

# **MCPA-MSA\_SB 1090 Statewide Secure Schools Emergenc**

Uploaded by: Andrea Mansfield

Position: FAV



# Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

## Maryland Sheriffs' Association



### MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair and  
Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: Darren Popkin, Executive Director, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee  
Andrea Mansfield, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee  
Natasha Mehu, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee

DATE: February 28, 2024

RE: **SB 1090 Maryland Center for School Safety - Statewide Secure Schools Emergency Response Program - Established**

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **SUPPORT SB 1090**. This bill creates a statewide Secure Schools Emergency Response Program overseen by the Maryland Center for School Safety.

Under SB 1090, the Program is charged with implementing a statewide emergency notification system that facilitates communication between public elementary and secondary school personnel, a public safety answering point, and a public safety agency in life-threatening and emergency situations, including medical emergencies and the presence of an active shooter or intruder at a public school. The Program must also procure and implement an emergency communication platform for these purposes.

Time is of the essence when schools are faced with an emergency. The program created under this bill would ensure that all key stakeholders are quickly and automatically notified when an emergency arises. The standards the bill establishes for communication platforms require certification by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Federal Support Anti-Terrorism by Fostering Effective Technologies Act. The platform must also be capable of administering a cellular panic button system for internal communication and an automated emergency alert notification system for external stakeholders such as nearby public and nonpublic schools.

The safety of the students, faculty, and first responders at our schools during an emergency situation relies on quick and clear communication among all stakeholders. The program created under this bill standardizes and facilitates that communication. For these reasons, MCPA and MSA **SUPPORT SB 1090** and urge a **FAVORABLE** committee report.

# **SB 1090 -- Sheriff Uy Letter of Support (Favorable**

Uploaded by: Christopher Feldenzer

Position: FAV



Maryland's First  
Nationally Accredited  
Sheriff's Office



50 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, Md. 20850  
240-777-7000  
240-777-7148 Fax

## SHERIFF MAXWELL C. UY

February 26, 2024

**VIA E-MAIL:** [jeff.waldstreicher@senate.state.md.us](mailto:jeff.waldstreicher@senate.state.md.us) and [Cheryl.Kagan@senate.state.md.us](mailto:Cheryl.Kagan@senate.state.md.us)

Senator Jeffrey Waldstreicher  
Senator Cheryl C. Kagan  
222 Lowe House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Re: SB 1090 – Maryland Center for School Safety – Statewide Secure Schools  
Emergency Response Program -- Established**

Dear Senators Waldstreicher and Kagan:

This letter confirms my stated support for enactment of SB 1090, as amended. As you know, the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) is actively involved in promoting school safety and staffs a Community Engagement Officer (CEO) at Magruder High School and an associated school cluster. In our view, the proposed legislation would provide an effective grant funding vehicle for Maryland public schools to evaluate and improve existing emergency notification systems that will enable schools to enhance communications both internally within individual school systems, as well as externally with law enforcement and first responders during an emergency.

We see a variety of tangible benefits likely to flow from this legislation. First, a grant-funding mechanism will provide a necessary jump-start to incentivize those school systems which have not otherwise prioritized the need to evaluate and enhance their existing emergency notification systems -- both within schools and with law enforcement agencies. Second, to the extent the grant-funding mechanism requires that school systems to engage in a consultative process with law enforcement as part of the grant application process, it will ensure that the relevant stakeholders have input into the funding process. Third, we think that such grant funding may also serve the added benefit of developing individual local school systems as "laboratories" to test a variety of emergency notification systems that may ultimately result in producing best practices for a model notification system should the State legislature decide to adopt a uniform notification system in the future.

The MCSO has many years of experience with and staffing school security and considers this grant funding mechanism to be an effective and necessary step in developing and enhancing security notification for local school systems. In sum, the MCSO fully supports this legislative effort to establish a grant funding mechanism to improve the emergency notification systems within our local school systems. Thank you for your efforts and consideration.

Sincerely,

Maxwell C. Uy  
Sheriff

# **ZeroEyes Testimony SB 1090 Favorable.pdf**

Uploaded by: Ellen Valentino

Position: FAV



DATE: February 28, 2024

TO: Chair Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy & the Environment Committee

FROM: ZeroEyes

SUBJECT: Support Senate Bill 1090, Maryland Center for School Safety – Statewide Secure Schools Emergency Response Program – Established

Thank you, Chair Feldman, and committee members, for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 1090. I'd like to also thank the sponsors, Senator Waldstreicher & Senator Kagan. On behalf of the ZeroEyes team, thank you for spearheading this issue.

My name is Mia Link, and I am the Vice President of Strategy for ZeroEyes. ZeroEyes was founded in 2018 by military veterans with the mission of improving public safety by providing proactive firearm detection in schools, commercial buildings, and government infrastructure.

Five years ago, ZeroEyes was spurred into action following the events at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida, when a former student brought a gun into the school, killing 17 and wounding an additional 17 people. Our team has grown out of the military special operations community and is now close to 200 employees, 80% of whom are military and law enforcement veterans.

Our technology uses artificial intelligence software implemented on already existing security camera infrastructure to detect visible firearms and alert law enforcement within seconds. Again, these are existing cameras that are then integrated with AI technology. Our software does not perform any sort of facial recognition, behavioral characterization, or predictive analytics and is compliant with all privacy standards and frameworks.

When a viable threat is detected, alerts are sent through the app and via phone to all parties involved, including the school administrators, police, and anyone else on the "alert" list.

