

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2024 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

Senate Bill 819 (Senator Jennings, *et al.*)  
Education, Energy, and the Environment

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**Public Schools - School Resource Officers - Firearms Required**

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This bill requires a school resource officer (SRO), including a Baltimore City school police officer, to carry a firearm while on the premises of a school to which the SRO is assigned. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2024.**

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None. The bill applies only to local school systems and law enforcement agencies.

**Local Effect:** The bill has no material effect on local governmental operations or finances.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** A “school resource officer” is defined as:

- a law enforcement officer who has been assigned to a school in accordance with a memorandum of understanding between the chief law enforcement agency and local school system; or
- a Baltimore City school police officer.

A Baltimore City school police officer is a person who, when acting in an official capacity, is a member of the Baltimore City School Police Force established in statute and who is authorized by law to make arrests. In general, a Baltimore City school police officer may act in an official capacity only on the premises of a Baltimore City school or under other

specified circumstances. When acting in an official capacity, a Baltimore City school police officer has all the powers of a law enforcement officer in the State. Members of the Baltimore City School Police Force are employees of and appointed by the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners. During school days, Baltimore City school police officers are authorized to carry weapons on the premises of a school to which they are assigned *only* before or after regular school hours; they are also authorized to carry weapons on the premises of a school to which they are assigned on days other than school days.

### *Maryland Safe to Learn Act*

Under Chapter 30 of 2018 (the Maryland Safe to Learn Act), the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) developed, in consultation with local school systems, a specialized curriculum to be used in training SROs and school security employees that addresses specified issues. The curriculum was submitted to and approved by the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission.

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.

Beginning in fiscal 2020 and each year thereafter, 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. Grants must be made based on the proportion of public schools in each jurisdiction.

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## **Additional Information**

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See SB 935 of 2023 and SB 973 of 2022.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland State Department of Education; Maryland Center for School Safety; Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; Department of State Police; Baltimore City Public Schools; Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 26, 2024  
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