

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2022 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 238 (Senator Salling)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Public Schools - Crossing Guards - Hiring and Budget Allocation

This bill requires each local board of education to require the local school system to hire crossing guards for each public school in the county. Local boards must provide sufficient funds in the board budget to meet this requirement. If a local board is not able to provide sufficient funding to meet these requirements, the county police department must hire additional school crossing guards to meet the required number of crossing guards and provide sufficient funding in the county police department budget. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2022.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Local government expenditures increase substantially, beginning in FY 2023, to assure that crossing guards are hired for every public school. **This bill imposes a mandate on a unit of local government.**

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: At its own expense, a county governing body may provide transportation for public school students, in addition to the transportation provided by the State.

A qualified school crossing guard may stop or otherwise direct vehicles and pedestrians on a highway or on school grounds to assist (1) pedestrians in the safe crossing of highways at a school crossing; (2) school vehicles in entering and leaving school grounds; and

(3) except in Baltimore City, vehicles that are not school vehicles in entering and leaving school grounds. A school crossing guard who qualifies for this authority:

- is age 18 or older;
- is under the control of a local law enforcement agency or a county school board;
- has completed training to perform any traffic direction duties to which the guard is assigned as prescribed by the law enforcement agency or county school board that has control over the school crossing guard; and
- is wearing an appropriate uniform as specified by the law enforcement agency or county school board that has control over the school crossing guard.

A person may not willfully disobey a lawful direction of a school crossing guard who is exercising the authority granted under State law. A school crossing guard who does not meet the qualifications needed to direct pedestrian and vehicular traffic entering and leaving school grounds may assist a pedestrian to cross a highway, providing the school crossing guard does not attempt to do so by directing traffic.

Local Expenditures: Expenditures for local school systems and police departments increase substantially beginning in fiscal 2023 to hire additional crossing guards for schools not presently served by crossing guards. It is assumed that this will be met with increased annual county appropriations to cover these costs.

The Maryland State Department of Education and Maryland Association of Counties both anticipate significant increased local expenditures will be required to meet the bill's requirements. The Anne Arundel County Police Department employs approximately 125 crossing guards to cover 72 of the 123 public schools in the county at a cost of approximately \$2.0 million. Therefore, hiring crossing guards to cover the remaining 51 schools will cost approximately \$1.4 million annually. Howard County estimates that 41 additional crossing guards will be required at an annual cost of approximately \$518,000. Montgomery County advises that 67 of its schools are not served by crossing guards and that as many as 95 additional crossing guards (assuming some schools require more than one guard) will be required under the bill, as well as three additional sworn officers to supervise these positions, at an annual cost of approximately \$3.5 million. Caroline County Public Schools was unable to provide a specific cost estimate but advises that presently there are paid school crossing guards at only one of its ten public schools.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Association of Counties; Caroline, Howard, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties; Baltimore City Public Schools; Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Frederick County Public Schools; Montgomery County Public Schools; Prince George's County Public Schools; Maryland State Department of Education; Department of Legislative Services

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