

Agenda

July 1, 2019

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

100 Community Place, Crownsville, MD 21032 – Side B

- Welcome of the Advisory Board – *Chair, Dr. George Arlotto*
 - Declaration of Quorum
 - Additions to the Agenda (if needed)
- Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes
 - May 6, 2019 - Meeting Minutes
- Maryland Center for School Safety Updates – *Kate Hession/Dino Pignataro*
- Work Plan Topic: Safe Schools Maryland Tip Line – *MCSS*
 - **Task:** Discuss various components to support the Safe Schools Maryland Tip Line
 - **Outcome:** Develop recommendations on marketing, PSA, data reports, and program guidelines
- Closing – *Dr. Arlotto*
 - Next Meeting – September 9, 10:00 a.m. Anne Arundel County Public Schools Board
Room: 2644 Riva Road, Annapolis MD 21401
 - Adjournment

Remaining 2019 Scheduled Meeting Dates

- August – NO MEETING
- September 9 -- Anne Arundel County Public Schools - Board Room
- October 7 – Crownsville – Side A
- November 4 – Crownsville – Side A
- December 2 – Anne Arundel County Public Schools - Board Room

Please be advised that the Advisory Board may move into a closed session, if needed, pursuant to Maryland Code, § 3-305 of the General Provisions Article.

Meeting Minutes - July 1, 2019

The meeting of the Maryland School Safety Advisory Board was held on July 1, 2019 at 100 Community Place, Crownsville, MD 21032

Dr. George Arlotto, the Advisory Board Chair, called the meeting to order at approximately 10:02 a.m., and provided opening comments, noting that a quorum was not present and therefore no actions would be taken and the minutes for the May 6th meeting would be held over until the next meeting.

The following Advisory Board members were in attendance:

- Chair - Dr. George Arlotto, Superintendent, Anne Arundel County Public Schools
- Sheriff Scott Adams, Cecil County Sheriff's Office (Maryland Sheriff's Association)
- Thomas E. Alban, Director of Risk Management for the Archdiocese of Baltimore
- Dr. Kellie Anderson, Coordinator of Psychological Services, Anne Arundel County Public Schools
- Jon Carrier, SRO Anne Arundel County Public Schools (President, Maryland Association of School Resource Officers)\
- Eric Ebersole, Delegate, District 12
- David Engel, Director, MCAC
- Jayshree Srinivasan, Student, Mount Hebron High School
- Manfred Reek, Representative School Bus Drivers
- Nicholas Shockney, Special Education Administrator, Carroll County Public Schools
- Amanda White, representative for Megan Berger, Attorney

The following Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) members were in attendance:

- Kate Hession, Executive Director
- Joseph Dino Pignataro, Deputy Director
- Dawn P. O'Croinin, Assistant Attorney General
- Ronald Pierce, Regional Specialist
- Emily Allen Lucht, Communication Specialist
- Sandra Caldwell, School Safety Analyst
- Jeyan Jabaraj, Data and Policy Analyst
- Jesika McNeil, Executive Assistant

Other representatives of State agencies and representatives for several board members were also in attendance.

Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes:

A quorum was not present; therefore, the May minutes could not be approved.

Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) Updates:

MCSS Executive Director Kate Hession informed the Advisory Board of the initiatives that the Center has been working on, the biggest being the grants and that all NOFAs were made available as of June 28th for the 2020 grants. Ms. Hession further explained that there were a total of four grants available in FY20: The Hate Bias grant, which would be a competitive grant totaling \$2 million; the School Transportation, which was also competitive for \$600 thousand that law enforcement would also be eligible to apply for; the SRO Adequate Coverage grant which was non-competitive for \$10 million which local school systems and law enforcement were eligible for, and the Safe Schools fund which is a non-competitive grant for \$10 million

Ms. Hession explained to the board that law enforcement would not be able to double their funds by applying for the same items under both grants and that the Center would work to make sure that they applied for the full allocations appropriately and would provide the Board a chart so that the board could see the allocations for each county.

