

Dear Senator,

I am writing to express my strong support for SB0646 School Construction - Public Charter School Facility Fund - Establishment, sponsored by Senator McCray. As a parent at Carroll Creek Montessori Public Charter School in Frederick County, Maryland, I urge you to support this bill and help ensure that our charter schools have access to adequate and affordable facilities.

Carroll Creek Montessori is an excellent public charter school that provides a unique and valuable alternative to traditional public schools. The Montessori approach focuses on each child's individual needs, providing a more personalized and engaging education that fosters creativity, critical thinking, and a love of learning. All three FCPS public charter schools, including Carroll Creek Montessori, have attained a 5-star rating on the 2019 Maryland Report Card, in company with only 9 (of 37) other FCPS elementary schools.

However, like many charter schools, Carroll Creek Montessori has struggled with inadequate and unaffordable facilities. The current school buildings offer inadequate classroom size, no gymnasium, no kitchen, no cafeteria, and no outdoor green space. In addition, a significant portion of the school's budget goes to private landlords instead of initiatives that directly support student learning. This is simply unacceptable, and it's time for our state to take action.

SB0646 seeks to establish a fund managed by the IAC that allows public charter schools to apply for up to \$2000 per pupil annually for eligible facilities-related expenses. This funding would come from the State's General Fund, and it would not impact the Blueprint formula or take funding away from any other public school students. Instead, this bill would allow more Blueprint dollars to be spent in the classroom on learning instead of on the school's facility. It also sets strong parameters around spending accountability and transparency while ensuring there is standard bond bill language on repayment if a school should close or sell a privately-owned building.

I urge you to support this bill, not only for the benefit of my children but for the benefit of all Maryland students. We need to ensure that all children have access to a quality education, regardless of their background or socioeconomic status. By supporting SB0646, you will be helping to level the playing field for charter schools and provide students with the resources they need to succeed.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to your support of SB0646.

Sincerely,

Clement Vasseur
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