In the last five years, we have experienced rapid growth. **Our software is deployed into hundreds of K-12 districts across 35 states.** Our service is also used and implemented within large enterprise organizations such as the Department of Defense, the Veterans Administration, Meijer, Verizon, FedEx, DHL, Subaru, and Home Depot among many others.

The lack of budget is the single greatest obstacle for schools to implement this technology. **With this bill, Maryland could join other states that are prioritizing school safety by taking the initiative to fund and add a proactive, technological solution to the growing problem of gun violence in schools.** We believe that this is the future direction – not just for school safety, but also for other areas such as hospitals, shopping centers, and so much more.



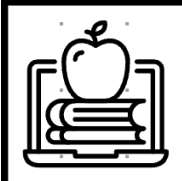
We look forward to the opportunity to partner with the State of Maryland and the Maryland Center for School Safety on a pilot program should this legislation be enacted. We would also like to offer a demonstration of our technology, should your committee be interested.

**SB1090 - Favorable.pdf**

Uploaded by: Henry J. Meiser

Position: FAV





# Coalition for Safer Schools

TO: Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment

RE: Senate Bill 1090, Maryland Center for School Safety – Statewide  
Secure Schools Emergency Response Program

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Mr. Chair, Madam Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee,

The Coalition for Safer Schools represents a diverse group of individuals and organizations, all of whom have stake in the success of the educational process. In this capacity, I write on behalf of our members in support of Senate Bill 1090 (SB1090), “Maryland Center for School Safety – Statewide Secure Schools Emergency Response Program”.

The purpose of this program is to improve the safety and security of Maryland’s public schools by implementing a statewide emergency notification system that encompasses communication between public elementary and secondary school personnel, 9-1-1 call centers, and, in instances of life-threatening emergencies, public safety agencies.

The Coalition holds that the development and subsequent use of such a emergency response program, specifically for emergencies within public schools, is a crucial, and currently missing. The Coalition particularly draws the committee’s attention to the development of a panic button event system, and the required capability to generate and *automatic emergency alert*. Both components are crucial to a school facing crisis, and ensuring we are supporting schools in preparative measures as much as possible

For these reasons, the Coalition for Safer Schools supports SB 1090.

Respectfully,

Henry J. Meiser

*Executive Director*

Coalition for Safer Schools

[henry@schoolsafetycoalition.net](mailto:henry@schoolsafetycoalition.net)



# **MCPA-MSA\_SB 1090 Statewide Secure Schools Emergenc**

Uploaded by: Natasha Mehu

Position: FAV



# Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

## Maryland Sheriffs' Association



### MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair and  
Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: Darren Popkin, Executive Director, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee  
Andrea Mansfield, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee  
Natasha Mehu, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee

DATE: February 28, 2024

RE: **SB 1090 Maryland Center for School Safety - Statewide Secure Schools Emergency Response Program - Established**

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **SUPPORT SB 1090**. This bill creates a statewide Secure Schools Emergency Response Program overseen by the Maryland Center for School Safety.

Under SB 1090, the Program is charged with implementing a statewide emergency notification system that facilitates communication between public elementary and secondary school personnel, a public safety answering point, and a public safety agency in life-threatening and emergency situations, including medical emergencies and the presence of an active shooter or intruder at a public school. The Program must also procure and implement an emergency communication platform for these purposes.

Time is of the essence when schools are faced with an emergency. The program created under this bill would ensure that all key stakeholders are quickly and automatically notified when an emergency arises. The standards the bill establishes for communication platforms require certification by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Federal Support Anti-Terrorism by Fostering Effective Technologies Act. The platform must also be capable of administering a cellular panic button system for internal communication and an automated emergency alert notification system for external stakeholders such as nearby public and nonpublic schools.

The safety of the students, faculty, and first responders at our schools during an emergency situation relies on quick and clear communication among all stakeholders. The program created under this bill standardizes and facilitates that communication. For these reasons, MCPA and MSA **SUPPORT SB 1090** and urge a **FAVORABLE** committee report.

# **FWA - MDEM - SB1090 - Statewide Secure Schools Pro**

Uploaded by: Anna Sierra

Position: FWA



**FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS - SB1090**  
**Maryland Center for School Safety - Statewide Secure Schools Emergency Response Program**  
**- Established**

Maryland Department of Emergency Management  
Hearing Date: 28 FEB 2024

Chair Brian Feldman  
Education, Energy, and the Environment  
2 West  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Chair Feldman,

School safety is one of the most critical responsibilities of the government, and as a Department whose mission includes disaster risk reduction, preparedness, and response, we are deeply aware of the threats that schools face today. It is with that awareness that the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM) writes **in favor with amendments to SB1090 - Maryland Center for School Safety - Statewide Secure Schools Emergency Response Program - Established.**

We thank Senator Waldstreicher for working closely with our Department, MCSS, and other stakeholders to identify solutions that will help school staff and first responders respond to critical incidents at schools. Our requested amendments reflect needs we have heard from schools, emergency managers, and 9-1-1 Centers across the State, as well as evidence-based best practices/areas for improvement identified in after action reports from a number of critical incidents at schools across the country.

