

Dear Senator Kasemeyer,

I write to let you know that I have submitted the attached testimony for the March 21 Capital Budget Subcommittee hearing.

With public education a top priority, it is critically important that the full \$5M be allocated in FY 12 for public library capital projects, and that the funding remain mandatory.

Like the schools, adequate quality space is vital to delivering our curriculum, which comprises three pillars: Self-Directed Education, Research Assistance & Instruction, and Instructive & Enlightening Experiences. \$5M is minimal when compared to allocations to schools and colleges and the return on investment in high-quality public education for all is immense.

Assuming the full \$5M is funded, MSDE has approved \$1M for Howard County Library (HCL) projects in FY 12 toward the construction of Phase II of the new Miller Branch & Historical Center and the design for contingent projects that, combined, will gain 20,000 SF of public service space as follows:

- The existing Miller Branch (23,500 SF) will be renovated into not only HCL business offices, but also critically needed classrooms and community meeting rooms. Relocating HCL business offices will enable 16,000 SF of administrative space at our Central and East Columbia branches to be repurposed into public service areas.
- At our East Columbia Branch, 9,000 SF of space will be repurposed for additional instructional spaces and technology classrooms, community meeting rooms, and a dedicated venue for Teen Time, HCL's novel program for at-risk youth, whose current space constraints require us to waitlist students.
- At our Central Branch, 7,000 SF of repurposed space will enable HCL Project Literacy (our Adult Basic Education initiative serving 500 students) to triple its individualized instruction space, which is so crucial to our students' success. Further, we need flexible classroom space for Project Literacy group instruction, space that will also afford us the ability to schedule additional high-demand children's classes. Lastly, this same flexible space can also function as community meeting room space.

If you need any additional information, I will be happy to provide it (e.g., HCL FY 10 statistics: 2.6M visits, 7.2M items borrowed, 1.4M research assistance interactions, 186,000 in attendance at classes and events--all of which continue to escalate).

Thank you for all you do!

Sincerely,  
Valerie

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