

R00A06
Maryland Center for School Safety
Maryland State Department of Education

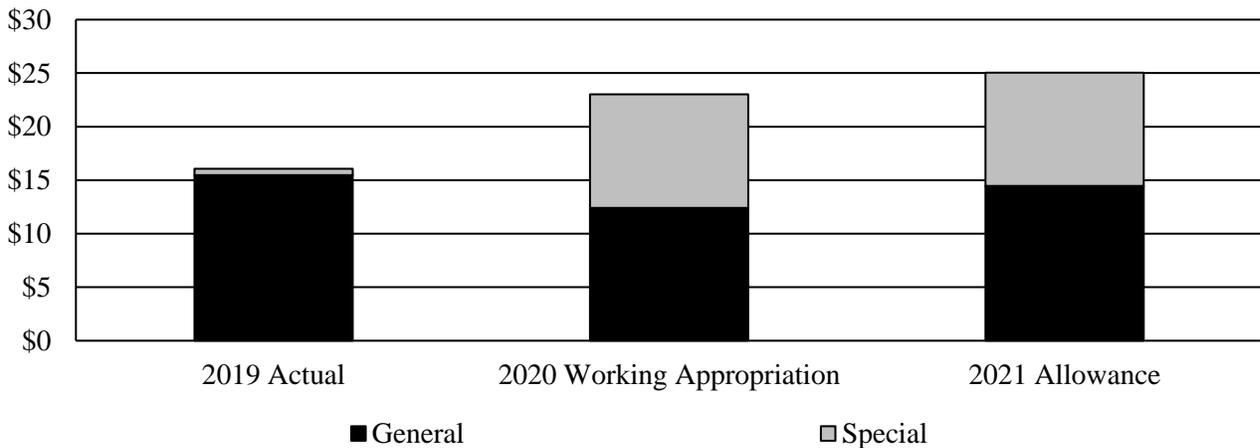
Program Description

The Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) was established in 2013 as an independent unit within State government tasked with providing a comprehensive, coordinated approach to school safety. Chapter 30 of 2018, the Maryland Safe to Learn Act, enhanced the role and responsibilities of the center and relocated it within the Maryland State Department of Education, following several high profile incidences of gun violence in Maryland and nationwide. In fulfilling its mission, MCSS provides a variety of services that include grant management; organizing trainings and seminars; reviewing school safety plans; providing technical assistance; and attending meetings of various task forces, commissions, and public organizations.

Chapter 30 also established a School Safety Subcabinet chaired by the State Superintendent of Schools and included five other State agency leaders. The subcabinet serves as the governing board for MCSS and is charged with multiple responsibilities, including collaborating to create a comprehensive, coordinated approach to school safety; fostering partnerships between the school and law enforcement communities; and administering grant funding. An advisory board with broad stakeholder representation was also created to assist the subcabinet. MCSS serves as staff to the subcabinet.

Operating Budget Summary

Budget Grows \$2.0 Million or 8.8% to \$25.1 Million in Fiscal 2021
(\$ in Millions)

