Testimony on Creating a School Facilities Inventory at

Pennsylvania Department of Education

September 22, 2025

Mary Filardo, Executive Director, 21st Century School Fund

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am sorry I am not able to attend in person. I am Mary Filardo, founder and director of a national non-profit organization that has been working to build the public will and public capacity for modern elementary and secondary public school buildings and grounds since my children first attended the public schools in Washington, DC in the 1980s.

About the 21st Century School Fund

- Our first focus was Washington, D.C. public school facilities, leading the development of the first long-range educational facility master plan (1994); initiating and then facilitating a public private development partnership to finance the first new school in DC in a generation (2001).
- Next, we facilitated a learning community of researchers and advocates from Chicago, New York City, Ohio urban districts, New Jersey Abbott districts, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and New Orleans in joint research and collaboration (2001-2008).
- Next, we extended our research and facilitation to state policy and state facility officials when we helped to start and staff the National Council on School Facilities, an association of states focused on k12 public school facilities (2012 to present).
- Next, we helped start the Build America's Schools Coalition (BASIC) which is a civic, education, labor, and industry coalition working towards an appropriate federal role in providing modern public school facilities (2017 to present).
- Finally, 21st Century School Fund is part of the National Center on School Infrastructure (NCSI) consortium. NCSI is funded by the U.S. Department of Education to bring information and technical support to states and high need school districts on effective stewardship of public school facilities (2023 to present).

From this foundation, I will provide a national context and background on effective state practice related to the items in this bill.

National Context:

The complexity and cost of operating, maintaining, financing, designing and building public school facilities is increasing. School districts expended $72 billion in FY2023 on maintenance and operation of plant and an annual average of $73 billion (actual $$) from FY19 to 23 on school construction and equipment capital outlay. See state by state comparisons in packet. These funds are falling short, but also may be poorly spent because of the complexity of pressures from:

- Enrollment changes –declines or growth
- Student assignment boundaries and school choice policy change
- Aged buildings
- Deferred maintenance
- Perceived and actual risks associated with:
    - Indoor environmental toxics
    - School shootings
    - Natural disasters
- Rising market costs for school operations, maintenance, financing, and construction

Added to these pressures is stress in our civil society, so decision makers struggle to earn the public trust needed to build consensus on paths forward to meet these challenges.

As evidenced by court decisions in many states (see https://www.21csf.org/policy-items.php?area=Facilities%20Funding) states have largely fallen short in their capacity to help districts deliver teaching and learning conditions which meet modern health, safety, environmental, and education standards. However, this is changing, and state capacity to assist districts has been growing over the decades.

The U.S. Department of Education funding for state facility capacity building is an example of a growing bi-partisan realization that state facility capacity can help districts and provides a sound return on investment. The " Supporting America's School Infrastructure" or SASI initiative was a joint idea of Senator Shelby (R-AL), former Chairman of the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee and Senator Reed (D-RI) the Ranking member of the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee. It is not an authorized program, but their understanding of the challenges districts were all facing during the COVID pandemic, made clear to them the benefits of state facility capacity to districts and they secured funding in budget report language for this under an existing US ED program in the FY2023 budget.

Background on Effective State Practice

In our work with the National Council on School Facilities, we prepared an assessment tool on state school facilities capacity building. We identified key areas where states can provide capacity to help their districts:

Facilities Governance and Decision-Making
Facilities Data and Information Management
Educational Facilities Planning
Technical Assistance & Training for Facilities Management
Facilities Financing & Funding
Standards, Assessments and Accountability

Each element (listed below) being tasked for Pennsylvania Department of Education in this bill falls into an area of effective practice and can assist districts.

- a public-school facility inventory;
- building condition assessments and facilities studies;
- assistance to districts toward leveraging resources; and
- agency coordination related to school facility planning and improvements.

The work needed to assist districts will cost PDE. With local district FY2023 M&O and capital facility expenditures of $5 billion in Pennsylvania, exploring how to fund an ongoing state facility capacity program makes sense. It can mean better value for funds already being spent, fewer facility deficiencies, and disparities, reductions in waste, fraud, or abuse of district facility funds. State departments of education can be an economical and strong investment in strategies for addressing the nation's need for modern public schools.

