

Chapter 648

(House Bill 326)

AN ACT concerning

Education – Maryland Center for School Safety – Anonymous Reporting System

FOR the purpose of requiring the Maryland Center for School Safety to develop and administer an anonymous reporting system; requiring the Center to develop operational guidelines and procedures for the anonymous reporting system and to provide certain training; requiring each local school system to participate in the anonymous reporting system, subject to a certain exception; requiring a certain custodian of records to deny inspection of information and materials related to the anonymous reporting system; and generally relating to the school safety anonymous reporting system.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – Education

Section 7–1502(g)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

BY adding to

Article – Education

Section 7–1514

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – General Provisions

Section 4–314.1(a)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2019 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

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

Article – Education

7–1502.

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

(1) 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;

- (2) Develop a website containing a searchable database of definitive research, books, videos, white papers, speakers, websites, and other school safety resources;
- (3) Develop criteria that may be applied consistently and uniformly in local school systems for coding unsafe incidents and serious or violent offenses;
- (4) Research and recommend the use of common assessment tools to be used to identify specific problems and needs of schools and neighborhoods to facilitate intervention before assessed findings become problematic;
- (5) Assist local school systems to conduct a thorough assessment of their school safety data, school building layouts, and use of human resources for monitoring purposes to determine the need for:
 - (i) Surveillance and other security technology; and
 - (ii) Innovations to maximize the use of human resources to monitor activity and influence positive relationship building;
- (6) Maintain and maximize relationships with emergency responders, law enforcement personnel, parents, and other emergency preparedness stakeholders to ensure seamless execution in an emergency event, including:
 - (i) Consolidate resources among stakeholders to maximize support and secure necessary skills to ensure emergency plan implementation;
 - (ii) Conduct collaborative training and preparation exercises; and
 - (iii) Identify improvements and ensure nonduplication of effort in emergency response procedures;
- (7) Provide safety information on traveling to and from school to parents and students twice a year that includes data related to bus and pedestrian safety, strategies for ensuring personal safety, efforts of the local school system or school to improve safety, and information on the available options for reporting incidents or concerns;
- (8) Utilize and update an existing clearinghouse of law enforcement resources that are available to support school safety to ensure that it includes information regarding the purpose and process for accessing available funding;
- (9) Assist local school systems to improve and monitor traffic control measures in the immediate vicinity of schools to reduce the potential for pedestrian and vehicle accidents;

- (10) Assist the Department to evaluate and update current data systems to ensure they are best suited for providing useful information on school safety issues;
- (11) Assist local school systems to monitor local school system and individual school behavior data to ensure fairness in the application of consequences for student misbehavior;
- (12) Assist the Department and local school systems:
 - (i) To prepare an annual report that combines multiple school safety data systems into one format for public review; and
 - (ii) To incorporate new data points into existing data collection systems;
- (13) Assist in the development of safety and security criteria for the design and operation of school facilities;
- (14) Assist 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;
- (15) Provide technical assistance to local school systems in the review of safety and security audits and the implementation of improvements in school facilities;
- (16) Analyze data on school resource officers and develop guidelines and training for local school systems as required under § 7–1508 of this subtitle;
- (17) Certify school safety coordinators as required under § 7–1508 of this subtitle;
- (18) Submit to the General Assembly and the Governor a summary of reports on school resource officer and local law enforcement agency coverage in public schools as required under § 7–1508 of this subtitle;
- (19) Consult with local school systems on safety evaluations developed under § 7–1510 of this subtitle;
- (20) Review and comment on school emergency plans developed under § 7–1510 of this subtitle;
- (21) Report to the General Assembly and the Governor on life–threatening incidents as required under § 7–1510 of this subtitle;
- (22) Collaborate with an institution of higher education or a designated federal or national research entity to study the effectiveness and psychological impact of

active shooter safety drills or trainings by researching and analyzing the data collected from local school systems in accordance with § 7–1509(f) of this subtitle;

(23) On or before October 1, 2024, identify best practices for active shooter safety drills or trainings, and periodically update those identifications using the data collected from local school systems in accordance with § 7–1509(f) of this subtitle; [and]

(24) Administer the Secure Schools Emergency Response Grant Program under § 7–1513 of this subtitle; AND

(25) DEVELOP AND ADMINISTER THE ANONYMOUS REPORTING SYSTEM IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 7–1514 OF THIS SUBTITLE.

7–1514.

(A) (1) THE CENTER SHALL DEVELOP AND ADMINISTER AN ANONYMOUS REPORTING SYSTEM.

(2) THE ANONYMOUS REPORTING SYSTEM SHALL:

(I) COORDINATE THE RECEIPT OF INFORMATION RELATING TO A SCHOOL OR STUDENT SAFETY CONCERN IN A MANNER THAT MAINTAINS THE ANONYMITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL REPORTING THE INFORMATION; AND

(II) PROVIDE A MECHANISM FOR ANY REPORTED INFORMATION TO BE FORWARDED TO SCHOOL OFFICIALS OR OTHER APPROPRIATE RESPONSE PERSONNEL.

(3) THE CENTER SHALL:

(I) DEVELOP OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE ANONYMOUS REPORTING SYSTEM; AND

(II) PROVIDE TRAINING SESSIONS FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL ON NAVIGATING THE ANONYMOUS REPORTING SYSTEM.

(B) (1) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, BEGINNING JULY 1, 2027, EACH LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM SHALL PARTICIPATE IN THE ANONYMOUS REPORTING SYSTEM DEVELOPED UNDER THIS SECTION.

(2) (I) A LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM MAY CHOOSE NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ANONYMOUS REPORTING SYSTEM ONLY IF THE LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM, ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2027, OPERATES AND MAKES AVAILABLE TO THE

PUBLIC A REPORTING SYSTEM THAT IS SUBSTANTIALLY SIMILAR TO THE ANONYMOUS REPORTING SYSTEM DEVELOPED UNDER THIS SECTION.

(II) A LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM THAT CHOOSES NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ANONYMOUS REPORTING SYSTEM SHALL PROVIDE WRITTEN NOTICE TO THE CENTER ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 1, 2026.

Article – General Provisions

4–314.1.

(a) Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, a custodian shall deny inspection of any record disclosing:

(1) a safety evaluation or school emergency plan developed under § 7–1510 of the Education Article;

(2) an emergency response policy developed under § 7–1509 of the Education Article and § 3–520 of the Public Safety Article;

(3) guidelines for school resource officers and supplemental coverage by local law enforcement agencies developed by the Maryland Center for School Safety under § 7–1508 of the Education Article;

(4) a plan to implement the Maryland Center for School Safety’s guidelines adopted by a local school system under § 7–1508 of the Education Article; [or]

(5) any school mapping data produced under the School Mapping Data Program in accordance with § 7–1510.1 of the Education Article; **OR**

(6) INFORMATION AND MATERIALS RELATED TO THE ANONYMOUS REPORTING SYSTEM DEVELOPED UNDER § 7–1514 OF THE EDUCATION ARTICLE.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

Approved by the Governor, May 26, 2026.