

The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners
Letter of Information
Senate Bill 644 – Public Schools – School Resource Officers –
Firearms Required

February 12, 2025

The Baltimore City Public School System has had its own school police force for over 40 years. The Baltimore City School Police Force has built community relations inside the school building with many of its students. The Baltimore City Police Force works in collaboration with school police and helps to keep bad things from the community spilling into the school building. The mission of the Baltimore City School Police Force is to create and maintain a safe learning environment.

As many know, school police in the City are not armed during school hours, if they are assigned to a school. However, the law allows those school police officers that are assigned to a school to have firearms before and after school hours. Additionally, those school police that patrol are armed throughout the day.

The Baltimore City school police officers are specifically trained to work with our students and receive training on trauma informed care, de-escalation, conflict mediation, mindfulness, non-violent crisis intervention, etc. The training they receive is both evidenced based and approved by the Maryland Center for School Safety and the Maryland Police Correctional Training Commission. It is much more than the average police officer.

With the engagement and public input, the City School Police Force rewrote many of its General Orders. We have also created an MOU for school police and principals with a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities. Again, the focus of school police is to not only protect, but to build relationships with the student population as a preventative measure in order to keep the school community safe. I would also include that our Chief of Police and his team have received national recognition from their work with students.

Now that the Blueprint for Maryland's Future has become law, there is additional funding to allow school systems to have more community schools, provide extensive wraparound services, promote more trauma informed care and build upon restorative practices, among many more items to address mental, behavioral and socio-economic issues of students.

And lastly, we must state that the General Assembly passed legislation in 2018, (Safe to Learn Act) on student safety and requires school districts to have a plan that identifies adequate police coverage of school buildings. This information must be submitted annually to the Maryland Center for School Safety.

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