

R00A06
Maryland Center for School Safety
Maryland State Department of Education

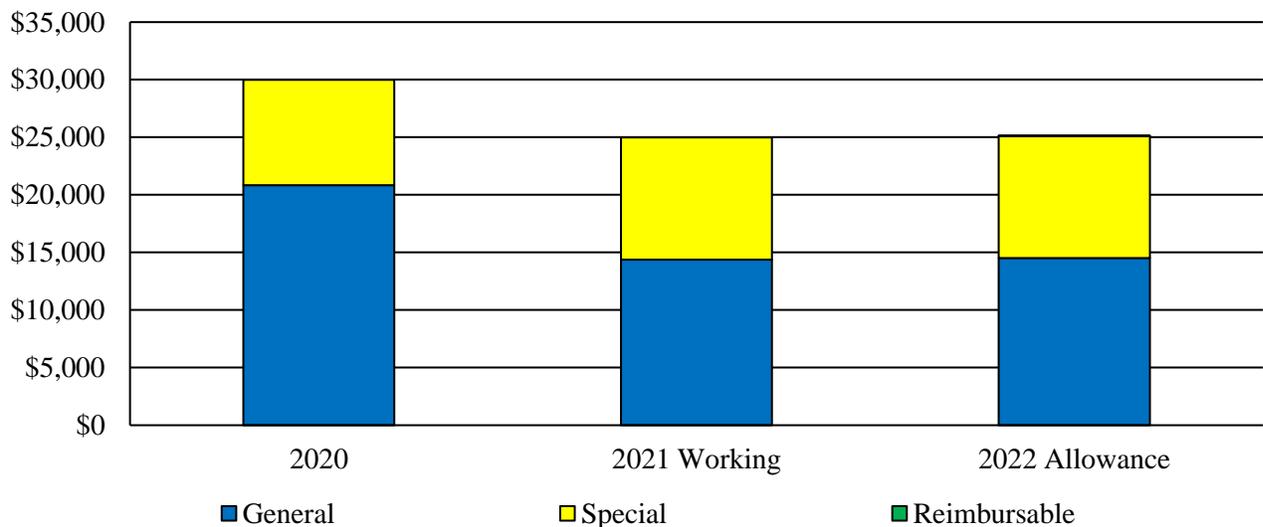
Program Description

The Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) was established in 2013 as an independent unit within State government tasked with providing a comprehensive, coordinated approach to school safety. Chapter 30 of 2018, the Maryland Safe to Learn Act, enhanced the role and responsibilities of the center and relocated it within the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) following several high profile incidences of gun violence in Maryland and nationwide. In fulfilling its mission, MCSS provides a variety of services that include grant management; organizing trainings and seminars; reviewing school safety plans; providing technical assistance; and attending meetings of various task forces, commissions, and public organizations.

Chapter 30 also established a School Safety Subcabinet chaired by the State Superintendent of Schools and included five other State agency leaders. The subcabinet serves as the governing board for MCSS and is charged with multiple responsibilities, including collaborating to create a comprehensive, coordinated approach to school safety; fostering partnerships between the school and law enforcement communities; and administering grant funding. An advisory board with broad stakeholder representation was also created to assist the subcabinet. MCSS serves as staff to the subcabinet.

Operating Budget Summary

Fiscal 2022 Budget Increases \$0.2 Million, or 0.6%, to \$25.1 Million
(\$ in Thousands)



Note: Numbers may not sum due to rounding. Cost-of-living adjustments for fiscal 2021 and 2022 are not reflected.

