

OPINION

Maryland's newest schools should be run on clean energy

| READER COMMENTARY

By **FOR THE BALTIMORE SUN**

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I am a great supporter of the Built to Learn Act and do hope the Maryland General Assembly passes this much-needed school funding and that Gov. Larry Hogan signs it into law this session ([“Leaders of Maryland’s largest jurisdictions come to Annapolis to push for \\$2.2B school construction bill,”](#) Jan. 23). Being the parent of a child in a Maryland public system, I have seen that the condition of our schools and they need an upgrade. Having recently had my child out of his classroom for two weeks due to a leaking heating and cooling system in an aging building just breaks my heart, especially since his class is not alone.

That being said, any school built using these funds will most definitely be in use in 2050. The year is important because it's when the science says our society needs to have stopped emitting greenhouse gases to stave off the worst of climate change. Technologies currently exist to make sure the schools constructed under Built to Learn are emissions-free through electric heat pumps, efficient lighting, high quality insulation and solar panels, among others. Not only that, these technologies in the long term will substantially reduce operating costs that can go to fund other aspects of running schools such as teacher salaries. Solar energy can even be generated in excess during the summer when school is out and sold back to the grid possibly bringing in revenue. Additionally, seeing these technologies in action will inspire the next generation of STEM leaders in Maryland.

As the General Assembly debates Built to Learn, I implore them to think about this future that will save taxpayers money in the long term, clean up our air and provide a great learning opportunity. This legislation must require that the school construction funds go to clean energy schools.

Joseph Jakuta, Mount Rainier

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