

**BILL:** House Bill 522  
**TITLE:** Public Schools - School Resource Officers - Prohibited Conduct  
**DATE:** March 30, 2021  
**POSITION:** SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS  
**COMMITTEE:** Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs  
**CONTACT:** John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) supports House Bill 522 with amendments.

MABE recognizes the major contributions SROs are making in schools across the state to benefit school climate, culture, and safety. SROs and teachers, principals, and other school personnel are collaborating to provide mentoring, counseling, and instruction concerning appropriate student behaviors, and are responding accordingly to violations of school policy and law. MABE also recognizes the need to pursue expanded training of SROs, principals, behavioral health staff, and teachers, on the optimal classroom and school-based practices to maintain safe and supportive schools conducive to learning and the dignity and well-being of each student.

MABE supported House Bill 522, as introduced, in order to clarify the reasonable prohibition on SROs from unilaterally enforcing discipline-related school policies, rules, regulations, or procedures to ensure that SROs do not make determinations regarding student discipline. As introduced, this legislation was aligned with Maryland's training program for SROs and therefore the policies and procedures that should already in place regarding the appropriate role of SROs as it relates to students, educators, and administrators, and student disciplinary actions. As amended in the House, this legislation not only continues to reflect this original intent but also includes several new provisions which MABE generally supports but believes require additional clarification and revisions.

Specifically, MABE is concerned with the conditions placed on the use of school safety grant funding to prohibit the combined use of these funds for SROs and the expansion of school-based mental health services and behavioral supports. MABE supports the continuation of the school safety grant program, and additional resources for the hiring of additional school counselors, school psychologists, and other services, and does not believe these investments should be mutually exclusive. Other provisions added to the bill include extensive new training and reporting requirements which MABE generally supports, specifically regarding the responsibilities of the Center for School Safety and the training of school administrators in addition to security personnel.

Local boards appreciate that when the Safe to Learn Act passed in 2018 it mandated the development of comprehensive curriculum for all SROs and any other designated school security personnel. The multi-faceted role of SRO's is evident in the outline of the 40-hour, 5-day, mandatory curriculum for all SROs and school security staff.

- School Resource Officer: Definition & History of Role
- Memorandum of Agreement/Understanding (MOU) between the police department and the school
- Working Collaboratively with School Administration and Staff
- Restorative Practices in Schools: PBIS, School Based Mediation, and School to Prison Pipeline considerations and Implicit Bias
- Maintaining a Positive School Climate

- Victimization of Youth in Schools - Child Protective Services
- Informal Counseling Roles and Responsibilities
- Disability & Diversity Awareness with a focus on Inclusiveness and Cultural Fluency
- Implicit Bias
- Drug Education and Current Trends in Maryland Schools
- Investigation of Bullying, Threats & Social Media
- Principles of Effective Learning - The Expanding Role of an SRO as an Instructor
- Constructive Interactions with Students - Building Trust and Reducing Fear
- Collaboration and Problem Solving with Stakeholders
- Youth Development, Behavior and Discipline

Again, MABE believes that a holistic approach to training SROs and other school security staff is essential to maintaining safe schools and access to an equitable, high quality education for all of Maryland's students.

For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on House Bill 522 with amendments.