#### Requested Amendments

- Alter the program from MCSS-procured program to an opt-in grant program
- Expand eligible costs under the grant program to include installing/updating Public Address systems, intercom systems, and bi-directional amplifiers to improve emergency communications during critical incidents
- Remove the DHS SAFETY Act certification requirement and allow MCSS to establish standards
- Alter the appropriation language from “shall” to “may”



### Justification

The Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) led a study this summer after the introduction of the first version of this bill in the 2023 General Assembly session. MCSS convened a workgroup of subject matter experts in emergency notification and response including MDEM, school safety experts from school districts across the State, county emergency management, and Public Safety Answering Point (a.k.a. 9-1-1 Center) leaders to evaluate evidence from past school incidents across the nation. This study was not legislatively mandated; workgroup members dedicated time and effort in order to evaluate school emergency notification systems by a thorough review of evidence-based practice.

After reviewing numerous after action reports, speaking with other states and evaluating the evidence, the workgroup concluded that there were multiple ways to invest in emergency notification and communication methods that would increase school safety during critical incidents, and that there was limited evidence that panic buttons alone would increase school safety or improve first responder response. When lives are at stake, investment should be made in evidence-based solutions to increase safety, and the workgroup makes several alternative recommendations for investment in the published study. MDEM supports investment in those alternatives.

MDEM recognizes that some local jurisdictions have opted to invest in panic button systems, and the Department supports the choice of local school officials to implement safety measures that have been coordinated with local first responders in support of local response processes. However, this bill establishes a one-size-fit-all state procurement approach that may not integrate well with local management of first response procedures. We believe our amendments will provide school systems and emergency services the flexibility they need to meet the needs of their students, staff, and first responders during critical incidents.

MDEM also recognizes that these types of statewide systems have been mandated in other states on the basis that a panic button system provides the opportunity to contact 9-1-1 without having to make a call that may give away someone's position. Only a handful of states have universal text-to-9-1-1, and it is easy to see why panic buttons would be an attractive emergency notification system in those areas without it. Maryland has demonstrated leadership in the area of Text-to-9-1-1 and has had Statewide Text-to-9-1-1 capability since 2020. For those systems with plans in place to



Wes Moore | Governor

Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor

Russell J. Strickland | Secretary

use Text-to-9-1-1 in critical emergencies, alternative school safety measures may be more appropriate for investment.

Lastly, the inclusion of the [DHS SAFETY Act](#) as a required provision of procurement in this bill should be removed. According to DHS, the SAFETY Act, “provides incentives for the development and deployment of anti-terrorism technologies by creating systems of risk and litigation management. The purpose of the Act is to ensure that the threat of liability does not deter potential manufacturers or sellers of effective anti-terrorism technologies from developing and commercializing technologies that could save lives.” There are alternative operational-related standards (e.g. cybersecurity standards) that should be considered for school technology, and MCSS is in a position to work with subject matter experts to identify those standards and incorporate them in the grant program. Leaving out standard-specific language will allow MCSS to update standards as they evolve over time.

**In conclusion, MDEM urges the Committee to vote favorable with our requested amendments on SB1090.** If you have any questions, please contact Anna Sierra, MDEM legislative liaison: [anna.sierra1@maryland.gov](mailto:anna.sierra1@maryland.gov).



**SENATE BILL 1090**

**By: Senators Waldstreicher and Kagan**

Introduced and read first time: February 2, 2024

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

**A BILL ENTITLED**

AN ACT concerning

**Maryland Center for School Safety – Statewide Secure Schools Emergency Response Program – Established**

FOR the purpose of establishing the Statewide Secure Schools Emergency Response Program to be administered by the Maryland Center for School Safety to improve the safety and security of public schools in the State by implementing a certain emergency notification system; and generally relating to the establishment of the Statewide Secure Schools Emergency Response Program.

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments, Article – Education

Section 7–1502(a)  
Annotated Code of Maryland  
(2022 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments, Article – Education

Section 7–1502(g)(20) and (21)  
Annotated Code of Maryland  
(2022 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

BY adding to  
Article – Education

Section 7–1502(g)(22) and 7–1513  
Annotated Code of Maryland  
(2022 Replacement Volume 2023 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments, Article – Public Safety

Section 1–301(a), (j), (t), and (u) Annotated Code of Maryland

(2022 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

**Article – Education**

7–1502.

(a) There is a Maryland Center for School Safety.

(g) The Center shall perform the following functions and duties:

(20) Review and comment on school emergency plans developed under § 7–1510 of this subtitle; [and]

(21) Report to the General Assembly and the Governor on life–threatening incidents as required under § 7–1510 of this subtitle; **AND**

**(22) ADMINISTER THE STATEWIDE SECURE SCHOOLS EMERGENCY RESPONSE GRANT PROGRAM UNDER § 7–1513 OF THIS SUBTITLE.**

7–1513.

**(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.**

**(2) “FIRST RESPONDER” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 1–301 OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE.**

**(3) “~~PANIC BUTTON~~ EMERGENCY EVENT” MEANS AN EMERGENCY SITUATION THAT **REQUIRES IMMEDIATE RESPONSE BY FIRST RESPONDERS. COMPELS THE USER OF AN EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM TO PRESS A PANIC BUTTON TO INSTANTLY SUMMON HELP TO THEIR LOCATION FROM FIRST RESPONDERS OR OTHER PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCY PERSONNEL.****

**(4) “PROGRAM” MEANS THE STATEWIDE SECURE SCHOOLS EMERGENCY RESPONSE **GRANT** PROGRAM.**

**(5) “PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCY” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 1–301 OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE.**

**(6) “PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINT” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 1–301 OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE.**

