

SCHOOL SAFETY & SECURITY

MABE POSITIONS

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education, representing all local boards of education in Maryland:

- ✓ **Supports** federal, State, and local government funding for local public school safety programs, facility upgrades, and the wide array of behavioral health and public safety services provided by other public and private entities, which are essential to maintaining safe and secure schools and access to an excellent education for all of Maryland's students.
- ✓ **Supports** increased state funding to support the work of local school systems to ensure that the Safe to Learn Act is implemented with fidelity; and increased state and local funding for programs addressing gangs, drugs, human trafficking, behavioral health, and the impact of systemic violence in communities, schools, and our students' lives.
- ✓ **Supports** local discretion to adopt programs and policies to ensure school safety and security.
- ✗ **Opposes** the unfunded mandate to expand the responsibility of public schools to provide "adequate school health services" to include behavioral health services.
- ✗ **Opposes** legislation which attempts to address student safety concerns by prescribing specific tools or approaches or imposes unfunded mandates on local boards of education.

BACKGROUND

Safety and security in public schools is extremely important to local boards of education for the protection of students and staff, as well as necessary to environments conducive to teaching and learning. MABE 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.

Following the tragic school shooting in Newtown, Connecticut in 2012, the State Board approved reforms to require evacuation, shelter in place, lockdown and other drills that all schools must conduct each year. And in 2013, with MABE's support, the Maryland Center for School Safety was created to facilitate coordination and collaboration between local school systems. Tragically, a mass school shooting occurred on Feb. 14, 2018 at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida; and a school shooting occurred on March 20, 2018 at Great Mills High School in St. Mary's County, Maryland. These events led to broad bipartisan support for the Safe to Learn Act of 2018, which:

- Establishes a School Safety Subcabinet and Advisory Board and increases funding for the Maryland Center on School Safety (MCSS);
- Requires school systems to designate a certified school safety coordinator and to conduct annual safety evaluations of each school;
- Requires local school systems to designate a mental health services coordinator, and requires local assessment teams for the identification of, and intervention with, students or other individuals who may pose a threat to school safety;
- Requires all school resource officers (SROs) and school safety and security personnel to complete a specialized curriculum in school law and restorative approaches, and requires school systems to report on schools with assigned SROs and, if not, how adequate local law enforcement will be provided; and
- Provides significant initial funding for school facility upgrades and school safety and security programs.

In addition, Maryland has long-mandated state and local policies on criminal gang activity, bullying (including cyber bullying), background checks for school employees and contractors, and emergency plans and drills to prepare for violent or traumatic events. In 2014, MABE supported legislation to expand the "person in position of authority" law that criminalizes, as a fourth degree sex offense, sexual activity between educators and students. In 2018, a bill passed to require training of all school employees on the prevention of child sexual abuse.

For additional information, see [MABE's Resolution on Safety and Security in Public Schools](#).