



PSSAM
Public School Superintendents' Association
OF MARYLAND

Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director
1217 S. Potomac Street
Baltimore, MD 21224
410-935-7281
marypat.fannon@pssam.org

BILL: SB 1077

TITLE: Public Schools - Appropriations for School Safety Expenditures - School Security Employees

DATE: March 27, 2024

POSITION: Favorable

COMMITTEE: House Appropriations Committee

CONTACT: Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four public school superintendents, **supports** Senate Bill 1077.

This bill authorizes the annual appropriation to the Safe Schools Fund to provide grants to local school systems or law enforcement agencies to assist in providing adequate law enforcement coverage for public schools, from \$10.0 million to \$15.0 million in fiscal 2026, and to \$20.0 million in fiscal 2027 and each year thereafter. The bill also (1) expands the authorized uses of the grant funds to include school security employees and (2) requires the Maryland Center for School Safety, the State Department of Education, the Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center, and the Interagency Commission on School Construction jointly to review and provide guidance on the state of physical security in schools.

PSSAM appreciates the bill as amended to revert to the current model using the number of schools, rather than the initial proposal based on enrollment. The current model recognizes that school safety requires a campus deployment strategy and is a more equitable funding formula. Also, we support new bill provisions that require a joint review and subsequent recommendations on the improvement of physical security in schools by key State entities.

In 2018, the General Assembly passed the Safe to Learn Act and created a comprehensive initiative for the improvement of school safety, including the creation of the Safe Schools Fund to be administered by the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS). While local districts are in need of additional funding for school safety, the existing prohibition on using the funds for school security employees has resulted in lower usage of the Fund; this is reported in the fiscal note as expenditures of \$6.2 million of the \$10.0 million mandated appropriation in FY '23. The authorization under this legislation will greatly enhance the demand and usage of the entire Fund.

For these reasons, PSSAM **supports** Senate Bill 1077 and requests a **favorable** report.