Hession informed the Board that the Subcabinet approved and agreed with the Advisory Board recommendation of a \$5,000 base allocation for non-profit special education facilities and that this would be taken off the top of the base allocation for the local school systems. Hession further noted that the Subcabinet agreed to start each school system a base allocation of \$200,000 like last year and subtract the special education facilities base leaving a base allocation of \$179,000 per school system and then the remainder divided on a per pupil rate. Hession stated that this information was include as part of the NOFAs that were issued.

Ms. Hession notified the Board that there will be a new grant application process this year and that the Center had created an online PDF application and made the submission process available online as well, allowing the Center to better organize the information and in anticipation of a lot more applications this year.

Ms. Hession stated that the second big initiative the Center had was to provide the SRO trainings this summer.

Ms. Hession stated that two of the largest jurisdictions were trained last week and that Anne Arundel County, Prince George's County were done at the same time last week and that Montgomery County had over 200 people in their session. Ms. Hession confirmed that the responses to the training have been very positive and that she is reviewing all of the evaluations as they come in and making the changes that we can and taking in account other information provided.

Ms. Hession provided a big thank you to the Advisory Board members that have been actively involved in the development and delivery of the training.

Dr. Anderson stated that she appreciated how easy the Center staff made everything for the instructors when they were supporting trainings throughout the state.

Ms. Hession stated that the final update was that the School Safety conference would be held August 5th and 6th and that registration was open. Ms. Hession explained that the conference would be two days with three paths (Mental Health, SROs and School Safety Coordinators) with keynote speakers and the afternoons broken into breakout sessions. Ms. Hession further explained that attendees are not required to stick to their selected paths and that the Center hoped that everyone would find the conference beneficial and that everyone that attended would take something away with them.

Mr. Carrier asked if there would be a sign up link for the conference

Ms. Hession stated that there was and that the Center would send it out to everyone again.

Dr. Arlotto opened the floor for any questions or concerns. There were none.

Work Plan: Safe Schools Maryland Tip Line

Ms. Caldwell presented the Safe Schools Maryland Tip Line to the Board. Ms. Caldwell informed the Board that the tip line had been in operation since October of 2018 and as with anything you find hiccups and things you would like to improve upon, which is why she was presenting the resource to the Board and looking for feedback. Ms. Caldwell informed the Board that the tip line was a way to anonymously report any school safety concerns via the hotline, website or smartphone app that is compatible with both Apple and Android phones, and the tip line was completely anonymous and free to users.

Ms. Caldwell informed the Board that the tip line is available 24/7/365 and that when you submit a tip it goes to Maryland's Emergency Management Agency's (MEMA) joint operations center tip processing agents. Ms. Caldwell also stated that she has been participating in monthly calls on the nationwide tip line which has been helpful to see what other states are doing. Ms. Caldwell further stated that as of June 2019 the Center had received 400 tips through the tip line.

Ms. Caldwell stated that the reason the state has the tip line is that in 81% of planned school event's someone knew something prior to it taking place and 93% of those were peers in the school, but they had reporting roadblocks where they didn't know who or how to report or they were scared to be found out if they told.

Ms. Caldwell stated that tip line data shows that parents prefer to use the hotline method to make reports while students prefer to use the phone apps and the app is the leading reporting method.

Ms. Caldwell confirmed that when someone calls the tip line at 833-MD-B-SAFE the dispatcher immediately asks if the person is safe to talk, if so they get as much information as possible, regarding the situation, from the caller.

Caldwell informed the Board that in March WMAR interviewed MCSS, MEMA, and Cecil County where they followed a tip through the process, calling the piece “the journey of the tip”. Ms. Caldwell stated that the Center felt as though WMAR did a good job with the piece and the interview. Caldwell aired the piece for the Board. Caldwell reviewed the tip line info graphic to review the process: a tip is submitted, then goes to the operations center at MEMA for triage. From there, the tip is sent to the school, school system, and local law enforcement as necessary. To give the Board attendees an idea of how the process works and how to submit a tip Caldwell broke the attendees into groups to submit a test tip to the tip line.

