

<b>Bill:</b>	Senate Bill 540	<b>Date:</b>	February 28, 2024
<b>Title:</b>	Education - School Mapping Data Program - Established	<b>Committee:</b>	Education, Energy, & Environment
<b>Position:</b>	Letter of Information	<b>Contact:</b>	Kim Buckheit <a href="mailto:kim.buckheit1@maryland.gov">kim.buckheit1@maryland.gov</a> 443-902-0622

On behalf of the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS), thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter of information for Senate Bill 540.

MCSS strongly supports efforts to improve the quality and utility of school mapping data and its availability to authorized users such as first responders to ensure the safety and security of school occupants and communities. However, MCSS would like to highlight three concerns with Senate Bill 540 as currently drafted.

1. MCSS currently administers the Safe Schools Fund on behalf of the School Safety Subcabinet and the School Safety Grant Program (SSGP) on behalf of the Interagency Commission on Public School Construction (IAC). As drafted, the bill creates an unnecessary complication by transferring funds to MSDE to award to local school systems and law enforcement agencies to support mapping of schools. **Grant administration for a school mapping program could be managed by MCSS** and not MSDE.
2. MCSS acknowledges that school mapping data is currently being generated by school districts and the State for other purposes including multiple aspects of facilities management such as facilities maintenance, facilities-portfolio planning, and capital budgeting and funding. To prevent the duplication of efforts by various State and local agencies and the waste of scarce local and State resources, it is essential that all school-mapping efforts conform to standards that support all of the uses of such data described above. MCSS respectfully suggests that, as the two agencies primarily responsible for conducting or facilitating the activities described above, **MCSS and the IAC be tasked with identifying the standards** under which school mapping be conducted.

3. It is estimated digital maps of a school would cost local school systems between \$1,000 to \$3,000 per school, depending on the size and complexity of the facility and mapping specifications. Although local school systems and law enforcement agencies would be able to receive grants for this purpose through the Safe Schools Fund, the current appropriation amount would not be sufficient to meet the total cost for most Maryland jurisdictions, even if the entirety of their allocation was used for this singular purpose. Excluding funding for School Resource Officers (SROs), the **Safe Schools Fund<sup>1</sup> has been funded with \$600,000 dollars (\$25,000 per school system)** for the last three years.

MCSS remains committed to assisting local school systems in the implementation of a layered approach to school safety. The inclusion of emerging technologies is one element of a well designed school safety plan.

Thank you again for taking the time to review this information as you consider Senate Bill 540.

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<sup>1</sup> The Safe Schools Fund includes funding that is separately allocated for School Resource Officers and adequate law enforcement coverage in the amount of \$10MM and \$600,000 for the categories eligible under Ed. Art. §7-1512(f).