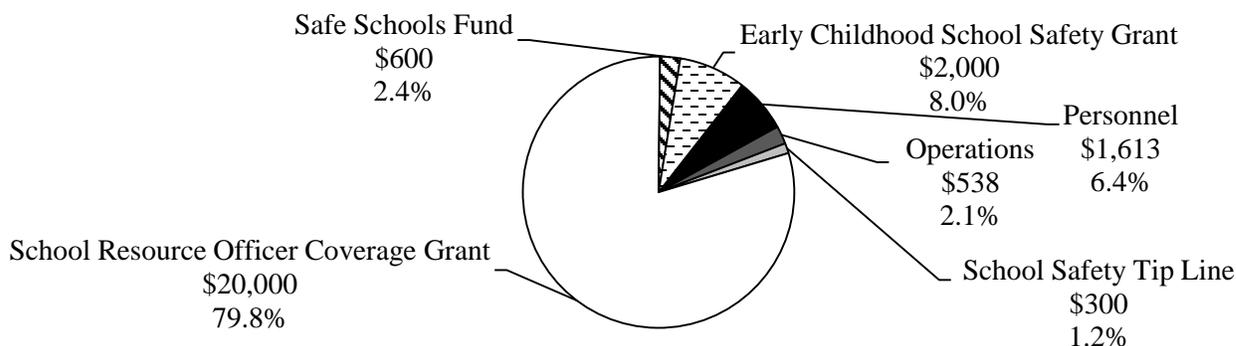


Note: Numbers may not sum due to rounding. The fiscal 2020 appropriation includes deficiencies, planned reversions, and general salary increases. The fiscal 2021 allowance includes contingent reductions and general salary increases.

Fiscal 2021 Overview of Agency Spending

The fiscal 2021 allowance appropriates \$25.1 million to the Center for School Safety. Operations programming accounts for 9.7% of the allowance and is split between personnel expenses (6.4%), everyday operating expenses (2.1%), and the School Safety Tip Line (1.2%), as shown in **Exhibit 1**. The remaining 90.3%, or \$22.6 million, supports grant programming. The Safe Schools Fund accounts for \$600,000 of the allowance, or 2.4%. This special fund grant is funded by the revenues from fines on motorists driving without proper insurance. The Early Childhood School Safety grant, transferred to MCSS’s budget from the Division of Early Childhood Development (DECD), reflects \$2.0 million (8.0%) in general funds within the fiscal 2021 allowance. The largest share of the allowance supports the School Resource Officer (SRO) Grant, which expends \$10.0 million in general funds and \$10.0 million in special funds (79.8%), as mandated by Chapter 30. This special fund grant is funded via the General Fund; as such, the same \$10.0 million must be budgeted twice in MCSS’s allowance. For a complete account of school safety-related grant programs, refer to **Appendix 2** of this analysis.

Exhibit 1
Overview of Agency Spending
Fiscal 2021 Allowance
 (\$ in Thousands)



Source: Governor’s Fiscal 2021 Budget Books

Proposed Budget Change

The Center for School Safety’s budget underwent relatively little change between fiscal 2020 and 2021. In total, the center’s budget grew by just over \$2.0 million dollars, as detailed in **Exhibit 2**. This is primarily due to the relocation of the \$2.0 million Early Childhood School Safety Grant from DECD. The remainder is accounted for by the annualized 1% salary increase in fiscal 2020 and the 2% cost-of-living-adjustment in fiscal 2021, totaling approximately \$19,670. MCSS’s budget decreased by approximately \$117,000 largely due to the completion of various startup costs necessary to assist MCSS in achieving independent operation.

Exhibit 2
Proposed Budget
MSDE – Maryland Center for School Safety
(\$ in Thousands)

| How Much It Grows: | General Fund | Special Fund | Total |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| Fiscal 2019 Actual | \$15,475 | \$600 | \$16,075 |
| Fiscal 2020 Working Appropriation | 12,424 | 10,600 | 23,024 |
| Fiscal 2021 Allowance | <u>14,451</u> | <u>10,600</u> | <u>25,051</u> |
| Fiscal 2020-2021 Amount Change | \$2,027 | \$0 | \$2,027 |
| Fiscal 2020-2021 Percent Change | 16.3% | | 8.8% |

Where It Goes:

Personnel Expenses

| | |
|---|-------|
| Regular earnings | \$195 |
| Employee Retirement Systems payments..... | 52 |
| Social Security contributions..... | 14 |
| Net 2% cost-of-living adjustment in fiscal 2021 | 13 |
| Annualized general salary increase of 1% in fiscal 2020 | 6 |
| Employee and retiree health insurance | -4 |
| Turnover adjustments | -133 |
| Other fringe benefit adjustments | 1 |

Other Changes

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Early Childhood School Safety grant transferred from MSDE – Division of Early Childhood Development | 2,000 |
| Completion of various one-time start-up costs related to the establishment of the MCSS | -117 |
| Total | \$2,027 |

MSDE: Maryland State Department of Education

Note: Numbers may not sum due to rounding. The fiscal 2020 appropriation includes deficiencies, planned reversions, and general salary increases. The fiscal 2021 allowance includes contingent reductions and general salary increases.