Fiscal 2020

Exhibit 1 illustrates how MCSS received a total of \$10.5 million in general fund enhancements beyond the statutorily mandated amount provided in the Governor’s fiscal 2020 allowance; this additional funding can be broken down into three tranches of money, as shown below:

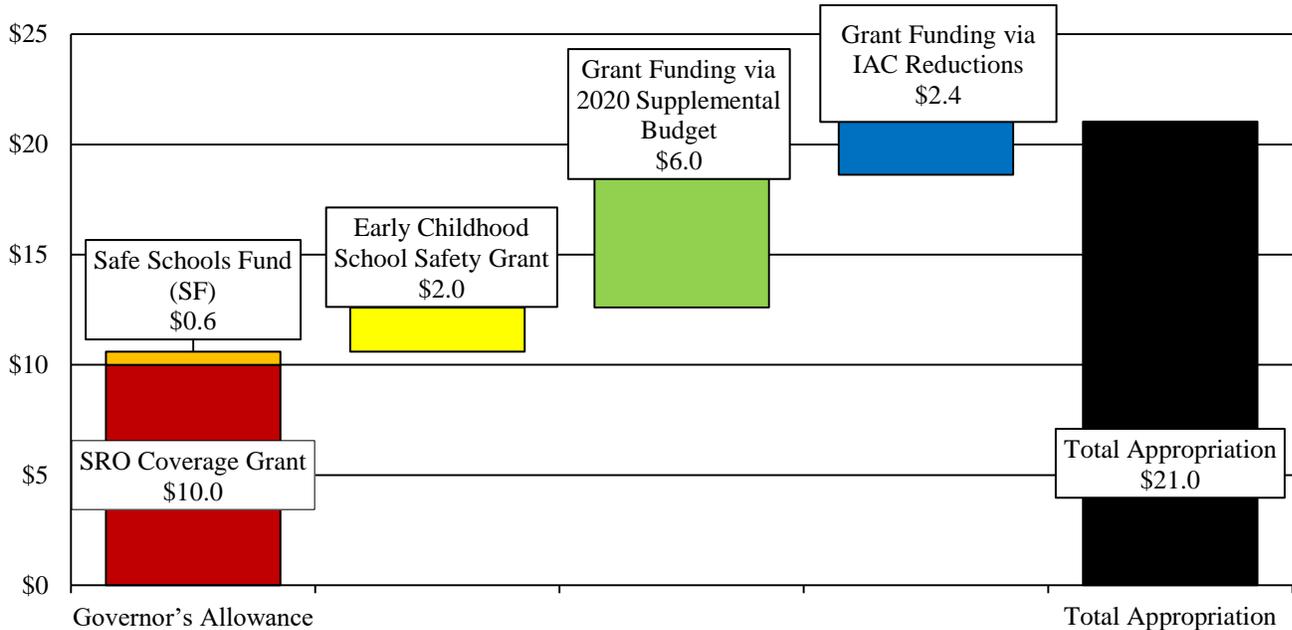
- ***Early Childhood School Safety Grant:*** This grant was transferred via budget amendment from MSDE Headquarters to MCSS, as the intent of the grant better aligned with the mission of MCSS. This grant accounts for \$2.0 million of the fiscal 2020 budget amendments.
- ***Additional Funding via the 2020 Supplemental Budget:*** Accounting for \$6.1 million, this money was provided via fiscal 2020 deficiency in the 2020 Supplemental Budget. This money was needed to fulfill grant obligations for the Safe Schools Fund, which MCSS had already awarded during the fiscal 2020 grant funding cycle.
- ***Additional Funding via Reductions to the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC):*** An additional \$2.4 million was transferred to MCSS from IAC to further fulfill Safe Schools Fund grant obligations, which MCSS had awarded during the fiscal 2020 grant funding cycle. No budget amendment formally recognized the transfer of these funds until December 2020, six months after the end of the fiscal year and the expenditure of funds. By recognizing the funds after the fact, the review of the amendment by the General Assembly had no practical effect.

The result is a fiscal 2020 appropriation that is 80% higher than the annual mandated amount for grants made from the Safe Schools Fund and a 24% reduction in school safety capital grants awarded by IAC. Further, the fiscal 2020 closeout shows that \$1.8 million of the appropriation was canceled at the end of the fiscal year due to lower than anticipated grant participation. It is therefore unclear why these additional funds were needed if not explicitly tied to grant obligations.

