



Maryland

DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET
AND MANAGEMENT

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HOUSE BILL 157 Public Schools – Appropriations for School Safety Expenditures – Increase (School Safety Enhancement Act of 2024)

STATEMENT OF INFORMATION

DATE: January 26, 2025

COMMITTEE: Appropriations

SUMMARY OF BILL: House Bill 157 increases a \$10 million annual appropriation to the Safe Schools Fund to \$20 million beginning in fiscal 2026. The fund provides grants to local school systems and local law enforcement agencies to assist in meeting an annual reporting requirement on law enforcement coverage in public schools.

EXPLANATION: Actual expenditures from the Safe Schools Fund for public school resource officer (SRO) grants have been significantly lower than the \$10 million annual funding mandate since fiscal 2019, ranging between \$4 - \$5 million per year. This is due primarily to the limited use of the funding provided in the existing mandate. SRO grants support the salary and fringe benefits for SROs in Maryland public schools. There is currently a \$10 million annual mandate for this program, but spending typically ranges \$4-\$5 million per year. The grants are required to be distributed to local school systems based on the number of schools in each system in proportion to the total number of public schools in the State in the prior year. Underspensing is driven by the fact that not all jurisdictions fully utilize their allocation of funding. Any unspent funds revert to the Safe Schools Fund.

Given the current \$10 million annual appropriation is not spent each year, amending the statute to broaden the use of existing funding may be more fiscally prudent than increasing the mandated appropriation at this time.

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