Facilities Maintenance and Operations Expenditures FY2023

State	Enrollment 2022-2023 (regular districts)	Maintenance & Operation of Plant (V40) FY23	M&O per Student FY23	ESSER Federal Revenue for M&O (_ae7) FY23 *	% Federal Revenue for M&O FY2023
Alabama	745,473	$940,568,000	$1,262	$56,616,000	6.0%
Alaska	130,723	$304,592,000	$2,330	$5,342,000	1.8%
Arizona	901,638	$1,195,508,000	$1,326	$53,073,000	4.4%
Arkansas	467,862	$659,097,000	$1,409	$49,758,000	7.5%
California	5,314,753	$9,348,361,000	$1,759	$467,686,000	5.0%
Colorado	846,796	$1,172,236,000	$1,384	$11,683,000	1.0%
Connecticut	472,943	$940,665,000	$1,989		0.0%
Delaware	123,243	$359,595,000	$2,918	$32,715,000	9.1%
District of Columbia	49,687	$99,426,000	$2,001	$856,000	0.9%
Florida	2,841,354	$3,822,318,000	$1,345	$200,776,000	5.3%
Georgia	1,708,936	$1,873,608,000	$1,096	$105,346,000	5.6%
Hawaii	170,209	$472,623,000	$2,777	$50,012,000	10.6%
Idaho	289,242	$294,823,000	$1,019	$15,061,000	5.1%
Illinois	1,842,461	$3,048,627,000	$1,655	$121,836,000	4.0%
Indiana	983,256	$1,472,198,000	$1,497	$47,032,000	3.2%
Iowa	511,211	$671,960,000	$1,314	$14,923,000	2.2%
Kansas	487,751	$692,384,000	$1,420		0.0%
Kentucky	659,152	$783,921,000	$1,189	$38,536,000	4.9%
Louisiana	639,586	$1,087,492,000	$1,700	$39,745,000	3.7%
Maine	170,728	$378,702,000	$2,218	$53,655,000	14.2%
Maryland	889,557	$1,588,603,000	$1,786	$136,503,000	8.6%
Massachusetts	871,037	$1,875,517,000	$2,153	$91,108,000	4.9%
Michigan	1,232,814	$1,894,959,000	$1,537	$92,097,000	4.9%
Minnesota	795,812	$902,080,000	$1,134	$17,674,000	2.0%
Mississippi	436,542	$542,450,000	$1,243	$20,408,000	3.8%
Missouri	865,696	$1,209,192,000	$1,397	$53,133,000	4.4%
Montana	150,120	$215,591,000	$1,436	$8,784,000	4.1%
Nebraska	330,898	$464,348,000	$1,403	$160,000	0.0%
Nevada	424,337	$443,969,000	$1,046	$19,453,000	4.4%
New Hampshire	159,181	$293,802,000	$1,846	$11,599,000	3.9%
New Jersey	1,317,045	$3,164,650,000	$2,403		0.0%
New Mexico	294,983	$522,143,000	$1,770	$95,563,000	18.3%
New York	2,355,695	$5,592,854,647	$2,374		0.0%
North Carolina	1,400,794	$1,484,004,000	$1,059	$119,063,000	8.0%
North Dakota	118,403	$164,242,000	$1,387		0.0%
Ohio	1,560,559	$2,200,097,000	$1,410	$127,961,000	5.8%
Oklahoma	650,345	$980,524,000	$1,508	$132,350,000	13.5%
Oregon	550,605	$744,105,000	$1,351	$98,000	0.0%
Pennsylvania	**1,510,396**	**$2,865,953,000**	**$1,897**		0.0%
Rhode Island	124,230	$204,271,000	$1,644	$9,943,000	4.9%
South Carolina	736,002	$1,033,982,000	$1,405		0.0%
South Dakota	139,310	$176,825,000	$1,269	$3,051,000	1.7%
Tennessee	1,000,982	$980,969,000	$980		0.0%
Texas	5,117,013	$6,823,658,000	$1,334	$297,895,000	4.4%
Utah	609,804	$547,971,000	$899	$4,907,000	0.9%
Vermont	82,779	$172,253,000	$2,081	$6,613,000	3.8%
Virginia	1,260,290	$1,897,088,000	$1,505	$46,649,000	2.5%
Washington	1,083,584	$1,567,088,000	$1,446	$27,836,000	1.8%
West Virginia	249,403	$354,937,000	$1,423	$23,954,000	6.7%
Wisconsin	811,661	$1,167,903,000	$1,439	$35,357,000	3.0%
Wyoming	92,380	$178,999,000	$1,938	$6,316,000	3.5%
National Total/*Avg*	**46,579,261**	**$ 71,873,731,647**	***$1,543***	**$ 2,753,126,000**	***3.8%***