**(B) (1) THERE IS A ~~STATEWIDE~~–SECURE SCHOOLS EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROGRAM ADMINISTERED BY THE CENTER.**

**(2) THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM IS TO PROVIDE FUNDING TO PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS TO IMPROVE ~~THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE STATE BY IMPLEMENTING A STATEWIDE~~ EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS AND ~~SYSTEM THAT FACILITATES~~ COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL PERSONNEL, A PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINT, AND A PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCY DURING EMERGENCY EVENTS. ~~IN LIFE-THREATENING AND EMERGENCY SITUATIONS, INCLUDING MEDICAL EMERGENCIES AND THE PRESENCE OF AN ACTIVE SHOOTER OR INTRUDER AT A PUBLIC SCHOOL.~~**

**~~(C)~~ (3) THE CENTER SHALL PROVIDE FUNDS TO LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS ~~COUNTY BOARDS~~ PROGRAM SHALL TO PROCURE AND IMPLEMENT AN FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS AND ENHANCED COMMUNICATIONS WITHIN THE SCHOOL AND WITH PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCIES PLATFORM FOR A SECURE SCHOOLS EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROGRAM. THROUGH WHICH ALL SCHOOL FACULTY AND STAFF ARE ABLE TO ALERT A PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINT TO REPORT A LIFE-THREATENING OR AN EMERGENCY SITUATION.**

**(4) EACH COUNTY BOARD, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY AND LOCAL PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINT, MAY APPLY TO THE CENTER FOR FUNDS TO PROCURE AND IMPLEMENT ENHANCEMENTS ~~THE PROGRAM.~~**

**(D) THE ~~COMMUNICATION PLATFORM~~ EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION AND ENHANCED COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING REQUIRED UNDER ~~SUBSECTION (B)(3) OF THIS SECTION~~ SHALL MAY INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:**

**(1) A CELLULAR PHONE APPLICATION-BASED ~~PANIC BUTTON EVENT~~ EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM THAT:**

**(I) CAN BE INTEGRATED WITH A LOCAL PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINT; AND**

**(II) IS ABLE TO:**

**1. PLACE A STANDARD TELEPHONE CALL TO 9-1-1;**

**2. TEXT COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN AUTHORIZED USERS AND A PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINT AND PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCY;**

**3. PROVIDE TEXT MESSAGES, E-MAILS, AND PUSH NOTIFICATIONS TO AUTHORIZED USERS, INCLUDING**

**SCHOOL PERSONNEL, FIRST RESPONDERS, AND OTHER PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCY PERSONNEL; AND**

**4. AUTOMATICALLY TRANSMIT SCHOOL FLOOR PLANS, SCHOOL EMERGENCY PLANS, AND RELEVANT CONTACT INFORMATION TO FIRST RESPONDERS OR PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCY PERSONNEL RESPONDING TO A PANIC BUTTON EVENT AT A SCHOOL WITHOUT FURTHER ACTION NEEDED BY THE USER REPORTING THE EMERGENCY; AND**

**(2) CAPABILITY TO GENERATE AN AUTOMATED EMERGENCY ALERT NOTIFICATION TO ALL PUBLIC AND NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS LOCATED IN REASONABLE PROXIMITY TO AN EMERGENCY SITUATION THAT IS DETERMINED TO BE AN IMMINENT THREAT TO SCHOOL CAMPUSES OR SCHOOL PERSONNEL BY THE PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINT RECEIVING THE REPORT, INCLUDING REPORTS OF:**

**(I) AN INDIVIDUAL WHO WAS KILLED;**

**(II) AN ACCIDENT OR THREAT THAT RESULTED IN SERIOUS BODILY INJURY;**

**(III) AN INDIVIDUAL WHO WAS ASSAULTED WITH A DEADLY WEAPON AND THE ALLEGED ASSAILANT REMAINS AT LARGE;**

**(IV) THE DISCHARGE OF A FIREARM; AND**

**(V) ANY OTHER EMERGENCY SITUATION AGREED TO BY A PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCY AND A COUNTY BOARD.**

**(3) INTERCOMS, PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEMS, BI-DIRECTIONAL ANTENNAS OR BOOSTERS, AND OTHER TECHNOLOGY THAT WILL IMPROVE EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION AND COMMUNICATIONS AS IDENTIFIED BY THE CENTER.**

~~**(E) THE COMMUNICATION PLATFORM PROCURED UNDER SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION SHALL BE CERTIFIED BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY UNDER THE FEDERAL SUPPORT ANTI-TERRORISM BY FOSTERING EFFECTIVE TECHNOLOGIES ACT.**~~

~~**(F) (1) ON OR BEFORE SEPTEMBER 1, 2026, THE CENTER SHALL ENSURE THAT THE GRANT PROGRAM HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED IN EACH PUBLIC SCHOOL IN THE STATE IS OPERATING AND AVAILABLE TO A COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM COUNTY BOARD.**~~

~~(2) (I) A PUBLIC SCHOOL WITH AN EXISTING PROGRAM THAT IS SUBSTANTIALLY SIMILAR TO THE PROGRAM MAY SUBMIT A REQUEST TO THE CENTER TO OPT OUT OF THE PROGRAM.~~

~~(H) IF THE CENTER DETERMINES THAT A PUBLIC SCHOOL'S EXISTING PROGRAM IS SUBSTANTIALLY SIMILAR TO THE PROGRAM, THE CENTER SHALL GRANT THE SCHOOL'S REQUEST TO OPT OUT OF THE PROGRAM.~~

(G) FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026, THE GOVERNOR ~~SHALL~~ MAY INCLUDE IN THE ANNUAL BUDGET BILL AN APPROPRIATION OF \$4,500,000 FOR THE PROGRAM.

