



HB613 PUBLIC SCHOOLS - APPROPRIATIONS FOR SCHOOL SAFETY EXPENDITURES - INCREASE

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APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

SUPPORT

Jeanette Ortiz, Esq., Legislative & Policy Counsel (410.703.5352)

Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) supports **HB613 Public Schools - Appropriations for School Safety Expenditures - Increase**. This bill requires the Governor's to include an annual appropriation of \$20 million in his budget to fund school resource officers and specified school safety enhancements beginning in FY 2024 and each fiscal year thereafter. This would be an increase from the current \$10 million appropriated in the State budget.

Safety in public schools is increasingly important to local boards of education as school-related security incidents and threats in Maryland and throughout the nation have increased over the years. As a result, it is essential for educational leaders to be included in the continued development of a comprehensive security plan. The pursuit of a safe school environment must be tempered by a balanced emphasis on the protection of individual student rights.

AACPS supports State assumption of costs associated with security improvements, including school building alarms, cameras, and other security technology, thereby freeing school system resources to address their core mission: student achievement. Enhancing the safety and security levels available at public schools would serve to lessen potential threats or distractions to the educational system and thus lessen to potential adverse impacts to educational equity and continuity of instruction.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** committee report on HB613.