



Maryland Outdoor Learning Partnership (OLP) School Sustainability Working Group Meeting Minutes

Date and Time: Wednesday, June 11, 2025, 1:00-2:00 PM

Attendees

Laura Collard (Working Group Co-Chair), Deborah Herr Cornwell (Working Group Co-Chair), Victoria Howard, Deborah Herr Cornwell, Larissa Pasco, Mary Westlund, Maria Prawirodihardjo, Karen Fedor, Olivia Wisner, Stephanie Tuckfield (OLP Co-Chairs Designee)

Welcome & Meeting Began at 1:05

Working Group Share Out (Goals, Resources, Who We Work With, Gaps or Needs)

Member Organization	IAC
Overall Goal and Resources	Interagency Commission on School Construction (FY 2024, Annual Report) 850 million in state funds Maintenance is approximately 50% of the total cost of school IAC staff completes Statewide Facilities Assessment (SFA) (approximately 350 assessments each year)
Programs	Capital Improvement Program (CIP) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Can include 10% of what the state is putting toward construction can go toward design cost. Healthy School Facility Fund Aging Schools Program Build to Learn Program School Safety Grant Program New program to be launched in FY 2027, (called Priority Fund) Priority will be based on SFA scores.



Current Gaps or Needs (related to School Sustainability)	Financial constraints have delayed maintenance (usually scheduled at the 30 and 50 yr mark of the facilities).
--	--

Discussion:

- Certain site development costs are considered part of the design costs
- The majority of the IAC's funding programs are non-competitive, except for the Healthy School Facility Fund. The IAC awards State funding based on the total funds available, the LEA's prioritized projects, and if the expenditures are eligible to be funded with State dollars. The IAC's Administrative Procedures Guide: https://iac.mdschoolconstruction.org/?page_id=616
- Capital Project Managers at the IAC are in regular communication with LEA facilities management
- Each individual funding program from the IAC has guides on how to apply, what can and cannot be funded. For more information about the individual programs visit https://iac.mdschoolconstruction.org/?page_id=135
- MSDE has guidance on using Native Plants in landscaping and outdoor courtyards and the use of courtyards for curriculum support: http://archives.marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/FCB60C1D-6CC2-4270-BDAA-153D67247324/32899/PlanningConstructingUsingSchoolCourtyards_062012_.pdf
- The purpose of Maryland Public School Facilities Educational Sufficiency Standards is to establish acceptable minimum levels for the physical attributes, capacity, and educational suitability of existing public PreK-12 school facilities in



- order to assess existing facilities against a defined standard to identify deficiencies. COMAR, 14.39.07 specifically addresses this: <https://shorturl.at/CVZ1l>
- Buildings are required to be 'high performance buildings' under [State Finance and Procurement § 3-602.1](#) if they are receiving State funds. The Maryland Green Building Council requires either LEED, IgCC, or GBI Green Globes rating for certification as a High-Performance Green Building.
 - Many IAC programs require a State and Local cost share, meaning that the State will pay some percentage of eligible construction costs, while the county/city will pay the rest. If the school is being built is to be a net zero school, the % paid by the county/ city would be reduced by 5%, and the State cost would increase by 5%.
 - MEA has decarbonizing public schools grant, next round to open in July. MEA works closely with MSDE Office of School Facilities.
 - MDA is interested in identifying funds that could renovate existing greenhouses on school grounds.

Remaining Questions:

- Is there guidance provided to schools on what the IAC would be looking to fund?
- Is their guidance on including outdoor classrooms/ native plants in their application?

The following steps outline a typical process of designing and constructing a new school:

- **The Planning Phase:** The outcome is Educational Specifications (Ed Specs)
 - Project approval and site selection;
 - Planning committee and planning subgroup formation;
 - Committee discussions and decisions on program, philosophy, content, staffing, organization, etc.;
 - Educational specifications preparation;
 - Selection of an architect;



- **The Design Phase:** The outcome is Construction Documents ready for Bidding
 - Pre-design meeting with the architect;
 - Schematic design;
 - Design development;
 - Preparation of construction documents;
- **The Bidding Phase:** The outcome is Pricing
- **The Construction Phase:** The outcome is a school that ready for occupancy

Update from Environmental and Climate Literacy Working Group

- The OLP ECL Working Group identified the desire for further leadership and definition of climate literacy, reinforcing Maryland environmental literacy, and strengthening networks. In the April meeting, the work group discussed the potential impact of strategies such as utilizing community networks and one of the sub-groups has identified various networks with which the working group is connected in order to support reaching or utilizing existing networks. The work group also discussed the potential impacts and needs if an updated state policy or tool were created. A sub-group began discussing existing sources of data that could be used to inform a new policy or tool, and what gaps in information exist. The last subgroup has focused on how we are currently or could interact with teacher training in higher education. The full working group will also be researching and considering examples of climate literacy policies and/or tools in other states to inform our next steps.

Updates from Chesapeake Bay Program

- Agenda item not reached

Defining Opportunities that Support Goals and Priorities of the OLP Executive Order

- Agenda item not reached



Items for Next Meeting Agenda and Next Steps

- o 5 minutes for sharing from WG members about their work and 5 minutes for questions (overall goals and resources that each of our organizations can offer and whom we work with and our current gaps or needs); tentatively Maria and Larissa in August.

Meeting Closed at 2:07