PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE REPORT

2026 Legislative Session

Reference No.:	CB-069-2026
Draft No.:	2
Committee:	PLANNING, HOUSING, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Date:	7/21/2026
Action:	FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

REPORT: Committee Vote: Favorable with Amendments, 4-0 (In favor: Committee Vice Chair Oriadha, Council Members Adams-Stafford, Dernoga, and Olson)

The Prince George's County Council convened as the Planning, Housing and Economic Development (PHED) Committee on July 21, 2026, to consider CB-69-2026. As introduced on Tuesday, June 29, 2026, Draft-1 is for the purpose of exempting certain private school uses in the Residential Rural (RR) Zone from the requirement for special exception approval.

The PHED Committee Director, Rana Hightower, provided a summary of the proposed legislation and shared public comments and feedback from various agencies within Prince George's County. The City of Greenbelt submitted a letter in support of the proposed legislation.

Mr. James Campbell, Land Use and Development Specialist, provided an overview of the policy and fiscal impacts of the proposed legislation. There will be no direct impact on expenditures with this bill. There is a potential for additional tax revenue associated with this bill if a for-profit private school were to be approved. This bill would allow private schools to use an existing building in the RR Zone without the need for a special exception. This bill would streamline the zoning application and review process and make it less cumbersome for certain private schools to reuse an existing building in a certain residential zone.

Council Member Adams, the bill sponsor, explained that CB-069-2026 is not about creating new schools in residential zones. The bill is about restoring existing schools to the very use for which they were originally created and successfully operated. While continuing to require compliance with the County's objective zoning standards. The bill removes unnecessary procedural barriers which are encouraged by Plan 2035, which encourages reinvestment in legacy community assets and represents a commonsense zoning correction.

The Planning Board voted to support LDR-96-2026 with amendments proposed in written testimony, and as revised by staff. The amendments were to add Section 27-5402 Additional Requirements for Specific Special Exception Uses and language under that section to the bill.

The Zoning Hearing Examiner provided written comments requesting the amendments listed below.

1. Add the correct table of use and a second use entitled, "Private schools pursuant to Section 27-5102(a)(3)(C)(iv)," and place a P in the RR Zone and an X in the other residential zones.

2. On page 2, the "c" on line 6 should be "C".

3. On page 2, lines 10 and 11 should be revised to delete the redundant "that was". I also agree with the language proposed by the Technical Staff concerning" use as a school in the last 5 years" but any other requirements for the use, which will be permitted by right, should be added to Section 27-5102 of the Zoning Ordinance, and not to the Special Exception standards in Section 27-5402 thereof.

Mr. Mathew Tedesco testified on behalf of St. Jerome Institute Catholic High School in support of CB-69-2026 with amendments. He provided a letter outlining the history of St. Hugh of Grenoble Catholic School, emphasizing that St. Jerome's, an independent Catholic high school founded in 2018, seeks to relocate from Washington, DC back to Prince George's County to serve local families.

Currently, St. Jerome's has about 70 students but anticipates growing to 130. CB-69-2026 would allow the school to move to the former St. Hugh site, which has been inactive since 2009 and is no longer a nonconforming use.

Passing this legislation would restore educational services at the site, support community stability, and prevent the property from becoming underutilized. It aligns planning objectives and serves the public interest by repurposing established school facilities in a way compatible with their communities.

Mr. Don Bunuan, a parent and Board member of St. Jerome Institute Catholic High School, testified in support of the legislation, highlighting the school's commitment to relocating to Prince George's County. Given the resources required for a special exemption, his focus is on utilizing the underutilized St. Hughes building in Greenbelt, which would greatly support their mission of prioritizing student financial aid and faculty salaries. He stated they are eager to establish their home in the County.

The PHED Committee amendments were as follows:

On page 1, line 1, strike “Permitted Uses” and replace with “Special Exception Standards”

On line 3, strike “the Residential, Rural Zone” and replace with “a Residential Zone.”

On lines 6 and 14, strike “27-5102” and replace with “27-5402.”

On line 19, strike “5100. PRINCIPAL USES.” and insert “5400. SPECIAL EXCEPTION STANDARDS.”

On lines 20 through page 2, line 12, strike all text and replace it with "Sec. 27-5402. Additional Requirements for Specific Special Exception Uses.

(yy) Private School

(7) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Subtitle, a Private School use located in a Residential Zone shall not require approval of a special exception if the school:

(A) occupies a building that was or has previously been used as a Private School; and

(B) complies with the area, enrollment, and siting requirements of Sec. 27-5102(d)(3)(C)(i)(aa) or (i)(bb)."

On motion by Council Member Olson seconded by Council Member Dernoga the PHED Committee voted 4-0 favorable on CB-69-2026 as amended.