Personnel Data

| | <u>FY 19</u> <u>Actual</u> | <u>FY 20</u> <u>Working</u> | <u>FY 21</u> <u>Allowance</u> | <u>FY 20-21</u> <u>Change</u> |
|------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| Regular Positions | 14.00 | 14.00 | 14.00 | 0.00 |
| Contractual FTEs | <u>0.00</u> | <u>1.00</u> | <u>1.00</u> | <u>0.00</u> |
| Total Personnel | 14.00 | 15.00 | 15.00 | 0.00 |

Vacancy Data: Regular Positions

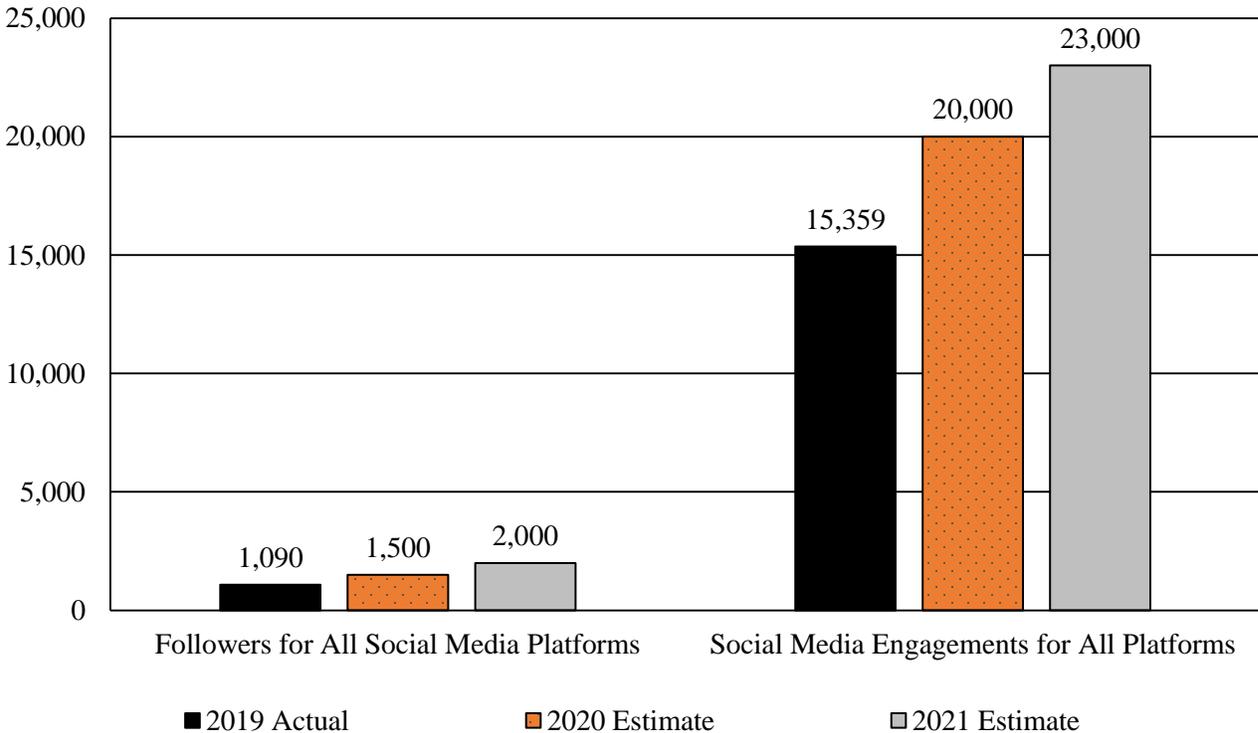
| | | |
|---|------|-------|
| Turnover and Necessary Vacancies, Excluding New Positions | 1.25 | 8.90% |
| Positions and Percentage Vacant as of 12/31/19 | 1.00 | 7.14% |
| Vacancies Below Turnover | 0.25 | |