* Not all states reported ESSER spending.

Source: NCES Fiscal Survey - Regular Districts and Regular Districts in Supervisory Union Only - Excludes charter, state, and other districts. Compiled by 21st Century School Fund. Sept 21, 2025.

District Reported Facilities Capital Expenditures (FY19-23) and Debt -- end of FY23

State	Annual Avg Facilities Capital Expenditures FY19-FY23	per Student Annual Avg Facilities Expenditures FY19-FY23	District Long Term Debt (__41f) end of FY23	Local Debt per Student in FY23	Interest on Long Term Local Debt (i86) for FY23
Alabama	$771,447,200	$1,035	$5,633,733,000	$7,557	$164,033,000
Alaska	$127,787,000	$978	$605,260,000	$4,630	$23,756,000
Arizona	$1,185,021,197	$1,314	$5,541,618,000	$6,146	$247,870,000
Arkansas	$631,189,200	$1,349	$6,089,968,000	$13,017	$150,174,000
California	$10,096,048,592	$1,900	$85,756,340,941	$16,136	$3,760,480,000
Colorado	$1,708,663,600	$2,018	$12,471,257,647	$14,728	$671,611,000
Connecticut	$557,089,600	$1,178	$2,595,771,000	$5,489	$130,819,000
Delaware	$153,682,000	$1,247	$1,412,138,000	$11,458	$15,801,000
District of Columbia	$370,091,600	$7,448		$0	
Florida	$3,173,781,000	$1,117	$13,549,342,294	$4,769	$589,937,000
Georgia	$2,199,837,400	$1,287	$5,133,390,000	$3,004	$250,401,000
Hawaii	$242,294,200	$1,424		$0	
Idaho	$163,741,400	$566	$1,172,803,000	$4,055	$52,840,000
Illinois	$3,090,402,598	$1,677	$16,274,559,647	$8,833	$1,145,869,000
Indiana	$1,802,197,000	$1,833	$12,563,709,000	$12,778	$373,338,000
Iowa	$1,063,717,600	$2,081	$5,254,891,000	$10,279	$154,332,000
Kansas	$846,271,200	$1,735	$7,018,188,000	$14,389	$226,266,000
Kentucky	$848,746,600	$1,288	$5,974,097,000	$9,063	$242,296,000
Louisiana	$566,180,400	$885	$3,953,880,000	$6,182	$129,221,000
Maine	$182,551,798	$1,069	$1,071,268,000	$6,275	$51,506,000
Maryland	$1,633,667,600	$1,836	$6,311,420,647	$7,095	$198,442,000
Massachusetts	$1,054,775,800	$1,211	$7,560,740,000	$8,680	$316,024,000
Michigan	$1,991,674,998	$1,616	$22,468,352,000	$18,225	$800,664,000
