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Capital – State Department of Education

Maryland State Department of Education

Response to the Analyst's Review and Recommendations

House Capital Budget Subcommittee - March 20, 2015

Senate Capital Budget Subcommittee - March 23, 2015



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State 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 account for the relative per capita wealth of the jurisdiction. Additionally, the minimum State share of 50% mirrors protections of similar programs and the maximum State share of 90% ensures some level of local participation in the projects. 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 such as Allegany and Somerset Counties.

MSDE also wishes to express its gratitude for the funding previously authorized through 2018 to continue and complete construction of the desperately needed renovations to the Enoch Pratt Free Library/State Library Resource Center. The analysis provides an excellent description of the dire need at this location.

MSDE and DGS should provide a status update on the project, including the likelihood that construction will commence in December 2015 and that all \$25.9 million in construction funding will be required for expenditure in fiscal 2016.

MSDE reached out to the Department of General Services, which is the agency overseeing this project. DGS reports that December 2015 is a realistic start date for construction of the project, and that the Department of Budget and Management agrees.

DGS reports that, at this point, it is unclear how much construction funding will be required for fiscal 2016. A professional construction cash flow will be available when a Construction Manager (CM) is on board. DGS is currently preparing a CM Request for Proposals and intends to have a CM under contract by May. The first year of construction is typically more expensive than the subsequent years because many fees are front loaded.

With regard to the specific recommendations noted in the analysis:

Recommended Actions

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

MSDE concurs.

2. State Library Resource Center
Approve the \$16.85 million general obligation bond fund authorization to provide continued

construction funding for the State Library
Resource Center – Renovation project.

MSDE concurs.

MSDE again thanks the General Assembly for the ongoing support of Maryland’s public libraries. They are places for lifelong learning and an important part of the mission of MSDE.