Ms. Caldwell read the scenario that would be used for the tip line test and asked the Board to input a tip and provide feedback.

Ms. Berger suggested that information about who was involved could be clearer because she wasn’t sure whose information she was supposed to enter there.

Ms. O’Croinin agreed and suggested that maybe it be changed to a pop up with choices so you don’t have to input your information.

Ms. Allen agreed with the above statements and that you should find a way to differentiate as to no “stall” someone trying to enter a tip.

Dr. Arlotto stated that maybe the field could be renamed to “Witness Other Than Yourself”

Ms. Caldwell thanked everyone for their feedback and asked the Board what they liked about the application.

Ms. Srinivasan stated that she liked that there was an option to upload pictures

Mr. Ebersole stated that he liked the fact that the phone number was readily available as soon as you went on the app.

Ms. Caldwell confirmed that if the person reporting has a long narrative, sometimes it is faster for the person to call vs. typing the narrative in.

Caldwell further stated that the challenge the Center is facing is how to make the application more student friendly, especially in reference to event types. Caldwell informed the board that there is concern that these are not being categorized correctly or because the list is so long they are not scrolling through the entire list to find what best suits their situation.

Ms. Caldwell informed the Board that the initial thought was to combine some of the events into one. For example, weapons would cover knives, guns etc. instead of each being listed individually. Ms.

Caldwell stated that a second thought was to limit the number of events to just five categories like physical safety, mental health, building safety etc.

Ms. Caldwell continued to pose some other suggestions to the Board, such as making them all “I feel statements”. For example, “I feel I’m in danger” and the final thought that Ms. Caldwell posed to the board was to take the even type option away all together and have the MEMA dispatchers read the narratives and correctly categorize the tip.

Mr. Alban asked what was the value of the categories and how were they triaged. Specifically, if it’s a specific category is the tip moved onto a more experienced person?

Ms. Caldwell stated that they are used to classify the tip.

Mr. Alban asked how many tips have to be reclassified at the end of the day.

Ms. Hession stated that quite a few have to be reclassified; however, the system flags life threat event types and that those tips come in as flagged in a higher category.

Mr. Reek stated that he assumed this data would be used at a later time and would be important.

Ms. O’Croinin stated that who should be collecting the data is an important offset and that if you are trying to write an accurate report it would be better for the MEMA dispatchers to categorize the tip and check as many categories as needed.

Mr. Engel stated that one that shouldn’t be missed in all of the discussions is ease of use vs. the type of event and that should never be taken away or put on the MEMA dispatcher to guess what the importance is or how it should be handled. Mr. Engel stated that maybe the app should allow the response to allow the scope to be narrowed.

Ms. Hession questioned if by narrowing the scope Mr. Engel meant having field within like a drop down. For example, instead of just saying there’s a weapon in school being able to choose a specific type of weapon.

Ms. Allen stated that she wasn’t sure if a student would say “has a weapon” vs. the type of weapon because weapon was a more adult term. Ms. Allen asked if the system has the ability to auto flag key words allowing the tip to be further triaged.

Ms. Hession stated that the system did allow for specific words to be flagged

Dr. Arlotto stated that he liked the fact that it was two-way conversation and that he initially thought it was only a one way conversation.

Mr. Ebersole asked if the app had been tested with children vs. adults for feedback.

Ms. Caldwell stated it had not but that was in the plans

Ms. O’Croinin stated that kids like to upload items and suggested that maybe the upload and review feature be moved to the onset of the narrative vs. the end.

Mr. Engel stated that you need to get as much information as possible upfront because like 911 people give information and hang up and don't call back.

Ms. Allen suggested that the Center get with the local student councils to get feedback from the students because what make sense to us as adults vs. kids is a lot different.

Mr. Adams stated that you have to look at the fact that the app is working and people are using the system so you don't want to make a change just to change.

