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**BILL:** Senate Bill 1077  
**TITLE:** Public Schools – Appropriations for School Safety Expenditures – School Security Employees  
**HEARING DATE:** March 27, 2024  
**POSITION:** SUPPORT  
**COMMITTEE:** House Appropriations  
**CONTACT:** Mr. Steve Edwards, Deputy Communications Officer (301-766-8914)

The Washington County Board of Education supports Senate Bill 1077 as it aligns with the Board’s 2024 legislative priority of achieving the goal of providing a safe and secure learning environment for students and staff.

Because school safety and security is a priority for the Board of Education, this year it made an investment of just over \$800,000, in addition to the \$1.5 million cost to the Board for school resources officers, to hire 19 school safety and security assistants to further enhance school safety at each secondary school in Hagerstown and Williamsport. These new safety and security assistants have made our schools safer by being proactive in addressing safety concerns, assisting in responding to concerning student behaviors, and helping grow a positive school culture. The Safety and security assistants are unarmed, plain clothed employees who interact with students in a variety of school settings to develop a positive rapport with their respective school communities and most importantly, the students they serve each day. Their important work was best characterized by one of our high school principals whose school has benefited greatly from the addition of our school safety and security assistants. He said, quote, “We’re not policing students, we’re supporting students.”

The flexibility provided under Senate Bill 1077 will be important in helping to enhance safety efforts at schools across Maryland by allowing LEAs to utilize the current resources provided through the School Safety Fund to support school security employees, not just school resource officers as it currently does. Allowing local school systems to use School Safety Funds for school security employees can further enhance safety and security in school systems who may not be in a funding position to add safety and security employees to their toolbox. Both school security employees and school resource officers are important components of achieving the common goal of providing safe and secure learning environments for students and staff at all schools across Maryland.

*The Washington County Board of Education respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 1077.*

Thank you.

Cc: Washington County Board of Education Members  
Washington County Delegation to the Maryland General Assembly  
Dr. David T. Sovine, Superintendent  
Dr. Jennifer Webster, Associate Superintendent for Administration and Leadership  
Dr. Garry Willow, Associate Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction  
Mr. Jeffrey Proulx, Chief Operating Officer  
Ms. Ilissa Ramm, Chief Legal Counsel  
Mr. Steve Ganley, Safety and Security Coordinator  
Mr. John Woolums, Director of Governmental Relations, Maryland Association of Boards of Education  
Ms. Mary Pat Fannon, Executive Director, Public School Superintendents’ Association of Maryland