MCSS should provide the committees with the disbursements of all Safe Schools Fund monies by jurisdiction in fiscal 2020 as well as identify any unencumbered funds. MCSS should also explain why the additional \$8.5 million in general funds was needed and what steps it has taken to ensure that grants awarded from the Safe Schools Fund align with the authorized appropriation.

For further information regarding the MSDE’s fiscal 2020 closeout and concerns associated with the transparency of the department’s spending, refer to the MSDE – Headquarters Fiscal 2022 Budget Analysis.

Exhibit 1
MSDE – Maryland Center for School Safety
Safe Schools Fund Closeout
Fiscal 2020
(\$ in Millions)



IAC: Interagency Commission for School Construction
 MSDE: Maryland State Department of Education
 SF: Special Fund
 SRO: School Resource Officer

Source: Maryland Center for School Safety; Comptroller of Maryland, General Accounting Division; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal 2021

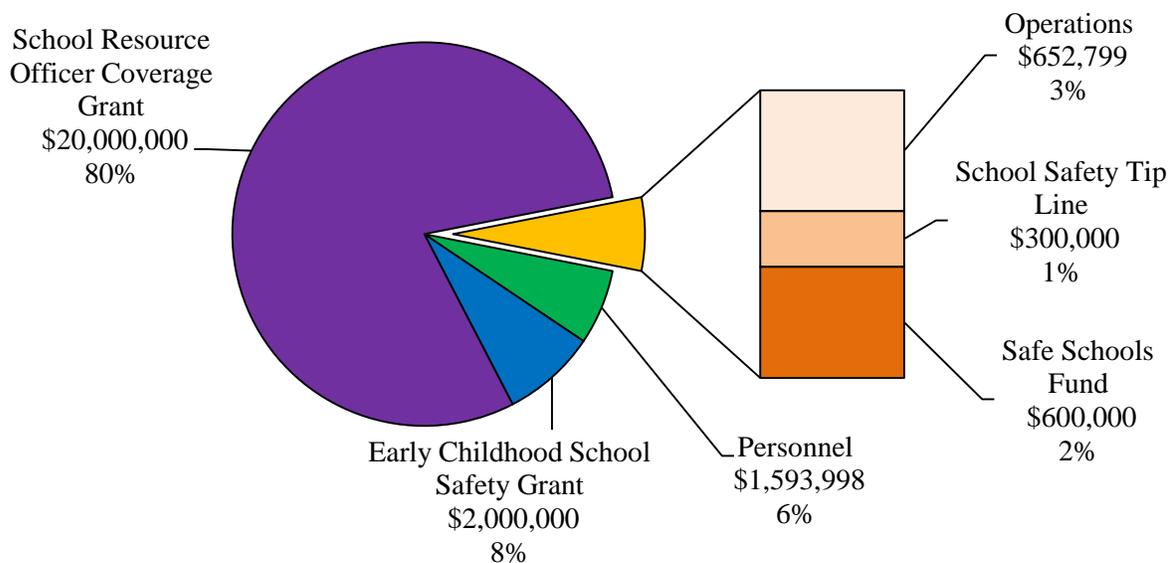
Cost Containment

At its July 1, 2020 meeting, the Board of Public Works approved of a package of cost containment actions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This included a \$43,000 general fund reduction to travel expenses in MCSS’s fiscal 2021 working appropriation.

Fiscal 2022 Overview of Agency Spending

The fiscal 2022 allowance appropriates \$25.1 million to MCSS. Operations programming accounts for 10% of the allowance and is split between personnel expenses (6%), everyday operating expenses (3%), and the School Safety Tip Line (1%), as shown in **Exhibit 2**.

