

Department of Planning and Budget 2022 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: HB873H1

House of Origin Introduced Substitute Engrossed
Second House In Committee Substitute Enrolled

2. Patron: Greenhalgh

3. Committee: Appropriations

4. Title: School boards; school resource officers; employment; threat assessment.

5. Summary: Requires each school board to enter into a collaborative agreement with the local law-enforcement agency to employ at least one school resource officer or school security officer in each public elementary and secondary school in the local school division. The bill provides that no school board shall be granted any full or partial waiver from such staffing requirements except to allow the sharing of a single school resource officer or school security officer by two different public schools that are adjoining or are within close proximity to each other and share facilities such as parking. Provides that no school division that refuses or fails to comply with the requirements is eligible for any grant from the Commonwealth, Board of Education, or Department of Education. The bill also requires each division superintendent to include on the threat assessment team established for each public elementary and secondary school in the local school division at least one school resource officer employed in the school.

6. Budget Amendment Necessary: Yes, Item 405, HB/SB30.

7. Fiscal Impact Estimates: Preliminary, see Item 8.

8. Fiscal Implications: School Resource Officers (SROs) are certified law enforcement officers hired by a local law enforcement agency to provide law enforcement and security services to Virginia public elementary and secondary schools. School Security Officers (SSOs) are employed by local school boards and are responsible solely for ensuring safety, security, and welfare. Currently, SROs and SSOs are optional in public elementary and secondary schools, and they are paid for by localities, either by the local law enforcement agencies, by the local school divisions, or both. The Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) currently administers the SRO Grants Program and Fund pursuant to § 9.1-110, Code of Virginia. These funds are awarded as matching grants to local law enforcement agencies and local school boards that have established a collaborative agreement to employ SROs.

This bill would require school divisions to employ at least one school resource officer or school security officer in each public elementary and secondary school in the local school division. While information regarding SRO employment is collected by the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) in the Annual School Safety Survey, there is not information available on SSO employment. While DCJS estimates that there are more than

650 schools without an SRO, it is not known how many of these schools may employ an SSO.

DCJS estimates that the average annual cost to employ a new full time SRO is \$125,000. This includes salary, benefits, equipment, vehicle, and training. Actual costs can vary widely and depend on the locality in which the SRO is employed. The cost of employing an SSO is typically less than an SRO. It is not known how many school divisions already employ an SSO in each school or would choose to employ an SSO rather than an SRO. Any actual fiscal impact to local school divisions is indeterminate.

Costs to employ existing or new SROs or SSOs to meet the requirements of this bill would be the responsibility of the locality or could be covered with grants from the DCJS-administered SRO Incentive Grant Program. These grants require a local match on the basis of the local composite index of ability to pay.

DCJS also provides SROs and SSOs with training that is required by Code. DCJS currently hosts seven SRO Basic courses annually to fulfill the training requirements. Each SRO Basic Course costs about \$8,500 to run and typically trains around 50 individuals. To provide the required training to approximately 650 additional SROs or SSOs each year, 14-16 additional sessions are needed, which would cost DCJS between \$119,000 and \$136,000.

Currently, DCJS has one position to host and coordinate SRO Basic courses annually. DCJS believes two additional staff members will be needed to meet increased demand for training and certification. According to DCJS, based on its current position, the additional positions would cost \$131,737 general fund each (inclusive of a \$75,000 salary plus benefits, and equipment), for a total cost of \$263,474 annually.

9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected: Department of Criminal Justice Services, Department of Education, local school divisions, local law enforcement agencies.

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No

11. Other Comments: None