

BILL: Senate Bill 540
TITLE: Education – School Mapping Data Program – Established
DATE: March 27, 2024
POSITION: SUPPORT
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
CONTACT: John R. Woolums, Esq.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), representing all twenty-four local boards of education, supports Senate Bill 540, to establish the School Mapping Data Program within the Maryland center for School Safety. MABE believes that this program, with sufficient funding, will contribute to the school site information available across state and local public safety agencies.

First, MABE is supporting other legislation in 2024 to sustain future funding for the Safe School Grant Program, currently funded at \$10 million, but scheduled to sunset as a program in FY 2026. House Bill 1390 would repeal this sunset, and has passed the House and awaits action in the Senate. MABE firmly believes that the success of the school mapping program envisioned by Senate Bill 540, and House Bill 472 as already passed in the House, is dependent on sufficient funding to support the intensive work to document all of the spaces within Maryland’s 1,400 public school facilities.

Sadly, if not alarmingly, the threats to school safety that gave rise to the creation of the School Safety Grant Program in 2018 remain a constant and high priority issue of great concern to all local boards of education in Maryland. These funds have, and should continue to, aid local school systems and local governments in funding facility renovations to make schools and classrooms safer places. In addition, this grant funding supports the installation of security technology such as controlled access doors, security cameras, and weapons detection systems. Therefore, MABE fully supports the primary objective of Senate Bill 540 to facilitate the development of a statewide database of school facilities mapping information to enhance and improve responses to emergencies.

For these reasons, MABE requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 540.