



PSSAM
Public School Superintendents' Association
OF MARYLAND

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BILL: SB 1077

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

DATE: February 28, 2024

POSITION: Favorable with Amendment

COMMITTEE: Senate Budget and Taxation 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 with **one amendment**.

This bill increases the annual mandated 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) alters the basis for the allocation of the funds to be the proportion of students enrolled in each local school system instead of the proportion of schools in each local school system.

PSSAM requests one amendment that the grant formula revert to the current model using the number of schools, rather than the proposal based on enrollment. The current model recognizes that school safety requires a campus deployment strategy and is a more equitable funding formula.

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 with one amendment** to maintain the current funding formula.