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In Unique Approach, One County Utilizes a P3 to Build Public Schools.

Instead of it taking six years to build six schools, it took three. The first-of-its-kind project saved Prince George's County, Maryland, millions of dollars—and includes 30 years of maintenance.

A suburban Maryland school district, faced with the staggering prospect of dealing with a \$8.5 billion backlog in building repairs and upgrades just a few years ago, celebrated the opening of six brand new middle schools this fall. The brightly lit, environmentally friendly buildings feature amenities like 3-D printers, performance spaces and ventilation systems that can screen out viruses. Even better, the schools come with a built-in maintenance plan for the next 30 years.

The program by the Prince George's County Public Schools used a financing tool that's more common for infrastructure projects like toll roads: a public-private partnership. By turning to the private sector, the school district was able to deliver the new schools in less than three years. Construction lasted only two years.

"It usually takes us six to seven years per school from design to construction completion," said Jason Washington, an associate superintendent who oversaw the project for the school system. But existing buildings were up to 80 years old and falling apart, and the district was running out of space for middle school students. "We had to find a way to do it faster."

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ROUTE FIFTY

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