



Correspondence - March 5, 2026

Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Senate Education, Energy and the
Environment Committee, Maryland Senate
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Delegate Jheanelle K. Wilkins, Chair
Ways and Means Committee, Maryland House
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130 Taylor House Office Building
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Chairs Feldman and Wilkins,

In this letter, the Maryland Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC), the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS), the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM), and the Maryland Department of State Police (MDSPP) jointly write to respectfully express our opposition to SB 895/HB 1328 – Public Safety – Department of State Police – School Mapping Data Program.

During the 2024 Legislative Session, the passage of Chapter 166/167 (HB 472/SB 540) created new precedent in Maryland for the establishment of data standards and funding of the development of school-mapping data undertaken with State funding for the purposes of supporting school safety as well as the effectiveness of first responders. Chapter 166/167 directed that the IAC develop school-mapping-data standards aligned with criteria in the statute. During 2024-2025, the IAC, in collaboration with MCSS, MDEM, the Maryland Department of Information Technology (DoIT), and the Maryland 9-1-1 Board and using stakeholder input gained through more than 13 stakeholder meetings, established those standards.

MCSS estimates that half of Maryland’s public school districts subsequently utilized a total of \$2.3 million in State funds to increase student safety by creating or commissioning maps for 976 of the approximately 1,400 public PreK-12 schools. However, SB 895/HB 1328 would make changes that provide no additional safety or security for students in Maryland and would result in the duplication of efforts that existing State and local agencies have undertaken to produce school mapping data in line with the recently adopted standards. **The changes proposed in SB 895/HB 1328 would cost State and local governments additional money, time, and effort, and would result in minimal additional benefit—if any—to the students of Maryland.**

Our agencies therefore oppose SB 895/HB 1328 for the below outlined reasons:

Delays Resulting in Compromise of Student Safety

Maintaining separate mapping systems—one owned by the Local Education Agency (LEA) for facility management and one by a public safety agency for emergency response—creates a critical risk of data divergence that could compromise both operational safety and fiscal efficiency. Because the LEA remains the primary authority for school construction, room numbering, and layout modifications, any change made to the physical floor plan would require immediate, manual synchronization across two different agency databases to avoid life-safety errors during a crisis. If these "data silos" are not perfectly reconciled, first

responders may rely on an obsolete public safety map while the school system operates under a newer version, leading to confusion regarding room locations or access points during an emergency. Furthermore, this dual-map model would force the State to fund two separate maintenance lifecycles, doubling the long-term expenditure for updates, data storage, and accuracy-verification walk-throughs for the approximately 1,400 public facilities.

Unclear Responsibility of State and Local Agencies

As currently drafted, the proposed legislation is unclear about the division of responsibilities between State agencies, and muddies the waters regarding the development and future updating of School Mapping Standards. Currently, Education Article § 5-310.1 appoints the IAC as the agency responsible for the development of mapping standards. The proposed legislation removes this responsibility from the IAC, but references the IAC-drafted standards in the proposed Public Safety Article § 2-802(c), which states that data must meet or succeed “*school mapping data standards established and updated by the Interagency Commission on School Construction*”—standards that would be unable to be updated or maintained by the IAC were the authorization for the drafting of said standards to be revoked with the removal of Ed. § 5-310.1. Previously, our agencies received extensive external feedback from the sponsor of SB 540 regarding the drafting of School Mapping Data Standards, and were informed by letter that standards should only include what was specifically outlined in legislation. The IAC in particular is concerned about the requirement to retain and update mapping standards that the IAC would no longer be statutorily permitted to update as a result of this proposed change.

Duplication of Expenditures of State and Local Funds

Implementing program changes to the School Mapping Data Program through Senate Bill 895 presents significant fiscal risks to the State, primarily due to duplication of work already in progress. In Fiscal Year 2026, the State awarded \$2.3 million in grants to map 976 public schools—approximately 70% of all Maryland public schools. LEAs are currently utilizing the established uniform standards, and have already entered into multi-year vendor contracts for school mapping. A mid-stream transition to the Department of State Police could negate financial commitments, render previously awarded funds wasted, and lead to significant administrative inefficiencies.