Ms. Srinivasan stated that maybe the Center should consider adding a message at the beginning reassuring students that the tip is anonymous.

Mr. Carrier asked why the app can't have two messages. One that's an open narrative, one with guiding questions, especially since some children are of special needs and need guiding questions vs. a narrative that would be difficult for them to complete.

Mr. Ebersole pointed out that the smartphone app is laid out very differently than the website.

Mr. Engel stated that he agreed with Mr. Adams point that the app is successful and he doesn't feel that there is an urgency to change it right now. He thinks the Center should get more information on the system and what it can do and then scrutinize it more. He feels that 400 calls is great and it shows the app's success.

Ms. Berger stated that when talking about success, there are the number of tips as well as the accuracy of the tips and that there are different indicators that can be used. Ms. Berger feels it would be helpful if the Center could share that data it has with the Board to have a deeper conversation.

Mr. Alban asked if the Center had decided to stay with the current app.

Ms. Hession confirmed that the Center would be continuing with P3 one more year through August 2020 while a full procurement process is completed.

Ms. Allen Lucht stated that the Center wanted to now discuss marketing with the Board. Who the target audience should be (students, parents, faculty and staff and the community).

Ms. Allen Lucht informed the Board that posters with the tip line information have been made available to all local schools as well as information on the back of Center employee business cards. Ms. Allen Lucht further explained that the Center was attempting to reach the bilingual community and was having posters produced in both English and Spanish.

Ms. Allen Lucht also informed the Board that the Center does outreach and local events with schools to promote the tip line and asked if the Board had any other outreach suggestions the Center should look in to in order to broaden the reach of the tip line.

Ms. Allen suggested the teacher's conference in October.

Ms. Allen suggested the county, local and state fairs because a lot of the area students get fair day off from school.

Ms. Srinivasan suggested the Maryland Association of Student Council and stated that there are three events throughout the year with a lot of student's state wide, so it would be good to target that community as well.

Ms. Allen Lucht displayed the marketing items that the Center gives out at conferences and events and informed the Board that the Center has a social media presence as well.

Ms. Allen Lucht further stated that the Center had partnered with Clear Channel to run marketing ads and that if you are driving on Route 50 towards the beach you may see information on the tip line.

Ms. Allen Lucht identified the following as partners that the Center is working with: Local School Systems, Law Enforcement, Maryland State Department of Education, Local Leaders, State Leaders, Parents, Media, and Concerned Community Members/Groups.

Ms. Allen Lucht asked the Board who they thought were other key partners that could help deliver the message.

Mr. Alban suggested the County Health Departments from a mental health perspective.

Ms. O'Croinin suggested pediatrician offices.

Mr. Alban suggested School Nurses.

Ms. Allen suggested Emergency Rooms and Court Houses.

Ms. Allen Lucht suggested the YMCA.

Mr. Reek suggested local libraries.

Mr. Tress suggested juvenile services locations and stated this info would be helpful to have when the kids are going back into the community.

Mr. Engel suggested recreation and sports centers.

Mr. Reek asked if the Center was providing recommendations on how to display the 100 copies of the tip line posters that are sent to each school and if the Center knows if they're being displayed.

Ms. Allen Lucht confirmed that at events the Center has had kids recognize the posters from their schools and ultimately the Center would like all teachers to display them in their classrooms.

Ms. Srinivasan stated that the posters are displayed in the hallway but there's a lot of information in the hallway so it's not being absorbed. Ms. Srinivasan suggested that someone from the Center come out and talk to the students about it during an assembly or that the Center has a video that plays during an assembly that all students will see.

Mr. Reek stated that he liked the idea of business cards because it was easy for a kid to carry around in their books.

Ms. Srinivasan suggested making it a picture or add in the student planner.

Mr. Tress stated that the Center should try to get to the parents more involved and aware.

Ms. Allen Lucht informed the Board that the Center gets positive responses from parents that want to take information and hand out at the grocery stores and to friends.