### Article – Public Safety

1–301.

(a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

(j) (1) “First responder” means an employee of a State or local public safety agency that provides emergency response services.

(2) “First responder” includes:

(i) a firefighter;

(ii) a paramedic;

(iii) an emergency medical technician;

(iv) a rescue squad member;

(v) a sworn member of the Office of the State Fire Marshal;

(vi) a member of a volunteer fire or rescue company who is a covered employee under § 9–234 of the Labor and Employment Article;

(vii) an individual who is licensed or certified under § 13–516 of the Education Article;  
and

(viii) a 9–1–1 specialist.

(t) “Public safety agency” means:

(1) a functional division of a public agency that provides fire fighting, police, medical, or other emergency services; or

(2) a private entity that provides fire fighting, police, medical, or other emergency services on a voluntary basis.

(u) “Public safety answering point” means a communications facility that:

(1) is operated on a 24-hour basis;

(2) first receives 9-1-1 requests for emergency services in a 9-1-1 service area and;

(3) as appropriate:

(i) dispatches public safety services directly;

(ii) transmits incident data to appropriate public safety agencies within the State for the dispatch of public safety services; or

(iii) transfers 9-1-1 requests for emergency services or transmits

1. an appropriate federal emergency communication center responsible for the delivery of public safety services on a federal campus or federal reservation; or

2. an appropriate public safety answering point located within or outside the State.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2024.

# **Yelin Testimony - SB1090 2024.pdf**

Uploaded by: Ben Yelin

Position: FWA



## FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS – SB1090

### MARYLAND CENTER FOR SCHOOL SAFETY - STATEWIDE SECURE SCHOOLS EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROGRAM - ESTABLISHED

#### EDUCATION, ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

FEBRUARY 28, 2024

#### Introduction

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and Members of the Committee:

My name is Ben Yelin, and I am the Program Director for Public Policy & External Affairs at the University of Maryland Center for Health and Homeland Security. During the interim, our organization worked with the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) and the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM) to conduct a comprehensive, wide-reaching study on the advisability of a Statewide Secure Schools Emergency Response Program, or “panic button” in Maryland schools. I am also a public-school parent, and care deeply about the safety and security of all Maryland students and staff. In that spirit, I write today to recommend a favorable report with amendments to SB1090.

#### Interim Study - Methodology

As part of our study, we spoke to representatives of state and local school safety officers, representatives from the Maryland 9-1-1 board, local and State emergency managers, and local public safety answering point personnel. Our team also conducted a review of the after-action reports (AARs) of previous high-profile school-based emergencies (mostly active assailant events) to determine whether an app-based or centralized “panic button” or school-based emergency notification system would have been useful in preventing or mitigating the casualties of those events.

#### Interim Study - Findings

Our report, based on extensive research and stakeholder input, recommended against the use of a statewide panic button system. Our comprehensive research indicated that the burden or cost of implementing such a system, especially in lieu of other needed upgrades to public safety technology, outweighs any potential benefits. Our stakeholders noted that communications failures during previous real-world incidents or exercise play were not due to any inability to contact 9-1-1 at the outset of an event, but rather on other technological failures, such as **insufficient public address systems, poor cellular and Wi-Fi coverage, and lack of proper coordination between responding agencies**. Additionally, Maryland, unlike many other states, has a universal text-to-9-1-1 system that could fulfill the same function as the statewide panic button system proposed in the original bill.

Our study of after-action reports from high profile school-shootings supports these conclusions as well. In each of the studied incidents, students, faculty, and staff were able to reach 9-1-1 to request emergency assistance without delay. There have generally not been issues contacting emergency services rapidly, which is the purported problem a new emergency notification system would be





intended to solve. Rather, communications issues centered around interoperability challenges between responding organizations, the inability to communicate with students and staff over a reliable loudspeaker system, and the inability to send real-time text alerts or emails to provide situational awareness, due to poor cellular or Wi-Fi coverage.

### **Lessons from Robb Elementary School**

There is also evidence that a cell phone alert app that notifies teachers, staff, and/or students to multiple kinds of emergencies, such as medical emergencies or emergencies in the local area but not on the school campus, could be harmful rather than helpful in an active assailant emergency. According to the after-action report of the 2022 Robb Elementary School Shooting in Uvalde, TX, the app's notifications were frequently ignored by teachers and staff because it alerted them frequently to nearby non-emergency incidents. Ultimately, this resulted in a delayed response when there was an on-campus assailant because the notification was either heard and ignored, or not received at all because teachers habitually turned off their cell phones at the start of the school day to avoid interruptions.

### **Interim Study - Recommendations**

In lieu of a mandatory statewide system as proposed in the original bill, our study recommended investments that would best address communications shortcomings:

- Improved and reliable intercom/public address systems
- Bi-directional amplifiers to enhance on-site cell/Wi-Fi coverage.
- Interoperability improvements in public safety communications, including Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD)-to-CAD communication.

### **Conclusion**

I am pleased that the sponsor has worked constructively with the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS), the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM) and other stakeholders to craft suggested amendments to the bill that reflect the findings and recommendations of the study. Specifically, the bill, as amended, would provide grant funding to local school districts to address their unique public safety communications needs. The eligible costs under the grant program allow for investments in the some of the very public safety communications upgrades mentioned in our study.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report with amendments on SB1090 and I am happy to answer any questions.

