

Fiscal Year 2026 Capital Budget
Response to Department of Legislative Services Analysis

**APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
HOUSE CAPITAL BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE
CHAIRPERSON, DELEGATE MARK CHANG**
February 24, 2025

**BUDGET AND TAXATION COMMITTEE
SENATE CAPITAL BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE
CHAIRPERSON, SENATOR CRAIG ZUCKER**
February 25, 2025



Class of 2024

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 2019 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 2025, the building is under construction and is expected to be finished in the next few months. MSD is also working with the Office of State

Maryland School for the Deaf Fiscal Year 2026 Capital Budget

Procurement and Maryland Correctional Enterprises to order equipment and furniture for the building. Implementation of this project has been delayed several times since it was first funded in fiscal 2019. When the committees last considered this project in the 2024 session, the project was scheduled for completion in May 2024 but is now anticipated in mid-calendar 2025.

- **Columbia Campus Emergency Notification System:** The fiscal 2020 and 2022 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, and the notification system is on schedule to be completed in May 2025. Even though the contracted amount approved by BPW in calendar 2023 is only 50% of the authorized funding, in February 2025, DGS advised that the authorization for \$4.6 million should remain due to cost uncertainty.

The Department of Legislative Services requested that DGS should be prepared to brief the committees on the problems encountered with the initial design procurement and address the decision not to procure a CM contract from the outset with the initial fiscal 2024 design authorization

DGS response

DGS initiated the steps for the AE Design and CMAR procurements in August 2023, shortly after funding became available. The AE design procurement process is more established within DGS and therefore progressed quicker. DGS was able to advertise the initial AE Design solicitation in October 2023, but DGS cancelled and reissued the solicitation in January and February 2024, respectively, in order to better clarify requirements for proposers to ensure a fair process. DGS started negotiations with the top ranked firm in May 2024 and the award was approved at the last December 2024 BPW meeting. DGS kicked off the design in January with the program verification phase to confirm user requirements in an interactive manner that will eventually solidify the program needs and scope of design. This phase involves a number of workshops and meetings with various user groups that are chosen and verified and vetted to be able to provide applicable input on the complex nature of this DeafSpace design project. The CMAR procurement will run concurrently with this program verification and schematic design effort and it is anticipated to be awarded in the design development phase in Q3 2025.

Maryland School for the Deaf Response

The Maryland School for the Deaf concurs with the analysis of the Department of Legislative Services.