

Bill:	House Bill 515	Date:	February 15, 2023
Title:	Public Schools - Active Shooter Safety Drills - Requirements	Committee:	Ways and Means
Position:	Favorable with amendments	Contact:	Kim Buckheit kim.buckheit1@maryland.gov 443-902-0622

On behalf of the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS), thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter of support with amendments to House Bill 515.

MCSS agrees that, *except* for active shooter drills happening outside of regular school hours with voluntary participants, active shooter drills should be done without loud sounds that simulate gun fire, or actors role-playing as shooters or victims. MCSS agrees that all annual drills should be developmentally and age-appropriate. MCSS also agrees that individuals may require mental health resources and support following an active shooter drill.

MCSS supports engaging parents as partners in school safety drills and providing information about drills for this purpose, as well as to minimize trauma for individuals as a result of the drill. Although there is value in announced drills being used as teaching tools to prepare individuals for emergency situations, there is equal value in unannounced drills being used to assess the ability of individuals to react and use knowledge previously taught. MCSS recommends that an amendment be made to House Bill 515 that allows for unannounced drills to occur with parent communication incorporated as a component of the drill.

Finally, House Bill 515 adds language to Ed. Art. 7-1507, which we believe is included in this section in error. Ed. Art. 7-1507 required the School Safety Subcabinet to “develop a model policy for the establishment of an assessment team or teams in each local school system.” The language included in this section under House Bill 515 would be better placed under Ed. Art. 7-1509.

Thank you again for taking the time to consider the information shared above, and MCSS respectfully requests that with the recommended changes, the committee give House Bill 515 a favorable report.