



Fiscal Year 2022 Capital Budget

SENATE CAPITAL BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE

February 16, 2021

HOUSE CAPITAL BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE

February 16, 2021



Class of 2020

Maryland School for the Deaf Fiscal Year 2022 Capital Budget

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. During a school year without COVID, 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. A 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 includes 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 2020 MSD enrollment is slightly below the average enrollment of FY 2019. However, MSD is confident that within a few years the enrollment will again increase. 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.

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MSD is requesting funding for the following projects:

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 into 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 began design of the Veditz Building renovation in Fiscal Year 2021.

Recommended DLS Actions

Approve the funding for the Veditz Building renovation.

The Maryland School for the Deaf concurs.

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 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 risk analysis for the New Emergency Notification System began in Fiscal Year 2021.

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Recommended DLS Actions

Approve the funding for the New Emergency Notification System.

The Maryland School for the Deaf concurs.

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, upgraded doorways, permanent ramps and many other modifications. In addition, these dormitories 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 air conditioning units are not energy efficient.

The School has been operating under the existing deficient conditions for the past 15 years, but has made every effort to attain its mission to provide quality educational services, including a safe dormitory environment for its students and staff.