Key Observations

1. School Safety Outreach Measures

MCSS manages social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn to provide updates from the School Safety Subcabinet, increase awareness of school safety-related events, and connect followers with resources to address a variety of school safety related concerns (bullying, mental health, school threats, *etc.*). Beginning in fiscal 2019, MCSS began to track its outreach measures online and on social media, as shown in **Exhibit 3**. In fiscal 2019, MCSS reports that among its four social media accounts, the center had a total of 1,090 followers. MCSS estimates that its followers will increase 83.4% to 2,000 by fiscal 2021. Total social media engagements were 15,359 in fiscal 2019; the center estimates that this number will increase 49.7% to 23,000 engagements for all platforms in fiscal 2020.

Exhibit 3
Maryland Center for School Safety
Online Outreach Efforts
Fiscal 2019-2021



Source: Governor’s Fiscal 2021 Budget Books

2. Low Submission Rate for the SRO Adequate Coverage Plan

Under Chapter 30, local school systems are required to submit SRO coverage plans each year. MCSS was required to develop guidelines to assist local school systems in determining adequate SRO or law enforcement coverage for all schools; the guidelines were completed in December 2018 but are shielded from disclosure by statute. Due by July 1, 2019, these coverage plans must demonstrate that each public school in the district employs SROs or provides sufficient law enforcement coverage to adequately provide security to that school. Fulfillment of the adequate local law enforcement coverage requirement is primarily achieved through the use of roving law enforcement officers, deputies, and school police officers on a geographic basis to respond to calls for service at schools within a particular region. An assigned SRO or demonstration of adequate law enforcement coverage was required at every public school by the start of the 2019-2020 school year. The center has indicated that local school systems' abilities to meet the established guidelines will be a considering factor in determining an allocation for the \$10 million SRO grant.

MCSS's Managing for Result (MFR) submission reports that 13.7%, or 194 public schools, have SRO coverage. MCSS further reports that 25% of schools submitted their coverage plan by July 1, 2019, and only 66% had submitted their coverage plan by the start of the 2019-2020 academic year. As this is the first year school systems are mandated to submit their coverage plan, the center expects that the timely submission rate will improve to 75% in fiscal 2021. Schools that fail to submit their annual SRO Adequate Coverage Plan may have their SRO grant funding withheld. MCSS has indicated that, as of January 2020, information regarding the allocation of this grant is not yet available. **The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) recommends restricting funds within MCSS pending the submission of a report detailing the allocation of the \$10 million SRO grant for fiscal 2020 and the identification of funds withheld from local school systems that fail to submit an SRO Adequate Coverage Plan.**

Due to the low submission rate of the SRO Adequate Coverage Plan for fiscal 2020, MCSS should brief the committees on the outreach efforts made to ensure awareness of this requirement, whether SRO grant funding has been withheld to noncompliant schools, how many schools have had their grant funds withheld, and the amount of funds withheld.

3. Distribution of Fiscal 2019 School Safety Operating Grants

The fiscal 2019 budget appropriated a total of \$14.1 million in School Safety Grants for MCSS to allocate by the end of fiscal 2020. This includes the School Safety Grants for schools at risk of hate crimes (\$1.0 million), the School Safety Evaluation Grant (\$2.5 million), and the School Safety Operating Grant (\$10.6 million). To date, nearly all of the \$14.1 million has been allocated; the breakdown of these funds by jurisdiction can be found in **Appendix 3**. Grant allocations for schools at risk of hate crimes was not available by jurisdiction at the time of writing this analysis.

MCSS should comment on how these funds have been used by local school systems and how the School Safety Grants for schools at risk of hate crimes has been allocated by jurisdiction.

4. Maryland School Safety Tip Line

In September 2018, the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) entered into an interagency agreement with MCSS to develop and maintain the Maryland School Safety Tip Line. The tip line will leverage a variety of communications modes to support the reporting and routing of tips concerning mental health crises, school and community violence, drug activity, abuse, harassment, and other issues affecting Maryland students. The tip line is being operated out of the Maryland Joint Operations Center at MEMA headquarters. Under the agreement, MEMA is responsible for:

- 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year operation of the tip line;
- entering and tracking information related to tips received; and
- the timely routing of tips received.