**SB1090 MCSS 2024 (1).pdf**

Uploaded by: Kate Bryan

Position: FWA

<b>Bill:</b>	Senate Bill 1090	<b>Date:</b>	February 28, 2024
<b>Title:</b>	Maryland Center for School Safety - Statewide Secure Schools Emergency Response Program - Established	<b>Committee:</b>	Education, Energy & Environment
<b>Position:</b>	Favorable with Amendments	<b>Contact:</b>	Kim Buckheit <a href="mailto:kim.buckheit1@maryland.gov">kim.buckheit1@maryland.gov</a> 443-902-0622

On behalf of the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS), thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter in favor *with amendments* to Senate Bill 1090.

MCSS fully supports county governments and school systems in making decisions about locally used and implemented school-based emergency notification systems and other layered approaches to school safety and security.

We appreciate Senator Waldstreicher collaboration with our office and the Department of Emergency Management in identifying amendments to the bill. These amendments incorporate the recommendations identified by local school systems, 9-1-1 centers, and emergency managers in our [Study of Emergency Notification in Maryland Public Schools](#).

Our working group of stakeholders, which included local and State representatives, also strongly believe that local governments and school systems are best situated to make decisions about locally used and implemented emergency communication and notification technology, particularly systems and technology that integrate into public safety answering points. The results of our study highlighted Maryland's existing Text-to-9-1-1 capabilities but also noted the need to continue to support local school systems in improving and sustaining reliable communication and notification systems including public address and intercom systems as well as cellular, wi-fi, and radio coverage in and around school buildings.

As such, MCSS respectfully recommends the following amendments to Senate Bill 1090:

**Amendment 1:** Eliminate the requirement for the procurement and implementation of a single statewide panic button system.

**Amendment 2:** Remove the requirement for technology to be certified by the [U.S. Department of Homeland Security under the Federal Support Anti-Terrorism by Fostering Effective Technologies Act](#).

**Amendment 3:** Establish a grant program that allows local school systems to make decisions on systems and technology to improve emergency notification and communication in coordination with local first responders and Public Safety Answering Points.

**Amendment 4:** Include other systems and equipment identified in our study as eligible projects, including intercom and public address systems, bi-directional antennas or boosters, and other technology that could address gaps in signal coverage or emergency notifications in general.

**Amendment 5:** Replace the fiscal year 2026 appropriation language from “shall” to “may.”

A wide array of Maryland stakeholders have worked to address emergency communication gaps and have advanced planning and tactical response coordination with local first responders. “Our review of the most high-profile nationwide school shooting incidents during the last two decades indicates that there continue to be gaps in interoperable and reliable communications. However, given the high cost of establishing a new single statewide panic button system, and, most importantly, a lack of compelling evidence of its potential efficacy, lead us to recommend a different course of action.

1. Investment in improved and reliable **intercom/public address systems** for all schools would provide the means by which school leaders can reliably communicate with the entirety of the school’s staff and students to alert them to danger and initiate a universal response protocol. After action reports from both the Sandy Hook and Robb Elementary School tragedies recommended improving the school’s intercom system. This remains a need for many Maryland schools.
2. Investment in **Bi-Directional Amplifiers (BDA)** to enhance on-site cellular/radio coverage would minimize significant gaps in cellular coverage on school grounds. Gaps in cellular coverage exist across the state and are particularly concerning in rural school locations, where cellular service is less reliable. BDAs improve service in the hardest-to-reach areas of a building and would support multiple aspects of school safety.
3. Investment in **interoperability improvements in public safety communications systems**, including CAD (Computer-Aided Dispatch)-to-CAD communications. CAD-to-CAD integration is a method of sharing 9-1-1 caller and response information seamlessly between public safety agencies. This allows public safety communicators to view real-time updates from 9-1-1 specialists and information relayed by first response units. Active assailants and other major school incidents will inevitably result in multiple public safety agencies responding to the location. In Maryland, dispatch for public safety agencies may not be integrated into one single Center.”

[Study of Emergency Notification in Maryland Public Schools \(Dec. 2023\)](#)

MCSS remains available to answer any questions and engage in discussions. Thank you again for taking the time to consider the information shared above as you consider Senate Bill 1090.

**SB1090-EEE\_MACo\_OPP.pdf**

Uploaded by: Dominic Butchko

Position: UNF



## Senate Bill 1090

### *Maryland Center for School Safety – Statewide Secure Schools Emergency Response Program – Established*

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment  
Committee

Date: February 28, 2024

From: Kevin Kinnally and Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** SB 1090. While this bill purports to strengthen school safety, MACo contends that the bill's one-size-fits-all approach is not compatible with local emergency protocols and procedures and thus places an unwarranted fiscal and administrative burden on local public safety agencies and personnel.

**While counties oppose the bill as introduced, MACo's concerns are addressed through amendments offered by the sponsor of the cross-filed House bill. As such, MACo would take no position on the bill with the following amendments:**

- **Alter the program from a State-procured program to an opt-in grant program.**
- **Expand the eligible costs under the grant program to include installing/updating public address systems, intercom systems, and bi-directional amplifiers to improve emergency communications during critical incidents.**
- **Strike the language requiring the DHS SAFETY Act certification and allow the Maryland Center for School Safety to establish standards.**
- **Strike the mandated appropriation.**

While counties support the intent of this legislation, procuring a statewide system capable of integrating across several technological and organizational structures is challenging. While some jurisdictions have invested in panic button systems, they have coordinated with county emergency managers and local first responders to support local response processes. However, this bill establishes a one-size-fits-all state procurement approach that will not integrate with local public safety agencies.