The cost implications of this bill far exceed current funding. While the original 2024 program was supported by a one-time \$3.0 million appropriation, those funds have been largely depleted. Currently, the Safe Schools Fund receives only \$600,000 annually, resulting in an insufficient \$25,000 allocation per LEA.

Consequently, SB 895 functions as an unfunded mandate that forces jurisdictions to divert limited resources from other essential safety initiatives. Redirecting entire local allocations to this single program would likely impede critical security efforts and increase the complexity of fiscal compliance audits. This fragmentation of resources risks a substantial waste of State assets and delays the availability of digital tools designed to protect Maryland students.

Duplication of Mapping

As the entities directly responsible for local public-school facilities, LEAs will always need their own school maps to support emergency planning and response as well as facilities-planning and facilities-management activities. Even if public safety agencies create their own maps, the LEA must maintain its own records, which are dynamic and subject to frequent changes. Having two separate map sets creates significant operational

risks, such as response delays if a responder's map is not synchronized with the school's actual current layout. For schools, facility maps are not just navigation tools; they are the foundation for annual facilities master plans that transition a district from reactive repairs to proactive long-term management. By visualizing the relationship between physical spaces, student needs, and budgets, LEAs use these maps to analyze capacity utilization and demographic alignment to identify where schools are overcrowded or where new boundaries must be shifted.

Detailed mapping data also serves as essential evidence for funding justifications and as the technical backbone for capital improvements. Construction and renovation planning rely on accurate data to prevent contractors from accidentally damaging underground electrical lines or critical utility storage during site work. Strategic maps allow architects to design phased construction plans that minimize daily learning disruptions while ensuring new additions align with existing plumbing and HVAC layouts. Without this centralized LEA-owned repository, they risk requiring two different groups to update separate data sets, which doubles the administrative workload and exponentially increases the probability of human error.

Under existing law, the mapping of public schools within each jurisdiction is managed by a single entity, the local school system. Each local school system, in collaboration with MCSS, is tasked with ensuring that the facilities maps are accurate, as they possess the best knowledge of their facilities and have complete access to them. Under the proposed legislation, each public safety agency with jurisdiction over a local public school may apply for funding, which opens the possibility for duplication of efforts and potentially requiring operators of the program to weigh competing agency proposals against one another for each jurisdiction with limited funding available. While school mapping data must meet a single set of minimum standards, varying preferences around the style and level of detail by which mapping may exceed the standards will increase the potential for greater inconsistencies in mapping products produced not only between jurisdictions but within individual jurisdictions. In addition, this legislation opens the door for conflict around mapping between municipal and county agencies when each has jurisdiction over the same schools.

Duplication of Local Government Verification Efforts

The proposed new language, as written, creates a new definition under the school mapping data program proposed statute, Public Safety Article § 2-801 for the term "verified data." Present language does not include this definition, which notably specifies that data must be "*physically inspected and confirmed for accuracy by an on-site review of school buildings and grounds by an entity responsible for producing school-mapping data.*" As the proposed language specifies that entities responsible for producing school-mapping data include only local public safety agencies, it's estimated that existing data that have been procured and produced by LEAs would need to be verified again by local public-safety entities responsible for verifying that said data complies with this addition. This duplicates local government efforts and will likely slow down the rollout of these maps, as previously discussed.

Limitations of Department of State Police Regarding School Mapping

MDSP currently doesn't employ the skilled professionals required to implement this program as required in the bill. MDSP consulted with the MCSS to ascertain what staffing needs would be necessary to implement the program. On the personnel side, MDSP anticipates the need for a Program Director, two Administrator IIs, one

GIS Analyst, and one Internal Auditor. Office equipment and lease space would also need to be procured. The fiscal impact of these additions in the first year is over \$528,000.

Conclusion

In light of the considerations outlined above, the undersigned agencies respectfully oppose SB 895/HB 1328.

Regards,



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