

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2018 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
 First Reader

House Bill 1446 (Delegate Long)
 Ways and Means

Public Schools - School Emergency Response Systems - Study (Safer Schools Act)

This bill requires the Maryland Center for School Safety (the center), in consultation with specified entities, to conduct a study to determine best practices and procedures for the use and installation of emergency response systems designed to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from a manmade or natural disaster or an emergency occurring on elementary and secondary school property. By December 1, 2018, the center must report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly. The center must also report to local stakeholders, including local school systems. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2018, and terminates after May 31, 2019.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by \$50,000 in FY 2019 to conduct the required study.

(in dollars)	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	50,000	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$50,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

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

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: In conducting the study, the center must (1) examine national best practices on the use and installation of school emergency response systems; (2) review the latest technological advancements of emergency response systems, including infrastructure components designed to promote building physical security and safety; and (3) consider the most effective elements of emergency response systems. This includes consideration of accessible alarm systems, specified communications systems, and controlled access or hardened door systems to provide refuge areas.

The center must make recommendations related to:

- standards for a comprehensive model emergency response system recommended for use by each local school system;
- standards for purchase, installation, and implementation for new school construction; and
- establishment of goals for installation and retrofitting of emergency response systems in existing school facilities.

Current Law/Background:

School Safety and Emergency Plans

According to State regulations, all students in State public schools, without exception and regardless of race, ethnicity, region, religion, gender, sexual orientation, language, socioeconomic status, age, or disability, have the right to educational environments that are safe, appropriate for academic achievement, and free from any form of harassment. Each local board of education has both the responsibility and authority to adopt policies designed to create safe schools.

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Emergency Planning Guidelines for Local School Systems and Schools were first developed in 2003 and updated in 2013; they are incorporated by reference in the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR). COMAR requires that each local school system and the School for Education Evolution and Development (SEED) develop an emergency plan for all public school grounds under its jurisdiction that:

- deals with the contingencies of man-made, technological, and natural hazards;
- conforms to regulatory requirements; and
- aligns with the guidelines.

Each local school and SEED school must also (1) ensure that each school facility has a school emergency plan aligned with the guidelines and that a copy is on file at the central

office; (2) ensure that a central administration emergency plan that is aligned with the guidelines is on file in each school grounds under its jurisdiction; and (3) develop and implement an annual schedule of safety drills in specified areas.

Chapter 327 of 2017 required MSDE to update its [Emergency Planning Guidelines for Local School Systems and Schools](#) by December 1, 2017, to accommodate, safeguard, and evacuate students, staff, and visitors with disabilities on public school grounds in accordance with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act. MSDE states that it worked closely with the center in completing the new guidelines dated October 2017.

Maryland Center for School Safety

Chapter 273 of 2013 established the center as an independent unit of State government. The center must provide a comprehensive, coordinated approach to school safety. Among its many functions and duties, the center must identify safe school professional staff development best practices; provide technical assistance and consultation to local school systems, State and local government, and community organizations on best practices for safe schools and violence prevention; and assist local school systems to monitor behavior data to ensure fairness in the application of consequences for student misbehavior.

The Governor's proposed fiscal 2019 budget includes \$2.0 million in general funds to establish a new School Safety Program in response to Chapter 732 of 2017, which created a grant program to provide funding for security-related projects (including personnel, technology, and facility upgrades) to schools and child care centers at risk of a hate crime. While the center is the entity responsible for making the grants, it was determined that the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention (GOCCP) has better capacity and experience to administer the grant funds. GOCCP has indicated that it will consider input from the center when making award decisions.

The Governor's proposed Supplemental Budget Number 1 for fiscal 2019 includes an additional \$2.5 million for the center for the purpose of monitoring school safety as well as an additional \$2.5 million for the GOCCP to provide grants to local school systems to carry out mandated safety assessments.

State Expenditures: General fund expenditures increase by \$50,000 in FY 2019 for the center to contract for the required study.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Charles County; Maryland State Department of Education; Public School Construction Program; Department of State Police; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 8, 2018
nb/rhh

Analysis by: Scott P. Gates

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510