Minnesota	$2,175,311,800	$2,733	$16,473,566,000	$20,700	$499,666,000
Mississippi	$485,452,400	$1,112	$1,949,751,000	$4,466	$67,318,000
Missouri	$1,259,516,400	$1,455	$9,187,969,000	$10,613	$319,332,000
Montana	$253,067,800	$1,686	$1,565,705,000	$10,430	$52,603,000
Nebraska	$364,324,400	$1,101	$4,457,875,000	$13,472	$138,612,000
Nevada	$655,849,000	$1,546	$3,521,186,647	$8,298	$197,739,000
New Hampshire	$163,559,799	$1,028	$799,379,000	$5,022	$40,929,000
New Jersey	$1,324,619,600	$1,006	$7,873,363,000	$5,978	$267,654,000
New Mexico	$526,522,600	$1,785	$2,296,428,000	$7,785	$67,871,000
New York	$5,908,752,101	$2,508	$16,388,384,647	$6,957	$1,736,499,000
North Carolina	$1,509,028,400	$1,077	$8,109,543,000	$5,789	$243,287,000
North Dakota	$251,729,400	$2,126	$909,806,000	$7,684	$37,443,000
Ohio	$2,184,788,400	$1,400	$15,486,930,000	$9,924	$546,591,000
Oklahoma	$567,374,800	$872	$2,926,928,000	$4,501	$53,949,000
Oregon	$1,646,946,200	$2,991	$12,609,208,000	$22,901	$524,140,000
Pennsylvania	**$2,200,307,599**	**$1,457**	**$24,231,548,647**	**$16,043**	**$960,460,000**
Rhode Island	$117,930,599	$949	$1,217,663,000	$9,802	$44,493,000
South Carolina	$1,316,584,396	$1,789	$9,563,085,000	$12,993	$320,424,000
South Dakota	$254,285,600	$1,825	$1,508,701,000	$10,830	$46,080,000
Tennessee	$858,796,200	$858	$6,483,655,000	$6,477	$244,066,000
Texas	$11,047,112,199	$2,159	$112,439,070,882	$21,974	$4,444,405,000
Utah	$740,118,000	$1,214	$4,283,873,000	$7,025	$164,962,000
Vermont	$64,711,991	$782	$244,339,000	$2,952	$9,101,000
Virginia	$1,238,796,000	$983	$8,795,322,000	$6,979	$308,766,000
Washington	$2,889,141,998	$2,666	$15,665,229,000	$14,457	$597,354,000
West Virginia	$206,470,600	$828	$449,529,000	$1,802	$9,141,000
Wisconsin	$1,286,898,400	$1,586	$8,603,587,000	$10,600	$280,828,000
Wyoming	$69,196,200	$749	$26,680,000	$289	$775,000
National Total/*Avg*	**$76,028,052,465**	***$1,632***	**$ 526,481,031,999**	***$ 11,303***	**$ 21,920,168,000**

