

Fiscal Year 2025 Capital Budget
Response to Department of Legislative Services Analysis

**APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
HOUSE CAPITAL BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE
CHAIRPERSON, DELEGATE MARK CHANG
March 4, 2024**

**BUDGET AND TAXATION COMMITTEE
SENATE CAPITAL BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE
CHAIRPERSON, SENATOR CRAIG ZUCKER
March 5, 2024**



Class of 2023

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. 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.

MSD is requesting funding for the following project:

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. Finally, the current dormitories do not comply with the Climate Solutions Now Act requiring state buildings to eliminate reliance on fossil fuels for heating.

The School has been operating under the existing deficient conditions for the past 20 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.

DLS Recommendations and Updates

Approve the general obligation bond authorization for the Maryland School for the Deaf.

Updates

- Veditz Building: From fiscal 2018 to 2023, a total of \$18.8 million was provided for the construction and renovation of the Veditz Building at the Maryland School for the Deaf's (MSD) Frederick campus, including \$6.0 million in GO bond authorizations and \$12.8 million in pay-as-you-go general funds. In September 2023, due to escalating construction costs, the Department of Budget and Management and the Department of General Services (DGS) asked for an additional \$3.4 million from the Construction Contingency Fund to complete the project, bringing the total cost to \$22.2 million. A contract was approved by the Board of Public Works (BPW) on November 29, 2023, and as of February 2024, asbestos abatement is underway, and

Maryland School for the Deaf Fiscal Year 2025 Capital Budget

the contractor is preparing the site for construction. This project was originally scheduled to be completed in May 2024 but due to delays is now scheduled for completion in late calendar 2025 or early calendar 2026.

- **Columbia Campus Emergency Notification System:** The fiscal 2019 and 2021 capital budgets included a total of \$4.6 million in GO bonds for design and construction of a new visual emergency notification system at MSD's Columbia (Howard County) campus. The project has experienced multiple delays due to difficulties with the procurement process; however, in November 2023, BPW approved a contract for \$2.3 million. As of December 2023, the project is underway and should be completed by the end of calendar 2024. Even though the contracted amount approved by BPW is only 50% of the authorized funding, DGS advises that the current authorization for \$4.6 million should remain due to cost uncertainty.

Maryland School for the Deaf Response

We concur with the analysis of the Department of Legislative Services