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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 15, 2013

Senate Capital Budget Subcommittee - March 22, 2013



Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Schools



Maryland Public Schools: ***#1 in the Nation Five Years in a Row***

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the capital budget analysis.

This Agency gratefully acknowledges the request made last legislative session by the General Assembly to investigate and report on possible adjustments to the Public Library Capital Grant Program. MSDE notes that the Capital Budget Subcommittees specifically expressed concern that some jurisdictions were unable to meet the 50% local match requirement, and that there were a small number of counties that comprised the majority of the prior years' funding under this program.

MSDE thanks the Maryland Public Library Administrators (MAPLA) who worked with this Agency in investigating alternatives for the matching formula. MSDE believes that the methodology proposed through SB633/HB685 provides a simple and fair way to improve access to this program for every county, regardless of its wealth base. Under the proposed 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 other similar programs and the maximum State share of 90% ensures some level of local participation in the projects.

As noted in the analysis, if this legislation passes, the Department requests that the General Assembly elect to provide additional funding to this program to support these new cost sharing levels at the full \$5 million program level. MSDE would welcome the opportunity to work with our colleagues at the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) to identify and recommend projects eligible for increased funding in FY 2014 so that this new formula could begin to work immediately.

MSDE also wishes to express its gratitude for the \$1.2 million to complete the design for 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.

With regard to the specific recommendations noted in the analysis:

Recommended Actions

1. Approve the \$2.3 million general obligation bond fund authorization for the Public Library Capital Grant Program.

As noted above, MSDE concurs with full funding of the program and also requests that, subject to the passage of SB633/HB685, funding be restored to the full \$5 million authorized program level.

2. Approve the \$1.2 million general obligation bond fund authorization to resume and complete design of the State Library Resource Center – Renovation project.

MSDE concurs.

This Agency again thanks you for your ongoing support of Maryland's public libraries. They are places for lifelong learning and an important part of the mission of MSDE.