The tip line is operated by 5 contractual full-time equivalent positions in MEMA's budget. Personnel and operating costs are billed to MCSS at a cost of \$300,000 per year. MCSS is responsible for the tracking and disposition of each tip at the State and local level. Tip line activity is discussed on a weekly basis with MEMA, local schools, and local authorities. The center has tracked the tips that it receives since October 2018. As of December 2019, the center has received 603 tips, 91% of which have been successfully closed. Data is collected on the nature of the tip; the 10 most common tip-line event types are shown in **Exhibit 4**.

Exhibit 4
Maryland Center for School Safety
Most Common School Safety Tip-line Events
October 2018 to December 2019

| <u>Event Type</u> | <u>Tips Received</u> |
|---|----------------------|
| General School Complaint/School Accountability | 66 |
| Assault/Intent to Harm Others | 51 |
| Bullying/Cyber-bullying | 50 |
| Planned School Attack | 48 |
| Drug Distribution/Use/Sale/Abuse | 47 |
| Bus Safety and Transportation Concerns | 39 |
| Smoking/Vaping | 35 |
| Building Safety/Security | 33 |
| Gun Possession and Use | 24 |
| Anger and Behavioral Issues/Hostile Environment | 20 |

Source: Maryland Center for School Safety

The 10 most common event types account for 413 tips, 68% of tips received since operations began in October 2018. “General School Complaint / School Accountability” is the most common event type with 66 tips received (10.9% of the total). As the purpose of the tip line is to report concerns regarding the safety and well-being of Maryland students, it is noteworthy that the most common event is only tangentially related to school safety. MCSS had advertised the anonymous tip-line service through digital billboards, social media outreach, and community outreach; it is important that the community is aware that the tip line is a service to report threats to the safety of Maryland students, not concerns regarding school administration.

MCSS should provide the committee with updates regarding the operation of the school safety tip line, the adequacy of current staffing and funding levels, the volume of tips received, and the process for tracking tips and disseminating tip information to partner schools.

In previous testimonies before the budget committees, MCSS expressed its intent to include tip-line statistics as part of its MFR submission. However, the above data was not included in the center’s submission. **In order to demonstrate the efficacy of the School Safety Tip Line, DLS recommends that the committees adopt narrative requesting that MCSS include tip-line statistics in their annual MFR submission.**

Operating Budget Recommended Actions

1. Add the following language to the general fund appropriation:

, provided that \$100,000 of this appropriation within the Maryland Center for School Safety may not be expended until the center submits a report to the budget committees detailing the allocation of the School Resource Officer (SRO) Grant for fiscal year 2020, the identification of local school systems who have failed to submit an SRO Adequate Coverage Plan, and the respective SRO Grant funds withheld from each noncompliant school. The report shall be submitted by September 1, 2020, and the budget committees shall have 45 days to review and comment. Funds restricted pending the receipt of a report may not be transferred by budget amendment or otherwise to any other purpose and shall revert to the General Fund if the report is not submitted to the budget committees.

Explanation: Chapter 30 of 2018 requires local school systems to submit SRO Adequate Coverage Plans each year. The first report submissions were due by July 1, 2019, and must demonstrate that each public school in the district employs SROs or provides sufficient local law enforcement resources to adequately provide security to that school. By the start of the 2019-2020 school year, only 66% of school systems had submitted the report. The statute also allocated \$10 million for the SRO Grant in fiscal 2020 for the purpose of assisting local school systems achieve adequate safety coverage by SROs or local law enforcement agencies. This report requests information regarding the allocation of the SRO Grant, and the amount of grant funds withheld from schools who fail to submit an SRO Adequate Coverage Plan.

| Information Request | Author | Due Date |
|---|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Report on the allocation of the SRO Grant for fiscal 2020 | Maryland Center for School Safety | September 1, 2020 |

2. Adopt the following narrative:

School Safety Tip Line Performance Measures: Operating out of the Maryland Emergency Management Agency headquarters, the Maryland School Safety Tip Line is a 24/7 anonymous tip line for citizens to report concerns such as a threat to a school, bullying in a school, or mental health. Performance measures for this program are not currently reported as part of the Maryland Center for School Safety’s (MCSS) Managing for Results (MFR) submission. The committees request that MCSS demonstrate the volume of calls received each year by event type, along with the closure rate, as part of their annual MFR submission.