Following the introduction of a similar bill in the 2023 session, the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) coordinated with the University of Maryland Center for Health and Homeland Security to study emergency notification in Maryland schools. The study convened a workgroup of subject matter experts in emergency notification and response, including the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM), school safety experts from school districts across the state, county emergency managers, and 9-1-1 specialists. The workgroup researched school emergency communications in other states and reviewed publicly available after-action reports from high-profile school-based emergencies.

The results of the MCSS study highlighted Maryland's existing Text-to-9-1-1 capabilities. They found no evidence that this type of emergency notification program would be effective as a single solution to keeping schools safe. The study identified emergency communication gaps that require more immediate attention and would be less costly and easier to implement.

For these reasons, MACo requests an **UNFAVORABLE** report on SB 1090 as introduced. However, MACo would take no position on the bill with the amendments above, which reflect the findings and recommendations of the MCSS study.

# **SB 1090.MCSS Central Statewide School Panic Button**

Uploaded by: John Woolums

Position: UNF



**BILL:** Senate Bill 1090  
**TITLE:** Maryland Center for School Safety – Statewide Secure Schools Emergency Response Program – Established  
**DATE:** February 28, 2024  
**POSITION:** OPPOSE  
**COMMITTEE:** Education, Energy, and the Environment  
**CONTACT:** John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) opposes Senate Bill 1090 which would mandate the creation of a new statewide “panic button” program to be accessible to all school staff and administered centrally by the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS).

MABE appreciates the intent to establish the statewide program proposed in this legislation. However, MABE believes the costs and intrusion into local policies, programs, services and school operations outweigh the benefits and merits of mandating the creation of such a program. Senate Bill 1090 would establish the new statewide secure schools emergency response program to be administered by the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS). Again, MABE appreciates the stated purpose of the program to improve the safety and security of public schools in the state, but objects to the need to invest in a uniform statewide emergency notification or “panic button” system to enable school personnel to communicate directly with a public safety answering point in perceived life-threatening and emergency situations. The bill further specifies that such incidents may include an array of incidents ranging from active shooters, intruders, medical emergencies, to severe weather conditions.

In addition, MABE is concerned with the proposed timeframe, mandating the Maryland Center for School Safety to ensure that this new statewide program has been implemented in each public school in the state by October 1, 2023. Again, MABE raises concerns with the approach taken in this bill to mandate a new statewide program based on a single procurement and single point of contact in life-threatening emergency situations occurring, or perceived to be occurring, in public schools. MABE’s adopted legislative positions and policy statement on school safety and security issues strike a balance of advocating for funding and policy decisions at the state level and support for local school system efforts to develop and implement school safety programs and strategies based on local priorities and available resources.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all local boards of education in Maryland:

- ✓ **Supports** federal, State, and local government funding for local public school safety programs, facility upgrades, and the wide array of behavioral health and public safety services provided by other public and private entities, which are essential to maintaining safe and secure schools.
- ✓ **Supports** increased state funding to support the work of local school systems to ensure that state laws and regulations, including the Safe to Learn Act, are implemented with fidelity; and increased state and local funding for programs addressing gangs, drugs, human trafficking, behavioral health, and the impact of systemic violence in communities, schools, and our students’ lives.
- ✓ **Supports** local discretion to adopt programs and policies to ensure school safety and security.
- ✗ **Opposes** legislation which attempts to address student safety concerns by prescribing specific tools or approaches or imposes unfunded mandates on local boards of education.

Safety and security in public schools is extremely important to local boards of education for the protection of students and staff, as well as necessary to environments conducive to teaching and learning. MABE believes that safety in public schools is the joint responsibility of local boards of education, school administrators and staff, students, parents and guardians, law enforcement and other public safety agencies, human services agencies, and the community in general.

Following the tragic school shooting in Newtown, Connecticut in 2012, the State Board approved reforms to require evacuation, shelter in place, lockdown and other drills that all schools must conduct each year. In 2013, with MABE's support, the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) was created to facilitate coordination and collaboration between local school systems. Tragically, a mass school shooting occurred on Feb. 14, 2018 at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida; and a school shooting occurred on March 20, 2018 at Great Mills High School in St. Mary's County, Maryland. These events led to broad bipartisan support for the Safe to Learn Act of 2018, which:

- Established a School Safety Subcabinet and Advisory Board and increases funding for MCSS.
- Required school systems to designate a certified school safety coordinator and to conduct annual safety evaluations of each school;
- Required local school systems to designate a mental health services coordinator, and requires local assessment teams to intervene with students and individuals who may pose a threat to school safety;
- Required all school resource officers (SROs) and school safety and security personnel to complete a specialized curriculum in school law and restorative approaches, and requires school systems to report on schools with assigned SROs and, if not, how adequate local law enforcement will be provided; and
- Provided significant funding for school facility upgrades and school safety and security programs.

The Center for School Safety has revised and expanded the mandated training for all school security staff and SROs, and the legislature consistently invests in school safety programs and facility upgrades. In 2021, the legislature considered but did not enact bills to reform or eliminate SRO programs. However, police reform laws were enacted regarding the police officers' bill of rights, police misconduct, use of force and arrest procedures, use of body-worn cameras, and training, and impact all law enforcement officers including SROs.