Mr. Reek stated that he knows there are restrictions on school buses but the Center should look at COMAR and see if there is any way to display on the outside of the bus as well.

Ms. Caldwell stated that there's a concern for students that don't have phones because they may have to ask to use a phone which would prohibit them from possibly reporting an issue.

Mr. Ebersole stated that for students without phones, most schools have media centers and accessible technologies in their schools and why it's not immediate it would be a way for them to get access during the day.

Mr. Ebersole stated that there are a lot of interactive sites now that parents are using like grades online that parents are on constantly and maybe the Center could get the tip line advertised there.

Mr. Tress suggested the agricultural community and 4H programs that have difficulty getting technology should be another marketing path. Mr. Tress suggested reaching out to through the county websites, community advisory boards etc.

Ms. O'Croinin stated that back to school nights are critical and the one time all information is looked at prior to the school year starting.

Ms. Allen asked if it was possible to reach out to the schools and have them put a link and contact information on their back to school lists of student supplies.

Dr. Arlotto stated that the tip line is new to the state and jurisdictions and that almost all systems had a way of reporting before the tip line's existence and that the Center should try to work with those entities coming off contract with one vendor to transition to the statewide tip line

Mr. Deschenods suggested having an assembly where everyone takes out their phone and downloads the app right then and there.

Mr. Reek stated that a lot of devices are provided by the schools systems so the app should be downloaded on all of those devices already.

Ms. O'Croinin suggested advertising on the back of bathroom stall doors.

Dr. Arlotto reminded the group not to lose sight of students without phones and that we should never get away from kids and adults reporting directly to people and that a student will approach a trusted adult to report so the app should be a supplemental resource not the main resource.

Mr. Carrier agreed with Dr. Arlotto's statement.

Ms. Hession suggested doing something short and sweet that is a minute or less video that could be played on websites, back to school night etc.

Mr. Carrier stated that he envisioned the tip line as a more after hours resource where a tip comes in after school hours and administration can get ahead of it before the next morning.

Ms. Allen Lucht confirmed that a lot of the Centers tips come in after hours and the biggest day for tips is Monday night.

Dr. Anderson stated that the see something, say something message is really where it all starts and that should be the first point in any video.

Ms. Allen suggested a message of see something, say something, and report it. Don't repeat it.

Dr. Anderson stated that it's important to help kids differentiate between what is snitching and what is helpful.

Mr. Engel stated that it's important that the message be clear that the tip line is related to schools because there are a lot of 800 numbers out there with similar messages.

Ms. Srinivasan stated that it needs to be clear that you can report during the summer and when school is out and after school hours.

Mr. Engel stated that he thought it was important to remember in the Centers messaging that you can never replace 911 except for a personal relationship in the schools so the purpose should not muddy the waters or the message and that message should be consistent across all jurisdictions.

Ms. Allen suggested moving the reporting button so that it was more prominent.

Mr. Engel stated that another thing that is under appreciated is the wrap around services that occur when it's not a criminal issue but a child in need of assistance, so how the app is branded is important because it's not just a safe school but also a safe child.

Ms. Allen asked the Board after the open discussions, what they would like to see come from the Center.

Ms. Srinivasan stated that she would like to see the video that is played in schools.

Mr. Ebersole stated he would like to see more data and reassurances. He asked of the 400 tips how many of them were dismissed and how many actually resulted in action or resulted in action that stopped an eminent threat.

Mr. Engel; stated that these types of questions were the reason that MCAC is not the primary taker of the calls and that they did not want law enforcement to be the first set of eyes on a tip. Instead, they are notified if there is a threat as due diligence and the reason the tips go to MEMA because it was a child vs. law enforcement issue.

Ms. Allen Lucht informed the Board that if they think of anything else they would like to share to please let the Center know and thanked everyone for their participation.

Dr. Arlotto asked if there were any questions.

Closing:

Dr. Arlotto reminded the group that there was no quorum so there was no need to motion for an end. He thanked everyone for their participation.

The meeting concluded at 12:00 pm.