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BILL: House Bill 1446  
TITLE: Public Schools – School Emergency Response Systems - Study (Safer Schools Act)  
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POSITION: Support  
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means  
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House Bill 1446 requires the Maryland Center for School Safety to conduct a study to determine best practices and procedures for the use and installation of emergency response systems in elementary and secondary school systems to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from a manmade or natural disaster or an emergency occurring on school property; requiring the Center to consult with certain parties; requiring the Center to report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly by December 1, 2018; etc.

PSSAM **supports** House Bill 1446.

Local superintendents appreciate the work of the Maryland Center for School Safety which was established in 2013. Since its creation, the Center has collaborated and partnered with all local school systems, law enforcement agencies, state and local government, parents, community organizations, and other stakeholders to provide a comprehensive, coordinated approach to school safety. Under the Center's leadership, we believe that Maryland schools have greatly benefited from this collaborative effort to promote interagency efforts that support safe schools for all students, parents, school staff, and community members.

In addition, the Code of Maryland Regulations 13A.02.02.01-.04 – Emergency Plans, sets forth the requirements for emergency plans that must be developed and implemented by every local school system. "Emergency plan" means a plan for each local system and each public school that addresses mitigation, preparation, response, and recovery involving an emergency, including responding to violent or traumatic events on school grounds during regular school hours or during school-sponsored activities and as well as events in the community that affect normal school functioning. The Regulation further requires each local system to develop an emergency plan for each public school and central administration office under its jurisdiction in consultation with other health and safety officials in the local community. Among other requirements the regulations requires local superintendents to certify annually in writing to the State Superintendent that the requirements of the Regulation are being implemented. PSSAM recommends that as a part of the comprehensive study required by this legislation, the Center review the existing emergency plans submitted by local school systems.

For the reasons stated above, PSSAM **supports** House Bill 1446 and urges a favorable committee report.