In addition, Maryland law mandates local board policies on criminal gang activity, background checks and employer history reviews for employees and contractors, and emergency plans and drills to prepare for violent events and natural disasters. State law also defines educators as "persons in position of authority" and criminalizes as a fourth-degree sex offense sexual activity between educators and students above the age of consent.

MABE urges the legislature to continue to invest in the high quality school safety programs described above and consider the input of local boards on legislation raising concerns about the ability to ensure safe learning environments in all schools and for all students and staff.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 1090.

# **SB 1090 - Maryland Center for School Safety - Stat**

Uploaded by: Mary Pat Fannon

Position: UNF



**PSSAM**  
Public School Superintendents' Association  
OF MARYLAND

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**BILL:** SB 1090  
**TITLE:** Maryland Center for School Safety - Statewide Secure Schools  
Emergency Response Program - Established  
**DATE:** February 28, 2024  
**POSITION:** Unfavorable  
**COMMITTEE:** Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
**CONTACT:** Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, PSSAM

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The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), on behalf of all twenty-four public school superintendents, **opposes SB 1090.**

Senate Bill 1090 establishes the Statewide Secure Schools Emergency Response Program to be administered by the Maryland Center for School Safety to improve the safety and security of public schools in the State by implementing a certain emergency notification system; requiring the Center to ensure that the Program has been implemented in each public school in the State on or before September 1, 2026; and requiring the Governor to include in the annual budget bill for fiscal year 2026 an appropriation of \$4,500,000 for the Program.

PSSAM appreciates the sponsor's interest and advocacy on this extremely important topic of student safety; however, we strongly oppose efforts to mandate protocols and programs that override local decision-making in these efforts. This legislation is extremely prescriptive and requires a program with an incredibly specific set of requirements that is almost impossible to find in the current marketplace. With safety programs that require local system integration, best practices call for local decision making and collaboration between school systems and their emergency responding agencies.

We support the Maryland Center for School Safety's (MCSS) opposition to a one-size state procured system, not an opposition to the creation of a panic button system. In fact, MCSS reports that in response to last year's SB 677 (Safety – Statewide Secure Schools Emergency Response Program – Established), they convened a group of stakeholders including MDEM, local emergency managers, local 9-1-1, and local school system safety experts to conduct a study on integrated systems. The results indicated there are evidence-based ways to improve school

safety, specific to emergency communications, that would be more valuable than a statewide panic-button system, such as intercoms, PAs, BDAs, and CAD to CAD integration.

PSSAM continues to support MCSS' research and development of best practices to guide any enhancements of local emergency response systems over a legislatively mandated system.

For these reasons, PSSAM requests an **unfavorable** report on Senate Bill 1090.

**2-28 SB 1090. CRSD. Emergency Response - Schools -**

Uploaded by: Gail Sunderman

Position: INFO

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# MARYLAND COALITION TO REFORM SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

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**HOUSE EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND the ENVIRONMENT**  
**HOUSE BILL 1090: Maryland Center for School Safety – Statewide Secure Schools**  
**Emergency Response Program - Established**

**DATE: February 28, 2024**

**POSITION: Letter of Information**

The Maryland Coalition to Reform School Discipline (CRSD) brings together advocates, service providers, and community members dedicated to transforming school discipline practices within Maryland’s public school systems. CRSD is committed to the fair and equitable treatment of ALL students, including pregnant or parenting students, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, religion, and socio-economic status, and reducing barriers to learning for ALL students. CRSD submits this letter of information to provide context for and articulate our concerns with ***SB 1090, which would establish a statewide schools emergency response program*** administered by the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS).

While the safety of students in schools is of paramount importance, the response to making schools safer frequently is to increase security measures and surveillance, place school police on school campuses, control access to buildings, and install metal detectors. While these efforts are well meaning and have intuitive appeal, they are often enacted without consultation of the empirical evidence. Implementing a Statewide school emergency response program is another well-meaning security measure that has not been adequately researched to determine its effectiveness.

Security measures are expensive and result in trade-offs. The bill calls for a budget appropriation of \$4,500,000 to procure and implement an emergency communication platform. It is not clear this will cover all of the costs and whether schools will encounter additional costs to train personnel, revise school preparedness plans, or maintain and update the system over time. Since emergency events are infrequent occurrences, this a very expensive program that diverts funding from other, evidence-based practices that promote school safety, student well-being, and enhance learning.

Enhancing school safety should rely on evidence-based policies and procedures that both keep our schools safe and maintain an environment conducive to learning. We urge the Maryland General Assembly and the Maryland Center for School Safety to focus on evidence-based policies and practices that create positive school climates, expand behavioral health services, fully implement restorative practices, and support schools in building healthy, supportive relationships. For these reasons, CRSD has concerns about the efficacy of SB 1090.

**For more information contact:**

Maryland Coalition to Reform School Discipline

[CRSDMaryland@gmail.com](mailto:CRSDMaryland@gmail.com)

**CRSD Members**

The Choice Program at UMBC

Camila Reynolds-Dominguez, FreeState Justice

The League of Women Voters of Maryland

Sayra and Neil Meyerhoff Center for Families, Children and the Courts, University of  
Baltimore School of Law

Progressive Maryland

Project HEAL (Health, Education, Advocacy, and Law) at Kennedy Krieger Institute

ACLU of Maryland

Maryland Office of the Public Defender