



Senate Bill 653

*County Boards of Education - Establishing Innovative Regional Schools - Authority
(Cross-County Attendance to Achieve Efficiency Act of 2019)*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Ways and Means Committee

Date: March 21, 2019

From: Robin Clark Eilenberg

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 653. This bill would enable local school boards to establish innovative regional schools. As amended by the Senate, the legislation clarifies the county role in developing regional schools.

Regional schools are a common-sense solution that provides agility to school districts grappling with facility needs and shifting student enrollments. Allowing school boards to coordinate regional schools through a memorandum of understanding will give them the flexibility needed to maximize use of the limited resources for the best educational outcomes.

Dramatic increases in school construction costs over the past decade have hindered progress on school construction and renovation of aging facilities. Maryland's counties provide robust capital funding to K-12 education. Every year, however, there are unmet facility needs. MACo supports innovative solutions to meet the needs of Maryland's students.

The *21st Century School Facilities of 2017 Final Report* recommended that the State explore the feasibility of regional (multi-district) school construction projects, including regional P3 zones (e.g., regional career and technical education high schools), and develop mechanisms and incentives to provide state funding. The *21st Century School Facilities Act of 2018* required that the Interagency Commission on School Construction provide technical support for agreements between and among local education agencies and county governing bodies, including regional partnerships, to promote efficiency. This legislation seems to take a reasonable step toward that goal.

For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS** SB 653 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.