \$8.3 million. More than half of the total (\$4.2 million) is for seven projects awarded funding in fiscal 2016. These projects are under design or out for bid, but the balance of funds will not be expended until construction commences. Typically, design fees only account for 10% of the total project cost.

All unexpended funds from fiscal 2013 are for three related projects in Howard County. Project One involved the renovation of the old Miller Library into administrative headquarters. Upon completion, administrative offices in the Central (7,000 SF) and East Columbia (9,000 SF) Branch Libraries were relocated to the new administrative headquarters. Project One fell behind schedule and delayed Projects Two and Three, renovation of the vacant space in the Central and East Columbia branches for use as public service areas. Both of these projects are now under construction and the Library anticipates they will be completed in fiscal 2016.

The majority of unexpended funds from fiscal 2014 are allocated to Washington County for a new 7,500 SF Hancock Library. Difficulty reaching consensus with town officials for the new location caused a delay in the selection of a site for more than one year. The Library subsequently chose a site in the town's Widmeyer Park and retained A&E services. The project is under design, and the Library expects to begin construction in fiscal 2017 and complete the project in fiscal 2018.

The attached program report provides the balance and status of all State funded projects.

MSDE wishes to express its gratitude for the funding previously authorized through fiscal 2019 to continue and complete renovations to the State Library Resource Center. The analysis provides an excellent description of the dire need at this location.

With regard to the specific recommendations noted in the analysis:

Recommended Actions:

- 1. Approve the \$5 million general obligation bond fund authorization for the Public Library Capital Grant Program.**

MSDE concurs.

- 2. Approve the \$26.4 million general obligation bond fund authorization to provide continued funding for the State Library Resource Center renovation project.**

MSDE concurs.

- 3. Approve the fiscal 2018 pre-authorization of \$30.5 million for the State Library Resource Center renovation project.**

MSDE concurs.

- 4. Approve the fiscal 2019 pre-authorization of \$3.5 million for the State Library Resource Center renovation project.**

MSDE concurs.