

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2021 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
First Reader

House Bill 1189  
Ways and Means

(Howard County Delegation)

---

Howard County Board of Education - School Safety Personnel  
Ho. Co. 10-21

---

This bill precludes the Howard County Board of Education from assigning school resource officers (SROs) to public schools in the county and instead requires the board to use adequate local law enforcement coverage to meet State guidelines for school safety. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2021.**

---

Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** None. The bill pertains only to Howard County.

**Local Effect:** The bill does not materially affect governmental finances in Howard County, as discussed below.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

---

Analysis

**Current Law:** Chapter 30 of 2018 (Maryland Safe to Learn Act) defined an SRO as (1) a law enforcement officer assigned to a school in accordance with a memorandum of understanding between a local law enforcement agency and a local school system or (2) a Baltimore City School Police Officer, as defined in current law.

Under Chapter 30, the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) developed, in consultation with local school systems, a specialized curriculum to be used in training SROs. All SROs were required to complete an approved specialized training program by September 1, 2019.

MCSS must collect specified data on SROs and, in collaboration with local law enforcement and school systems, develop guidelines based on its analysis of the data to assist local school systems in (1) identifying the appropriate number and assignment of SROs, including supplemental coverage by local law enforcement agencies and (2) collaborating and communicating with local law enforcement agencies. By July 1, 2019, each local school system must have developed a plan in consultation with local law enforcement to implement the guidelines and submit its plan to MCSS for review and comment.

Before each school year begins, each local school system must annually file a report with MCSS that identifies (1) the public schools that have an SRO assigned and (2) if no SRO is assigned to a public school, the adequate local law enforcement coverage that will be provided to the school. MCSS must submit annual summaries of the SRO/law enforcement coverage reports it receives to the Governor and General Assembly. MCSS must also collect and report annually data on specified incidents of use of force involving SROs or school security employees.

Each year, the Governor must include \$10.0 million for the Safe Schools Fund to provide grants to local school systems and law enforcement agencies to meet the SRO/law enforcement coverage requirements; the Governor's proposed fiscal 2022 State budget includes the funding. Grants must be made based on the proportion of public schools in each jurisdiction.

**Local Expenditures:** According to MCSS, Howard County assigns full-time SROs to 22 of its 77 schools, with adequate law enforcement coverage provided for the remaining 55 schools. Removing SROs from the 22 schools requires the school system to arrange adequate law enforcement coverage for those schools as well. The guidelines for adequate law enforcement coverage developed by MCSS are, for security reasons, protected information that is not available to the public. Therefore, the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) cannot independently assess the additional coverage that is necessary to satisfy those guidelines.

Nevertheless, DLS assumes that (1) fewer police officers are needed to provide adequate law enforcement coverage for the 22 schools than are currently assigned to the schools as SROs; and (2) any remaining current SROs, who are sworn police officers and paid by the county police department, are reassigned to other law enforcement duties. Thus, DLS advises that there is no negative fiscal effect on Howard County. However, Howard County advises that removing the SROs from schools and replacing them with adequate law enforcement coverage will cost the county \$4.1 million and require a total of 58 full-time equivalent positions.

## **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Howard County; Maryland State Department of Education; Maryland Center for School Safety; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 1, 2021

rh/rhh

---

Analysis by: Michael C. Rubenstein

Direct Inquiries to:

(410) 946-5510

(301) 970-5510