

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1336 (Delegate Ghrist)
 Appropriations

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

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. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2024.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by \$5.0 million in FY 2026 and by \$10.0 million annually beginning in FY 2027 due to the increases in the mandated appropriation; special fund revenues and expenditures increase correspondingly. **This bill increases a mandated appropriation beginning in FY 2026.**

(\$ in millions)	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
SF Revenue	\$0	\$5.0	\$10.0	\$10.0	\$10.0
GF Expenditure	\$0	\$5.0	\$10.0	\$10.0	\$10.0
SF Expenditure	\$0	\$5.0	\$10.0	\$10.0	\$10.0
Net Effect	\$0.0	(\$5.0)	(\$10.0)	(\$10.0)	(\$10.0)

Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease

Local Effect: Local revenues and expenditures increase due to the increase in the State grants provided to local school systems and/or law enforcement agencies. The distribution of those grants among local jurisdictions is also affected, as discussed below.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law:

Safe to Learn Act

Chapter 30 of 2018, the Maryland Safe to Learn Act, made comprehensive changes designed to improve the safety of the State's public schools. The remainder of this section summarizes relevant provisions of the Act.

School Safety Subcabinet

The School Safety Subcabinet consists of the following individuals or their designees:

- the State Superintendent of Schools;
- the Secretary of Health;
- the Secretary of State Police;
- the Attorney General;
- the Secretary of Disabilities; and
- the Executive Director of the Interagency Commission on School Construction.

The State Superintendent or designee chairs the subcabinet, and the Executive Director of the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) provides staff.

Maryland Center for School Safety

Chapter 372 of 2013 established MCSS as an independent unit within State government under the direction of a governing board chaired by the State Superintendent of Schools. Five years later, the Maryland Safe to Learn Act made MCSS an independent unit *within* the Maryland State Department of Education and increased the mandated appropriation for MCSS's operations from \$500,000 to \$2.0 million annually. MCSS's duties include:

- assisting local school systems to identify resources and implement training for students and parents about relationship violence, identifying the signs of unhealthy relationships, and preventing relationship violence;
- analyzing data on School Resource Officers (SROs) and developing guidelines for local school systems regarding the assignment and training of SROs;
- certifying school safety coordinators;
- consulting with local school systems on safety evaluations;
- reviewing and commenting on school emergency plans; and
- reporting on life-threatening incidents that occur on public school grounds.

Safe Schools Fund

The Safe Schools Fund is administered by the subcabinet, which must establish procedures for local school systems and law enforcement agencies to apply for grants from the fund. The purpose of the fund is to provide grants to local school systems to enhance school safety, as specified, and it may be used only for that purpose.

School Resource Officers and School Security Employees

The Maryland Safe to Learn Act defines an SRO as (1) a law enforcement officer assigned to a school in accordance with a memorandum of understanding between a local law enforcement agency and a local school system or (2) a Baltimore City School Police Officer, as defined in current law.

Each local school system must file a report with MCSS that identifies (1) the public schools that have an SRO assigned and (2) if no SRO is assigned to a public school, the adequate local law enforcement coverage that will be provided to the school.

Annually, the Governor must include \$10.0 million for the Safe Schools Fund to provide grants to local school systems and law enforcement agencies to meet the SRO/law enforcement coverage requirements established by Chapter 30. Grants must be made based on the proportion of public schools in each jurisdiction.

A school security employee is an individual who (1) is not an SRO and (2) is employed by a local school system to provide safety and security-related services at a public school.

State Fiscal Effect: General fund expenditures increase by \$5.0 million in fiscal 2026 and by \$10.0 million annually beginning in fiscal 2027 due to the increase in the mandated appropriation. Special fund revenues and expenditures for the Safe Schools Fund increase correspondingly under the assumption that all revenues are allocated to and spent by local school systems. However, MCSS reports that, in fiscal 2023, \$6.2 million of the \$10.0 million mandated appropriation was unspent by local school systems and reverted to the Safe Schools Fund. Therefore, special fund expenditures may be less. However, the authorization to use the funds for school security employees may encourage local school systems to use a greater portion of the funds than they have in the past.

The change in the allocation of grants to local school systems has no effect on total State expenditures, but as discussed below, it affects the distribution of funds among local jurisdictions.

Local Fiscal Effect: Total local revenues and expenditures increase overall due to the increase in the grants distributed to local school systems and/or law enforcement agencies, but changing the basis for the distribution of the grants to be the respective proportion of

students instead of the respective proportion of schools alters the distribution of the grants among local governments (and therefore, also local expenditures). Based on school year 2023-2024 enrollment and the number of schools in each jurisdiction, **Exhibit 1** shows the distribution of \$15.0 million and \$20.0 million to local jurisdictions under current law (proportion of schools) and the bill (proportion of students).

Exhibit 1
Distribution of Grant Funds under Current Law and the Bill
Based on School Year 2023-2024 Enrollment and Schools

	\$15 million		\$20 million	
	<u>Current Law</u>	<u>The Bill</u>	<u>Current Law</u>	<u>The Bill</u>
Allegany	\$275,035	\$138,326	\$366,714	\$184,435
Anne Arundel	1,332,863	1,421,972	1,777,151	1,895,963
Baltimore City	1,597,320	1,278,083	2,129,760	1,704,110
Baltimore	1,893,512	1,859,104	2,524,683	2,478,806
Calvert	264,457	255,900	352,609	341,200
Caroline	105,783	95,691	141,044	127,587
Carroll	465,444	440,402	620,592	587,203
Cecil	306,770	252,831	409,027	337,109
Charles	433,709	468,085	578,279	624,113
Dorchester	137,518	77,685	183,357	103,580
Frederick	729,901	803,844	973,202	1,071,793
Garrett	126,939	58,247	169,252	77,663
Harford	581,805	642,405	775,740	856,539
Howard	825,106	971,623	1,100,141	1,295,498
Kent	52,891	29,199	70,522	38,933
Montgomery	2,232,017	2,701,168	2,976,023	3,601,557
Prince George's	2,115,656	2,213,982	2,820,874	2,951,976
Queen Anne's	148,096	126,475	197,461	168,633
St. Mary's	327,927	290,359	437,236	387,146
Somerset	84,626	48,789	112,835	65,052
Talbot	84,626	75,898	112,835	101,198
Washington	465,444	380,149	620,592	506,865
Wicomico	264,457	254,332	352,609	339,109
Worcester	148,096	115,449	197,461	153,932
Total	\$15,000,000	\$15,000,000	\$20,000,000	\$20,000,000

Note: Does not include the SEED School.

Source: Maryland State Department of Education; Department of Legislative Services

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: SB 1077 (Senator Corderman) - Budget and Taxation.

Information Source(s): Baltimore City Public Schools; Maryland State Department of Education; Maryland Center for School Safety; Maryland Association of Counties; Montgomery County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

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rh/clb

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