Exhibit 2
Overview of Agency Spending
Fiscal 2022 Allowance



Note: Special fund grants financed by general fund appropriations require appropriations of each. As such, the School Resource Officer Grant is a \$10 million special fund grant financed with \$10 million of general funds.

Source: Governor’s Fiscal 2022 Budget Books

The remaining 90%, or \$22.6 million, supports grant programming. The Safe Schools Fund accounts for \$600,000 of the allowance, or 2%. This special fund grant is funded by the revenues from fines on motorists driving without proper insurance. The Early Childhood School Safety grant accounts for \$2.0 million (8%) in general funds in the fiscal 2022 allowance. The largest share of the allowance supports the School Resource Officer (SRO) Grant, which expends \$10.0 million in general funds and \$10.0 million in special funds (80%) as mandated by Chapter 30. This special fund grant is funded via the General Fund; as such, the same \$10.0 million must be budgeted twice in MCSS’s allowance. For a complete account of school safety-related grant programs, refer to **Appendix 2** of this analysis.

Proposed Budget Change

As shown in **Exhibit 3**, MCSS’s fiscal 2022 allowance is near level with its fiscal 2021 working appropriation, growing just 0.6%. The largest change is a \$65,000 increase in maintenance costs associated with the center’s computer software and systems. Additional growth is attributed to increases to its contractual payroll (\$47,000), telecommunication and publication expenditures (\$28,000), and funding for trainings and seminars (\$24,000) to align with the anticipated resumption of training activities.

Exhibit 3
Proposed Budget
MSDE – Maryland Center for School Safety
(\$ in Thousands)

How Much It Grows:	<u>General Fund</u>	<u>Special Fund</u>	<u>Reimb. Fund</u>	<u>Total</u>
Fiscal 2020 Actual	\$20,837	\$9,148	\$0	\$29,986
Fiscal 2021 Working Appropriation	14,389	10,600	0	24,989
Fiscal 2022 Allowance	<u>14,504</u>	<u>10,600</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>25,147</u>
Fiscal 2021-2022 Amount Change	\$115	\$0	\$43	\$158
Fiscal 2021-2022 Percent Change	0.8%			0.6%
Where It Goes:				<u>Change</u>
Personnel Expenses				
Employee and retiree health insurance.....				\$5
Workers’ compensation premium assessment				-2
Regular earnings				-3
Other Changes				
Computer software and systems.....				65
Contractual payroll.....				47
Office expenditures, including telecommunications and publication costs				28
Trainings and seminars				24
Miscellaneous adjustments.....				-6
Total				\$158

MSDE: Maryland State Department of Education

Note: Numbers may not sum to total due to rounding.

Personnel Data

	<u>FY 20</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>FY 21</u> <u>Working</u>	<u>FY 22</u> <u>Allowance</u>	<u>FY 21-22</u> <u>Change</u>
Regular Positions	14.00	14.00	14.00	0.00
Contractual FTEs	<u>2.00</u>	<u>1.00</u>	<u>1.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Total Personnel	16.00	15.00	15.00	0.00

Vacancy Data: Regular Positions

Turnover and Necessary Vacancies, Excluding New Positions	1.25	8.92%
Positions and Percentage Vacant as of 11/31/20	0.00	0.00%
Vacancies Below Turnover	1.25	

Key Observations

1. SRO Coverage Grant

The Safe Schools Fund includes \$10.6 million to offset expenses associated with maintaining and improving the security of schools; this includes \$10.0 million, which is earmarked specifically for the SRO Coverage Grant. This grant is disbursed to each county based on the percentage of schools in the county relative to the entire state. Section 7-1512(F) of the Education Article outlines a variety of permissible school safety-related uses for funding from the Safe Schools Fund, including performing risk assessments, staff and student safety training, and mental health outreach. Sections 7-1508 and 7-1512(G), however, stipulate that the SRO Coverage Grant may only be used to offset costs associated with adequate law enforcement officer coverage in a jurisdiction's schools.

