



# Keeping our Schools Safe and Secure

The number one priority for MCSBA member districts is to educate students in a safe and secure environment. However; due to limited local resources, we call on both the NYS Legislature and the Federal Government to provide the following supports to help our school districts to continue their critical work of providing safe and secure places to learn, work, and play:

<p><b>Local Control of any mandated and non-mandated safety and security measures</b></p>	<p>All MCSBA member districts work to diligently review and comply with mandated safety plans that provide appropriate lockdown and evacuation responses to a wide variety of potential threats. Plans are developed in coordination with local police, fire and emergency agencies to ensure coordinated and rapid response based on evolving best practices.</p> <p><b>School districts are in the best position to make all security decisions. MCSBA asks that any new legislation or regulation allow for local control and contain flexible funding parameters.</b></p>
<p><b>Campus Safety Preparedness</b></p>	<p>Schools must be available and accessible to the communities that support them as well as providing a safe and secure environment for students and staff. Therefore, good security strategies need to employ a layered approach to safety, including passive and active preventative and responsive capabilities.</p> <p><b>MCSBA members support federal and state research to inform best practices for safety and security in school facilities. Districts could then choose from selection of proven strategies to promote safer schools both when students are present and when schools are available for community use.</b></p>
<p><b>Fiscally Responsible Safety</b></p>	<p>School safety is a critical part of a successful learning environment. Unexpected building alterations, additional cleaning materials, and personal protective equipment needed to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic were not budgeted and costs significantly exceeded the federal relief funding provided. The costs associated with school safety are over and above the traditional costs required to provide for the learning environment. With revenues from tax levies capped, expenses for providing school safety are diverted from funding for traditional school services.</p> <p><b>MCSBA asks that the costs associated with school safety and security be excluded from the NYS tax levy cap. We also ask for the immediate release of Smart School Bond Act dollars, which can be used for this purpose.</b></p>

**Despite the recent frightening events, schools are the safest place children gather. Schools need to remain safe havens for all who enter but also need to be open, engaging and supportive environments for learning**