

BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Testimony of the Baltimore City Public School System Support with Amendments House Bill 630 -Primary and Secondary Education School District Energy Use Policy and Study

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Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools) supports with amendments HB 630. Each school district in Maryland should have an energy policy to reduce costs and protect the environment. For many districts, utilities are the second-largest budget item, after salaries, and the greenhouse gases released as a result of a district's energy use are significant. A district-level policy will describe expectations, set goals, and measure progress.

Procuring more energy from renewable sources is beneficial to the environment, reduces dependency on the grid, and supports the renewable energy sector in Maryland. City Schools procures some of its electricity from an off-site solar farm, has two Net Zero Energy schools with on-site solar, and follows all state mandates regarding renewable energy. We adopted a Sustainability Policy in 2016, which includes an Administrative Regulation about Energy, Water and Resource Conservation.

Schools across the state are of varying ages with many different building systems. Some schools are highly energy efficient while others are less so. Tracking energy use helps districts to identify inefficient buildings and then reduce waste by changing behaviors and/or directing retrofits to the buildings that most need them.

An energy policy also gives districts the opportunity to educate students and staff, because though a building may be designed and constructed to be energy efficient, it may not be operated in an efficient manner. Students can learn about renewable energy, the implications of burning fossil fuels, and ways to use less energy at school and at home. They will then understand their relationship to their local, regional, and global ecosystems and the positive steps they can take.

City Schools proposes two small changes to Section 1 of the bill, as follows:

- Modify Section 1(B)(3) to read: "Include current and historical data on the school district's energy use BY SQUARE FOOT." This will capture all energy use, not just electricity use, which is required in Section 1, (B)(2)(III).
- Modify Section 1(D)(2) to read: "Updated every THREE years." An update every three years is reasonable and reduces the compliance burden.

Finally, City Schools fully support Section 2 regarding research into funding additional net zero energy schools.

For the foregoing reasons, the Baltimore City Public School System supports House Bill 630 and urges a favorable report with amendments mentioned above.

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