In light of the ongoing discussions surrounding the role and responsibilities of law enforcement officers, several counties in Maryland have begun to reconsider the role of SROs. Currently, SROs are used in only 23% of Maryland schools. In September 2020, Montgomery County instructed its Superintendent of Schools to review the county's SRO program and to make recommendations as to whether it should be modified or ended. The Howard County Board of Education is conducting a similar review.

The General Assembly may wish to consider modifying Sections 7-1508 and 7-1512(G) of the Education Article to remove the restrictions on the \$10.0 million SRO Coverage Grant. This would maintain the same level of funding for every jurisdiction in the State but would provide them with a wider breadth of permissible uses of the funding under Section 7-1512(F) should they decide to forgo employing SROs, as many schools already do. This action would require separate legislation.

Operating Budget Recommended Actions

1. Concur with Governor’s allowance.

Updates

- School Safety Tip Line Operations:** Under an interagency agreement with MCSS, the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) maintains the Maryland School Safety Tip Line, which is operated out of the Maryland Joint Operations Center 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. MCSS is responsible for the tracking and disposition of each tip at the State and local level. Tip line activity is discussed on a weekly basis with MEMA, local schools, and local authorities. During the 2020 session, the budget committees requested data regarding the volume of tips received by the tip line; the 10 most common tip line event types of fiscal 2020 are shown in **Exhibit 4**.
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Exhibit 4
Maryland Center for School Safety
Most Common School Safety Tip Line Events
Fiscal 2020

<u>Most Common Events</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Percent of All Complaints</u>
Assault/Intend to Harm Others	61	14.1%
Bullying/Cyberbullying/Teasing	42	9.7%
General School Complaint/School Accountability	42	9.7%
Drug Distribution/Use/Sale/Abuse	34	7.9%
Planned School Attack	28	6.5%
Building/Physical Safety and Security	22	5.1%
Bus Safety/Transportation	21	4.9%
Anger Issues/Creating Hostile Environment	17	3.9%
Child Abuse/Neglect	17	3.9%
Smoking/E-cigs/Vaping	17	3.9%

Total Tips Received: 432

Source: Fiscal 2022 Managing for Results

Appendix 1
2020 Joint Chairmen’s Report Responses from Agency

The 2020 *Joint Chairmen’s Report* (JCR) requested that the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) prepare two reports. Electronic copies of the full JCR responses can be found on the Department of Legislative Services Library website.

- ***Allocation of the School Resource Officer (SRO) Grant:*** MCSS provided information regarding the allocation of SRO Grant Funds and any funds withheld from jurisdictions that fail to submit an SRO Adequate Coverage Plan. MCSS reported that all jurisdictions submitted this plan and that no penalties were applied.
- ***School Safety Tip Line Metrics:*** Committee narrative in the 2020 JCR requested data on the volume of tips received by the School Safety Tip Line, categorized by event type. For more information, refer to the Updates Section of this analysis.

Appendix 2
School Safety Grant Funding
Fiscal 2022
\$ in Thousands

<u>Grant Program</u>	<u>Appropriation</u>	<u>Fund</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Description</u>
Operating Budget				
Safe Schools Fund – SRO Coverage Grant	\$10,000	SF*	MCSS	Grants to partially offset local jurisdiction costs for providing an SRO or adequate law enforcement coverage to every public school. Allocations are based upon the annual adequate coverage plans submitted by school systems to MCSS.
Safe Schools Fund	600	SF	MCSS	Grants to offset the costs of security improvements at school facilities.
Early Childhood School Safety Grant for Schools at Risk of Hate Crimes	2,000	GF	MCSS	Grants to support school safety initiatives and facility improvements at daycare, early childhood centers, and schools deemed to be at risk of hate crimes.
Total Operating Grants	\$12,600			
Capital Budget				
Public School Safety Capital Improvements	\$10,000	GO Bonds	IAC	Grants to public schools for safety and security-related capital improvements.
Nonpublic School Safety Capital Improvements	3,500	GO Bonds	IAC	Grants to nonpublic schools for safety and security-related capital improvements.
Total Capital Grants	\$13,500			