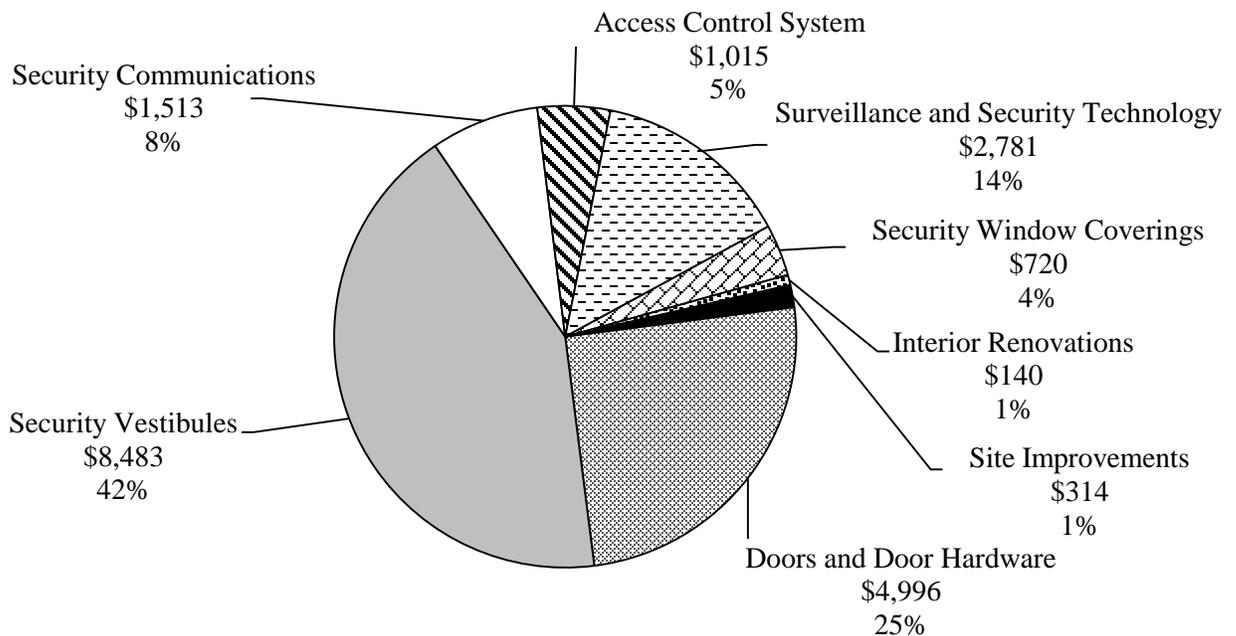
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| Information Request | Author | Due Date |
|----------------------------|---------------|---|
| School Safety Tip Line MFR | MCSS | With submission of the fiscal 2022 budget books |

Updates

- Distribution of Fiscal 2019 School Safety Improvement Grant Funds:** Pursuant to Chapter 14 of 2018, the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC) was tasked with allocating a total of \$20 million in funding in fiscal 2019 as part of the School Safety Improvement Grant – \$10 million in pay-as-you-go funding and \$10 million in bond premiums allocated via the capital budget bill. The grant allocation was split evenly across two funding rounds. Round 1 distributed funds based on the proportion of total enrollment and total facility square footage. For Round 2 funding, each county was provided a minimum allocation of \$200,000. The remaining funds were competitively awarded based on applications by local school systems. As of November 2019, a total of \$19,961,020 of the total \$20.0 million had been allocated to public schools across the State. **Exhibit 5** details the use of fiscal 2019 funds by improvement category. For further information on the School Safety Improvement Grant, please refer to the fiscal 2021 capital analysis for IAC.