Source: NCES F-33 Fiscal Survey, compiled by 21st Century School Fund, September 21, 2025.

District Reported State and Federal Revenues for Capital Outlay

State	Annual Avg Facilities Capital Expenditures FY19-FY23	Annual Avg State Revenue for Capital Outlay/Debt Service (C11) FY19-FY23	% State Revenue for LEA Capital Outlay FY19-FY23	ESSER Federal Revenue for Capital Outlay (_ae4) FY23	% Federal revenue for capital outlay -FY23
Alabama	$771,447,200	$ 207,295,398	26.9%	$209,418,000	18%
Alaska	$127,787,000	$ 149,400,400	116.9%	$31,715,000	18%
Arizona	$1,185,021,197	$ 132,139,385	11.2%	$241,853,000	16%
Arkansas	$631,189,200	$ 92,020,793	14.6%	$158,337,000	22%
California	$10,096,048,592	$ 1,279,557,162	12.7%	$814,221,000	7%
Colorado	$1,708,663,600	$ 208,644,771	12.2%	$62,459,000	3%
Connecticut	$557,089,600	$ 304,858,797	54.7%	$48,906,000	7%
Delaware	$153,682,000	$ 148,295,599	96.5%	$65,505,000	35%
District of Columbia	$370,091,600	$ -	100.0%	$66,000	0%
Florida	$3,173,781,000	$ 388,321,398	12.2%	$174,604,000	4%
Georgia	$2,199,837,400	$ 226,236,598	10.3%	$197,555,000	8%
Hawaii	$242,294,200	$ 473,260,200	100.0%	$2,960,000	1%
Idaho	$163,741,400	$ -	0.0%	$44,170,000	22%
Illinois	$3,090,402,598	$ 17,204,585	0.6%	$903,300,000	23%
Indiana	$1,802,197,000	$ -	0.0%	$246,602,000	12%
Iowa	$1,063,717,600	$ 548,397,600	51.6%	$92,815,000	7%
Kansas	$846,271,200	$ 274,309,189	32.4%		0%
Kentucky	$848,746,600	$ 242,789,196	28.6%	$107,073,000	9%
Louisiana	$566,180,400	$ -	0.0%	$134,923,000	16%
Maine	$182,551,798	$ 96,331,695	52.8%	$13,164,000	9%
Maryland	$1,633,667,600	$ 395,890,200	24.2%	$47,844,000	3%
Massachusetts	$1,054,775,800	$ 510,359,594	48.4%	$24,718,000	2%
Michigan	$1,991,674,998	$ -	0.0%	$170,333,000	6%
Minnesota	$2,175,311,800	$ 267,923,793	12.3%	$66,701,000	3%
Mississippi	$485,452,400	$ -	0.0%	$323,055,000	45%
Missouri	$1,259,516,400	$ -	0.0%	$51,765,000	3%
Montana	$253,067,800	$ 6,132,975	2.4%	$51,434,000	26%
Nebraska	$364,324,400	$ -	0.0%	$56,333,000	15%
Nevada	$655,849,000	$ 62,600	0.0%	$770,000	0%
New Hampshire	$163,559,799	$ 39,077,552	23.9%	$37,388,000	16%
New Jersey	$1,324,619,600	$ 258,029,995	19.5%		0%
New Mexico	$526,522,600	$ 82,540,597	15.7%	$80,695,000	12%
New York	$5,908,752,101	$ 3,181,240,552	53.8%		0%
North Carolina	$1,509,028,400	$ 101,320,388	6.7%	$187,574,000	10%
North Dakota	$251,729,400	$ 268,000	0.1%		0%
Ohio	$2,184,788,400	$ 220,910,449	10.1%	$473,336,000	20%
Oklahoma	$567,374,800	$ -	0.0%	$119,563,000	19%
Oregon	$1,646,946,200	$ 47,013,966	2.9%	$6,000	0%
Pennsylvania	**$2,200,307,599**	**$ 262,274,195**	**11.9%**	**$1,865,000**	**0.1%**
Rhode Island	$117,930,599	$ 76,302,599	64.7%	$29,812,000	19%
South Carolina	$1,316,584,396	$ 2,244,596	0.2%		0%
South Dakota	$254,285,600	$ -	0.0%	$92,104,000	21%
Tennessee	$858,796,200	$ -	0.0%		0%
Texas	$11,047,112,199	$ 397,548,396	3.6%	$272,777,000	2%
Utah	$740,118,000	$ 33,133,798	4.5%	$24,561,000	3%
Vermont	$64,711,991	$ 355,400	0.5%	$19,608,000	22%
Virginia	$1,238,796,000	$ 123,561,180	10.0%	$307,396,000	20%
Washington	$2,889,141,998	$ 290,933,995	10.1%	$34,013,000	2%
West Virginia	$206,470,600	$ 51,267,399	24.8%	$100,055,000	35%
Wisconsin	$1,286,898,400	$ -	0.0%	$77,647,000	6%
Wyoming	$69,196,200	$ 120,539,196	100.0%	$11,878,000	17%
National Total/*Avg*	**$76,028,052,465**	**$ 11,257,994,182**	***14.8%***	**$ 6,212,877,000**	***7%***

Source: NCES F-33 Fiscal Survey; FY19-23 for State Revenue for Capital Outlay; FY23 only for ESSER revenue for Capital Outlay (AE4).
Compiled by 21st Century School Fund, September 21, 2025.