

EQUITY FOR ALL KIDS



To: Chair McIntosh and members of the Appropriations Committee
From: Shamoyia Gardiner, Education Policy Director
Re: House Bill 1078: Public Safety - Education - Firearm Funding (No Funding for Firearms Act)
Date: February 27, 2020
Position: Support

The Federal Commission on School Safety's December 2018 report makes several troubling recommendations, including the suggestion that school districts loosen certification requirements and offer incentives to allow people with prior firearm experience, like military veterans and law enforcement retirees, to become teachers.¹ The report also alludes to the availability of grants from the Department of Justice for arming and training school staff.²

We know that the hyper-securitization and militarization of our schools will not make schools safer. In fact, we have evidence to the contrary. The Brookings Institution outlines four top-tier concerns about arming teachers: (1) police officers hit their targets in active shooter trainings less than 20% of the time--teachers are unlikely to be any better, (2) no evidence exists to demonstrate that the presence of armed personnel serves as a deterrent to mass shooters, (3) the proliferation of guns in schools inherently decreases the safety of schools, and (4) the school-to-prison pipeline is strengthened in the presence of predominantly white, armed personnel and inevitable criminalization and abuse of marginalized groups like students of color and students with disabilities.³

Districts across the state are awaiting legislation that will realize the additional funding expected from the recommendations of the Kirwan Commission. Maryland's student population is more diverse than ever, as are their academic, socio-emotional, and economic needs. **Ensuring both the quality of educators and availability of resources for students must remain the top priority for school districts**, while issues of public safety remain a top-line priority for institutions of public safety.

HB 1078 will prevent any county board of education or individual school from spending financial resources on firearm weapons and/or firearm weapon training for teachers. **ACY strongly urges a favorable report on this bill.**

¹ Federal Commission on School Safety. "Final Report of the Federal Commission on School Safety". December 2018. <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/school-safety/school-safety-report.pdf>

² ibid

³ Hansen, Michael. "There are ways to make schools safer and teachers stronger-but they don't involve guns". February 27, 2018