Exhibit 5
School Safety Improvement Grant Funding Allocation
Funding Rounds 1 and 2
Fiscal 2019
(\$ in Thousands)



Source: Interagency Commission on School Construction

- ***Establishment of a Satellite Office at Bowie State University:*** Chapter 30 required MCSS to establish an office at Bowie State University (BSU). On June 10, 2019, the center entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with BSU to allow regional training staff to occupy office space in the James E. Proctor, Jr. Building. Under this agreement, MCSS must pay BSU an annual occupancy fee of \$7,476 to cover facility, custodial, and informational technology support. The center also agreed to provide work to one student-intern, as assigned by BSU. The agreement is effective through June 30, 2022, and may be extended if agreed upon by both parties.

Appendix 1
2019 Joint Chairmen’s Report Responses from Agency

The 2019 *Joint Chairmen’s Report* (JCR) requested that the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) prepare one report. Electronic copies of the full JCR responses can be found on the Department of Legislative Services Library website.

- ***Establishment of Bowie State University Satellite Office:*** As per Chapter 30 of 2018, MCSS established a satellite office at Bowie State University. Further discussion of this report can be found in the Updates section of this analysis.

**Appendix 2
School Safety Grand Funding
Fiscal 2021**

| <u>Grant Program</u> | <u>Appropriation</u> | <u>Fund</u> | <u>Location</u> | <u>Description</u> |
|--|----------------------|-------------|-----------------|--|
| Operating Budget | | | | |
| SRO Grant | \$10,000 | SF* | MCSS | Grants to partially offset local jurisdiction costs for providing an SRO or adequate law enforcement coverage to every public school. Allocations are based upon the annual adequate coverage plans submitted by school systems to MCSS. |
| Safe Schools Fund | 600 | SF | MCSS | Grants to offset the costs of security improvements at school facilities. |
| Early Childhood School Safety Grant for Schools at Risk of Hate Crimes | 2,000 | GF | MCSS | Grants to support school safety initiatives and facility improvements at daycare, early childhood centers, and schools deemed to be at risk of hate crimes. |
| Total Operating Grants | \$12,600 | | | |
| Capital Budget | | | | |
| Public School Safety Capital Improvements | \$10,000 | PAYGO | IAC | Grants to public schools for safety and security-related capital improvements. |
| Nonpublic School Safety Capital Improvements | 3,500 | GF | IAC | Grants to nonpublic schools for safety and security-related capital improvements. |
| Total Capital Grants | \$13,500 | | | |

GF: general fund
 IAC: Interagency Council on School Construction
 MCSS: Maryland Center for School Safety
 PAYGO: pay-as-you-go
 SF: special fund
 SRO: school resource officer

* The fiscal 2021 budget appropriates \$10.0 million in general funds to the SRO Grant SF. These funds are therefore twice budgeted as general and special funds in MCSS’s fiscal 2021 allowance.

Source: Maryland Center for School Safety; Department of Budget and Management; Department of Legislative Services