GF: general fund
 IAC: Interagency Council on School Construction
 MCSS: Maryland Center for School Safety
 SF: Special Fund
 SRO: school resource officer

*The fiscal 2022 budget appropriates \$10.0 million in general funds to the SRO Grant SF. These funds are therefore twice budgeted as general and special funds in MCSS’s fiscal 2022 allowance.

Source: Maryland Center for School Safety; Department of Budget and Management; Department of Legislative Services

Appendix 3
School Resource Officer Adequate Coverage Grant
Allocation by Jurisdiction
Fiscal 2020

<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Schools Per Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Grant Allocation</u>
Allegany	22	\$155,587
Anne Arundel	127	898,161
Baltimore City	154	1,089,109
Baltimore County	174	1,230,552
Calvert	25	176,803
Caroline	10	70,721
Carroll	40	282,885
Cecil	32	226,308
Charles	39	275,813
Dorchester	12	84,866
Frederick	68	480,905
Garrett	12	84,866
Harford	54	381,895
Howard	77	544,554
Kent	5	35,361
Montgomery	209	1,478,076
Prince George's	207	1,463,932
Queen Anne's	15	106,082
Somerset	10	70,721
St. Mary's	28	198,020
Talbot	9	63,649
Washington	45	318,246
Wicomico	26	183,876
Worcester	14	99,010
Total	1,414	\$10,000,000

Source: Maryland Center for School Safety

Appendix 4
Object/Fund Difference Report
Maryland State Department of Education – Maryland Center for School Safety

<u>Object/Fund</u>	<u>FY 20</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>FY 21</u> <u>Working</u> <u>Appropriation</u>	<u>FY 22</u> <u>Allowance</u>	<u>FY 21 - FY 22</u> <u>Amount Change</u>	<u>Percent</u> <u>Change</u>
Positions					
01 Regular	14.00	14.00	14.00	0.00	0%
02 Contractual	2.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0%
Total Positions	16.00	15.00	15.00	0.00	0%
Objects					
01 Salaries and Wages	\$ 1,537,407	\$ 1,594,261	\$ 1,593,998	-\$ 263	0%
02 Technical and Special Fees	97,909	74,765	121,562	46,797	62.6%
03 Communication	10,020	22,765	10,034	-12,731	-55.9%
04 Travel	41,993	20,524	44,535	24,011	117.0%
07 Motor Vehicles	10,944	22,000	18,502	-3,498	-15.9%
08 Contractual Services	412,615	368,073	602,382	234,309	63.7%
09 Supplies and Materials	17,169	65,993	52,016	-13,977	-21.2%
10 Equipment – Replacement	151	0	0	0	0.0%
11 Equipment – Additional	12,790	95,500	34,266	-61,234	-64.1%
12 Grants, Subsidies, and Contributions	27,745,181	22,600,000	22,600,000	0	0%
13 Fixed Charges	99,335	125,000	69,502	-55,498	-44.4%
Total Objects	\$ 29,985,514	\$ 24,988,881	\$ 25,146,797	\$ 157,916	0.6%
Funds					
01 General Fund	\$ 20,837,493	\$ 14,388,881	\$ 14,503,797	\$ 114,916	0.8%
03 Special Fund	9,148,021	10,600,000	10,600,000	0	0%
09 Reimbursable Fund	0	0	43,000	43,000	N/A
Total Funds	\$ 29,985,514	\$ 24,988,881	\$ 25,146,797	\$ 157,916	0.6%

Note: The fiscal 2021 appropriation does not include deficiencies, targeted revenues, or across-the-board reductions. The fiscal 2022 allowance does not include contingent reductions or cost-of-living adjustments.