



Fiscal Year 2021 Capital Budget

**SENATE CAPITAL BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE**  
February 18, 2020

**HOUSE CAPITAL BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE**  
February 20, 2020



**Class of 2019**

## ***Background Information***

The Maryland School for the Deaf (MSD) provides educational and developmental services for the State's deaf and hard-of-hearing children and youth. The School, founded in 1867, serves this population through its two campuses located in Frederick and Columbia.

The School's instructional programs operate on a 180-day school year, from September through mid-June. Extended School Year (ESY) programs and enrichment camps are offered at MSD during the summer months. Approximately 24% of the students on both campuses reside at the School during the week, returning to their homes on weekends and during school breaks.

MSD's Frederick campus provides a comprehensive elementary/secondary school program, with separate departments for Elementary (pre-K through Grade 5), Middle (Grades 6-8), and High School (Grades 9-12). The Frederick Campus also offers a Career and Technology program, which provides students with career skills, including computer and technical courses. The Special Needs program is also offered at Frederick for students with additional learning and behavioral disabilities.

The Columbia Campus also provides a comprehensive elementary/secondary school program for Elementary and Middle School-age students that include Special Needs educational programs.

MSD's Family Education and Early Childhood Department (FEECD) works with families of deaf and hard-of-hearing infants and toddlers to develop early language skills for their children. Because the optimum time for language development is from birth to age three, children given early communication training have a much greater opportunity for social and academic development in later years.

Enrollment at MSD is cyclical in nature. FY 2017 had one of the largest enrollments recorded, but it also had one of the largest graduating classes at MSD. FY 2019 MSD enrollment has returned to enrollment average similar to FY 2015 and 2016. MSD considers size of graduating class when estimating future enrollment. The most difficult variable to estimate when calculating enrollment is admissions to the Family Education and Early Childhood Department. This is because these admissions are based on the number of deaf and hard-of-hearing children born each year.

**MSD is requesting funding for the following project:**

### ***Renovation of the Veditz Building – Frederick Campus***

The Veditz Building was constructed in 1975 as a vocational training building that included large spaces and high open ceilings for large equipment. The types of career technology education that occur today require a classroom setting. The changes in curriculum have also required more classroom spaces. Career technology education has changed to include medical technology, engineering, robotics, cyber security, and certified nursing assistant courses as well as the

traditional woodworking and automobile technology courses. The School has utilized movable walls to divide the open spaces to classrooms. Though usable it does not create an optimal educational environment.

This project is a renovation of both floors from open space rooms to classrooms with acoustic ceilings, better lighting, walls for white boards, and improvement to the building's electrical, mechanical, plumbing and HVAC systems. When completed, the Veditz Building will offer state of the art career technology education classes, preparing the students for future careers.

The Maryland School for the Deaf will begin design of the Veditz Building renovation in Fiscal Year 2020.

### **Recommended DLS Actions**

**The School concurs.**

**MSD prior authorized funding:**

#### ***Emergency Notification System – Columbia Campus***

The Maryland School for the Deaf Columbia Campus has a visual fire alarm system, but has no visual system to notify students, staff and visitors of other types of emergencies. The Maryland State Department of Education has mandated seven emergency drills. MSD Columbia Campus has an alarm system for only the fire drills with visual strobes to alert the deaf and hard of hearing population. All the other emergency drills rely on a text message phone chain using staff personal cell phones to provide visual notification to staff and students. At MSD, 100% of the students and more than 50% of the staff rely on visual communication. The Maryland School for the Deaf considers this project a life safety issue to for compliance with the Maryland Safe to Learn Act of 2018.

This project is to design an Emergency Notification System to inform staff, students and visitors via visual communication of drills and emergencies other than a fire emergency. When completed, the Emergency Notification System will improve life safety and ensure MSD complies with the Maryland Safe to Learn Act of 2018.

**The DLS analysis requested:**

*The Department of Legislative Services recommends that DGS update the committees on the status of the assessment of the Frederick campus emergency notification system, including a timeframe for reaching compliance and an estimate of any additional work and funding needed to bring the system up to compliance.*

**DGS Provides the following response:**

**The Maryland School for the Deaf, Frederick Campus, emergency notification project was substantially complete in September 2017 and the system was put into operation. At that time there was a list of items to be completed, known as a "Punch**

List". The campus was given a temporary occupancy permit by the State Fire Marshal's Office until these items could be resolved.

One of the items on the Punch List continues to be compliance with the National Fire Protection Act (NFPA 72) 10 second rule for fire alarm device activation. The contractor challenged that this rule should not apply to non-fire devices like the text messaging signs that provide notifications for non-fire related events. Text messaging signs are not common to mass notification systems, but were necessary for the occupants of the Maryland School for the Deaf to understand directions in a mass notification event, since verbal directions are not effective. The original contractor has been unable to get the entire system including the text message signs to comply. It is important to note that the audio and visual (horns and strobes) of the base fire alarm system comply with the 10 second requirement.

DGS hired a 3rd party to investigate the system and determine a solution that would allow the existence of the text message signs and the 10 second rule to coexist. The 3rd party has identified a proposed solution. DGS is scheduling testing of this alternate solution; if the alternate solution proves to be successful in meeting the 10 second rule, installation of corrective measures will be implemented in the summer of 2020 so as not to impact the student population.

### **Future Projects in the Capital Improvement Program**

#### ***High School Boys' and Girls' and Middle School Residences – Frederick Campus***

The Maryland School for the Deaf Frederick Campus was originally designed as a residential campus. Currently three buildings house the dormitories on the Frederick Campus, Foxwell-Moylan Hall, Faupel Hall, and Klipp-Redmond Hall. The buildings were built between 1964 and 1973. Each building is built with the same basic design. A fourth building, Barry Hall was demolished to accommodate the new cafeteria building.

The design of the original dormitories is barracks style with open showers where supervision of students is difficult. The dormitories were built at the largest period of residential enrollment of the school and are now over capacity for current enrollment needs. All buildings have the same design and foot print.

The existing dormitory buildings are inadequate by today's standards. The buildings do not meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. To be fully ADA compliant, the buildings would need elevators. In addition, they need to be updated to meet current requirements for fire suppression and sprinklers, and egress from the building. They do not meet requirements for insulation and energy efficiency and need to be upgraded with lighting and energy efficient windows. There is no central air conditioning in the buildings. Some of the rooms have individual window units but the electrical capacity of the buildings will not accommodate a unit in every window. Individual units are not energy efficient.

The School has been operating under the existing deficient conditions for the past decade, but has made every effort to attain its mission to provide quality educational services, including a safe environment for its students and staff.