Appendix 3
Safe Schools Operating Grant Allocation by Jurisdiction
Fiscal 2019

| <u>Jurisdiction</u> | <u>Hate Crimes</u> | <u>Safe Schools Fund</u> | <u>School Safety Evaluations</u> | <u>Grand Total</u> | <u>% of Total</u> |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Allegany | | \$256,019 | \$38,897 | \$294,916 | 2.1% |
| Anne Arundel | | 737,388 | 224,540 | 961,928 | 6.8% |
| Baltimore City | | 723,197 | 272,277 | 995,474 | 7.1% |
| Baltimore County | | 935,426 | 307,638 | 1,243,064 | 8.8% |
| Calvert | | 303,275 | 44,201 | 347,476 | 2.5% |
| Caroline | | 237,569 | 17,680 | 255,249 | 1.8% |
| Carroll | | 364,182 | 70,721 | 434,903 | 3.1% |
| Cecil | | 299,743 | 56,577 | 356,320 | 2.5% |
| Charles | | 374,576 | 68,953 | 443,529 | 3.2% |
| Dorchester | | 230,947 | 21,216 | 252,163 | 1.8% |
| Frederick | | 473,573 | 120,226 | 593,799 | 4.2% |
| Garrett | | 224,741 | 21,216 | 245,957 | 1.7% |
| Harford | | 445,268 | 95,474 | 540,742 | 3.8% |
| Howard | | 568,642 | 136,139 | 704,781 | 5.0% |
| Kent | | 212,939 | 8,840 | 221,779 | 1.6% |
| Montgomery | | 1,248,757 | 369,519 | 1,618,276 | 11.5% |
| Prince George's | | 1,059,034 | 365,983 | 1,425,017 | 10.1% |
| Queen Anne's | | 250,495 | 26,521 | 277,016 | 2.0% |
| Somerset | | 218,944 | 17,680 | 236,624 | 1.7% |
| St. Mary's | | 317,217 | 49,505 | 366,722 | 2.6% |
| Talbot | | 230,161 | 15,912 | 246,073 | 1.7% |
| Washington | | 346,686 | 79,562 | 426,248 | 3.0% |
| Wicomico | | 297,075 | 45,969 | 343,044 | 2.4% |
| Worcester | | 243,392 | 24,752 | 268,144 | 1.9% |
| Grand Total | \$970,488 | \$10,599,246 | \$2,500,000 | 14,069,734 | 100.0% |
| Total Funds Available | \$1,000,000 | \$10,600,000 | \$2,500,000 | \$14,600,000 | |

Source: Maryland State Department of Education; Maryland Center for School Safety

Appendix 4
Object/Fund Difference Report
MSDE – Maryland Center for School Safety

| <u>Object/Fund</u> | <u>FY 19</u> <u>Actual</u> | <u>FY 20</u> <u>Working</u> <u>Appropriation</u> | <u>FY 21</u> <u>Allowance</u> | <u>FY 20 - FY 21</u> <u>Amount Change</u> | <u>Percent</u> <u>Change</u> |
|---|-------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Positions | | | | | |
| 01 Regular | 14.00 | 14.00 | 14.00 | 0.00 | 0% |
| 02 Contractual | 0.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Total Positions | 14.00 | 15.00 | 15.00 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Objects | | | | | |
| 01 Salaries and Wages | \$ 864,257 | \$ 1,463,559 | \$ 1,587,502 | \$ 123,943 | 8.5% |
| 02 Technical and Spec. Fees | 82,183 | 191,376 | 74,867 | -116,509 | -60.9% |
| 03 Communication | 4,159 | 22,765 | 22,765 | 0 | 0% |
| 04 Travel | 28,662 | 63,524 | 63,524 | 0 | 0% |
| 07 Motor Vehicles | 178,492 | 22,000 | 22,000 | 0 | 0% |
| 08 Contractual Services | 694,894 | 368,078 | 368,073 | -5 | 0% |
| 09 Supplies and Materials | 73,676 | 65,993 | 65,993 | 0 | 0% |
| 11 Equipment – Additional | 41,777 | 95,500 | 95,500 | 0 | 0% |
| 12 Grants, Subsidies, and Contributions | 14,069,716 | 20,600,000 | 22,600,000 | 2,000,000 | 9.7% |
| 13 Fixed Charges | 37,459 | 125,000 | 125,000 | 0 | 0% |
| Total Objects | \$ 16,075,275 | \$ 23,017,795 | \$ 25,025,224 | \$ 2,007,429 | 8.7% |
| Funds | | | | | |
| 01 General Fund | \$ 15,475,275 | \$ 12,417,795 | \$ 14,425,224 | \$ 2,007,429 | 16.2% |
| 03 Special Fund | 600,000 | 10,600,000 | 10,600,000 | 0 | 0% |
| Total Funds | \$ 16,075,275 | \$ 23,017,795 | \$ 25,025,224 | \$ 2,007,429 | 8.7% |

Note: The fiscal 2020 appropriation does not include deficiencies, planned reversions, or general salary increases. The fiscal 2021 allowance does not include contingent reductions or general salary increases.