
BILL: HB0472 – Education – School Mapping Data Program – Established **DATE:** February 5, 2024

SUBJECT: Letter of Information **COMMITTEE:** Ways and Means

POSITION: Information only

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The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) provides this information for your consideration of HB0472 – *Education – School Mapping Data Program – Established*.

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) believes the program implemented through HB 472 would be most efficiently managed by the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS). The school mapping program is intended to assist first responders in emergency situations through the Safe Schools Fund. The MCSS currently administers the Safe Schools Fund and several LEA grant programs. However, MSDE is concerned that the current funding available through the Safe Schools Fund may not prioritize this additional allowable use of the funds as it is in addition to the ten other items. Currently, The Safe Schools Fund only provides \$600,000 annually to be allocated among all 24 LEAs.

Additionally, MSDE suggests collaboration between MCSS and the Interagency Committee on School Construction (IAC) to implement this initiative as the IAC may have related school-level data through its facilities assessment work. Collaboration with the Interagency Commission on School Construction and MCSS will be needed to ensure LEAs have the technical assistance to select and deploy a mapping system.

HB 0472

Under House Bill (HB) 0472, the School Safety Subcabinet, the governing entity of the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS), is authorized to allocate funds from the Safe Schools Fund to establish and execute the School Mapping Data Program under the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Under this new initiative, each local education agency (LEA) in collaboration with law enforcement agencies, may apply to MSDE for funds to generate school mapping data that meets the criteria. The Safe Schools Fund Grant is one of six grant programs currently managed by the MCSS. MCSS has experience managing grants to local education agencies (LEAs).

MSDE Responsibilities

To implement HB 0472, MSDE would need to work with the School Safety Subcabinet to facilitate the transfer of funds from the Safe Schools Fund to MSDE to be granted to LEAs. To effectively administer this program, MSDE would require a full-time specialist possessing expertise in grant management, school safety, school mapping, or related fields. Additionally, MSDE anticipates the need to contract entities proficient in school

mapping software to provide advisory services and technical assistance to LEAs, MSDE, and local law enforcement. This work will include the MSDE School Facilities Office, the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC), and MCSS.

If digital mapping is deployed, the standards listed in HB0472 should be reviewed by MSDE, the IAC, and LEA partners so that a unified standard is established to guide LEAs. This analysis should include other purposes that could be beneficial to the State and LEAs, such as facility maintenance and capital planning. LEAs will need technical assistance to support the selection and deployment of mapping software. Guidance will be provided on implementing the required walk-throughs of school buildings and grounds to verify accuracy and ensure that software programs are compatible with platforms used by state and federal public safety agencies that provide emergency services.

Impact on Local Education Agencies and the Interagency Commission on School Construction

LEAs will collaborate with local law enforcement to apply for funds to implement the School Mapping Data Program and ensure effective management of funds and compliance with the provisions of HB 472. LEAs will need to allocate sufficient time and staff to participate in mandatory inspections of school buildings and grounds to confirm the accuracy of school mapping. LEAs may need to acquire staff or services to make sure that school mapping software is compatible with platforms utilized by state and federal public safety agencies that deliver emergency services.

Currently, LEAs are not explicitly required to submit maps and floor plans to the IAC but are required to provide data as requested on facilities. The IAC notes that the LEAs do provide floor plans and that the quality varies widely. MSDE will need to coordinate with the IAC as updates to existing school maps are made, allowing for greater functionality of the digital map with other building and asset management requirements.

Safe Schools Fund

The Safe Schools Fund currently only provides \$600,000 annually to be allocated among all 24 LEAs, which amounts to \$25,000 per LEA. The estimated cost for the creation of a digital map is \$1,000 - \$3,000 per school, depending on the size of the school. The existing Safe Schools Fund allocation to an LEA would, in many instances, not meet the financial burden of digitally mapping each school, even if the LEA committed all its Safe Schools Fund allocation to this single effort.

MSDE respectfully submits this letter of information for your review and consideration. Please contact Akilah Alleyne, Ph.D., Executive Director of Governmental Affairs, at 410-767-0504, akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov, if additional information is needed.