



PSSAM
Public School Superintendents' Association
OF MARYLAND

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BILL: SB 756

TITLE: Primary and Secondary Education - School Safety and Student Well-Being - Examination of Policies and Funding

DATE: February 28, 2024

POSITION: Favorable

COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment 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 756.

This bill (1) repeals mandated funding specifically to help local governments provide School Resource Officers (SROs) and adequate law enforcement coverage for public schools; (2) expands the authorized uses of the Safe Schools Fund; and (3) requires the Governor to include an annual appropriation of \$20.0 million to the fund beginning in fiscal 2026. By July 1, 2025, and every two years thereafter, specified entities must review the state of physical security in schools and promulgate guidelines for school security. By December 1, 2025, the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) must contract with a third party to ensure that the center is adequately performing its statutory functions; the Governor must include \$200,000 in fiscal 2026 for this assessment. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), in consultation with specified entities, must provide an analysis of the effect of State and local policies on school safety and student well-being.

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 this Fund for school security employees has resulted in lower usage of the Fund. However, the increased authorized uses under this legislation will greatly enhance the demand and usage of the Fund.

For these reasons, PSSAM **supports** Senate Bill 756 and requests a **favorable** report.