

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 76
Appropriations

(Delegate Griffith)

Local School Systems - School Safety - Grant Allocations

This bill authorizes the School Safety Subcabinet to reallocate unspent funds appropriated for grants to assist in providing law enforcement coverage for schools to local school systems that have spent their allocation and demonstrate need within the same fiscal year. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: No net effect on general fund expenditures as the bill only authorizes the reallocation of existing funding for local school systems and/or law enforcement agencies. However, the bill may reduce reversions to the general fund in future years, as discussed below. The Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) can implement the bill with existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: Potential significant increase in revenues for school safety-related purposes for some local school systems and/or law enforcement agencies, but any such increase is contingent on the availability of unspent funds and is at the discretion of the School Safety Subcabinet. No effect on local expenditures.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law:

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 the Department 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 MCSS provides staff.

Grants for Law Enforcement Coverage for Public Schools

Each year, the Governor must include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of \$10 million for grants to local school systems and law enforcement agencies to assist in providing adequate law enforcement coverage for public schools. This includes offsetting the cost of assigning School Resources Officers (SROs) to public schools. Chapter 179 of 2024 further authorized the use of grant funds to offset the cost of assigning school security employees to public schools. Chapter 604 of 2025 (the Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2025) repealed a requirement that the \$10 million appropriation for the grant program be made to the Safe Schools Fund.

Grants must be made to each local school system in proportion to their share of public schools in the State. There is no statutory authority for the subcabinet to reallocate any unspent funds to other local school systems.

State Fiscal Effect: As noted above, the \$10 million mandated appropriation is no longer required to be made to the Safe Schools Fund. In prior years, grants to local school systems or law enforcement agencies were made from the Safe Schools Fund, and any unspent funds remained in the fund as part of its fund balance. In fiscal 2023, \$6.2 million of the \$10 million allocation remained unspent, and in fiscal 2024, \$3.7 million was unspent.

To the extent that grants are now made directly from the general fund, any unspent funds revert to the general fund at the end of the year. To the extent that unspent funds remain each year and are reallocated within the same fiscal year, as allowed by the bill, reversions to the general fund decrease.

Despite the statutory change, the fiscal 2027 budget as introduced includes a \$3 million general fund appropriation to the Safe Schools Fund for the grant program and a \$10 million special fund appropriation from the Safe Schools Fund for grants (the difference is assumed to be made up by the balance in the Safe Schools Fund). Therefore,

for fiscal 2027, any unspent funds do not revert to the general fund, so there is no effect on the general fund.

Local Revenues: Grant funds for adequate law enforcement coverage of schools (including for SROs) generally do not cover the full cost of providing that coverage, which is borne by local school systems and/or law enforcement agencies. However, as noted above, some local school systems/law enforcement agencies do not spend their allocation of grant funds. Due to the statutory requirement that funds be distributed based on the number of schools in each school system, unspent funds cannot be reallocated. Under the bill, some local school systems and/or law enforcement agencies that exhaust their grant allocations may receive additional funds to cover their costs of providing adequate law enforcement coverage but only at the discretion of the School Safety Subcabinet. Therefore, local revenues may increase, but a reliable estimate of total revenues or revenues per county cannot be made.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See HB 157 and SB 136 of 2025.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Center for School Safety; Department of Budget and Management; Baltimore City Public Schools; Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Prince George's County Public Schools; Frederick County Public Schools; Wicomico County Public Schools; St. Mary's County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

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jg/clb

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