

**BILL:** Senate Bill 238  
**TITLE:** Public Schools - Crossing Guards - Hiring and Budget Allocation  
**DATE:** February 3, 2022  
**POSITION:** OPPOSE  
**COMMITTEE:** Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs  
**CONTACT:** John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) opposes Senate Bill 238.

One of MABE's top legislative priorities for the 2022 session is to **Support sustained and increased local government investments in education**. Funding from Maryland's 23 counties and Baltimore City plays a critical role in the success of public education programs, services, and facilities. Specifically, MABE advocates for state laws mandating investments of local property and income tax revenues in public education, including a strong "maintenance of effort" guarantee that local funding must be sustained and typically increased from year to year.

In this context, MABE opposes Senate Bill 238 because it would appear to shift a funding responsibility for school crossing guard programs which is currently undertaken by local governments, through their funding of local law enforcement agencies. There are many nuances as to how local school systems, county governments, and local law enforcement agencies negotiate and collaborate on the funding, training, and provision of school crossing guards. Therefore, MABE respectfully requests that these local arrangements be allowed to continue to operate, without the one-size-fits-all revisions proposed in this legislation.

Importantly, MABE interprets Senate Bill 238 as mandating that a county funded responsibility be shifted to a local school system without sufficient funding being added by either the State or local government to the school system budget. MABE opposes the imposition of such an unfunded mandate on local school systems. In the alternative, Senate Bill 238 would provide school systems the option of declaring their inability to absorb this new cost, and return the funding obligation to their respective local law enforcement agencies. As these law enforcement agencies are already primarily responsible for operating crossing guard programs across the State, it is unclear that this end result differs from the status quo.

Again, the bill addresses a serious student safety policy area, but one that MABE firmly believes should remain in the context of local intergovernmental cooperation and coordination of planning and the investment of available funding.

For these reasons, MABE requests an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 238.