

BILL: House Bill 670
TITLE: Public Safety - Special Police Officers - Employing Entity
POSITION: OPPOSE
DATE: February 26, 2019
COMMITTEES: Judiciary Committee
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all twenty-four of the state's local boards of education, opposes House Bill 670.

MABE's opposition to this bill is grounded in the concern that, as it relates to public schools, it could jeopardize the framework established by the Safe to Learn Act of 2018 to ensure the hiring and assignment to schools of highly trained school resource officers (SROs) and other school security personnel. Specifically, MABE opposes this bill due to the lack of clarity and potential unintended consequences regarding the respective roles of any special police officers assigned to schools, and our SROs and other school personnel, in maintaining a safe and disciplined school environment conducive to learning.

MABE recognizes the major contributions SROs are making in schools across the state to benefit school climate, culture and safety. Today, SROs and teachers, principals, and other school personnel are collaborating to provide mentoring, counseling, and instruction concerning appropriate student behaviors, and are responding accordingly to violations of school policy and law. The General Assembly is to be commended for the clear direction of the Safe to Learn Act of 2018 to develop a comprehensive curriculum for all SROs and any other designated school security personnel. The multi-faceted role of SRO's is evident in the outline of the 40-hour, 5-day, mandatory curriculum for all SROs and school security staff.

- School Resource Officer: Definition & History of Role
- Memorandum of Agreement/Understanding (MOU) between the police department and the school
- Working Collaboratively with School Administration and Staff
- Restorative Practices in Schools: PBIS, School Based Mediation, and School to Prison Pipeline considerations and Implicit Bias
- Maintaining a Positive School Climate
- Victimization of Youth in Schools - Child Protective Services
- Informal Counseling Roles and Responsibilities
- Disability & Diversity Awareness with a focus on Inclusiveness and Cultural Fluency
- Implicit Bias
- Drug Education and Current Trends in Maryland Schools
- Investigation of Bullying, Threats & Social Media
- Principles of Effective Learning - The Expanding Role of an SRO as an Instructor
- Constructive Interactions with Students - Building Trust and Reducing Fear
- Collaboration and Problem Solving with Stakeholders
- Youth Development, Behavior and Discipline

MABE firmly believes that safety in public schools is the joint responsibility of local boards of education, school administrators and staff, students, parents and guardians, law enforcement and other public safety agencies, human services agencies, and the community in general. MABE believes that this holistic approach is essential to maintaining safe schools and access to a high quality education for all of Maryland's students.

For the reasons outlined above, MABE respectfully requests an unfavorable report on House Bill 670.