

MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY

School Safety Advisory Board Meeting

March 6, 2023

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Following the regular meeting, Board Members will move to virtual discussion rooms, which will be recorded and made available on the MCSS website.

Workgroup Discussions –*Assigned*

- a) Complete Assigned Tasks
- b) Define project outcomes with deadlines

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Welcome – *Chair, Dr. Michael J. Martirano*

a) Roll Call

Dr. Michael Martirano: Good morning, everyone and welcome to today's School Safety Advisory Board meeting. I'm Dr. Michael Martirano, Superintendent of schools for the Howard County Public School System, and I also serve as the Chair of this Advisory Board. It is now 10 o'clock and I will now call this meeting to order. I also want to verify before we start the meeting is being livestreaming and is being recorded. Can I confirm that?

Alan Chiusano: Yes, we are livestreaming and recording.

Dr. Michael Martirano: Thank you very much. I will now begin with a roll call of our Board Members to check for our quorum. I'm going to start in order here today. Katherine Klausmeier.

Samuel Deschenaux: Hi. Good morning. Senator wasn't able to make it, but I'm her legislative director here on her behalf.

Dr. Michael Martirano: Thanks. Eric Ebersole. Karin Bailey.

Karin Bailey: Present.

Dr. Michael Martirano: Good morning, Karin. Dr. Kellie Anderson. Pamela Gaddy.

Pamela Gaddy: I'm here.

Dr. Michael Martirano: Good morning, Pamela.

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Pamela Gaddy: Good morning.

Dr. Michael Martirano: Laurel Moody.

Laurel Moody: Good morning. I'm here.

Dr. Michael Martirano: Good morning, Laurel. Claire Cabral. Our student rep, Claire. Dr. Tia McKinnon.

Dr. Tia McKinnon: Here. Good morning.

Dr. Michael Martirano: Good morning. Sheriff Matthew Crisafulli. Chief Paul Kifer.

Chief Paul Kifer: Good morning, I'm here.

Dr. Michael Martirano: Good morning, Chief. David Engel. Detective Lawrence E. Smith. Dr. Sharon A. Hoover. Megan Berger.

Payton Aldridge: Good morning. I'm here on behalf of Megan Berger.

Dr. Michael Martirano: Okay. Thank you. Scott Tiffin. Michael Brown. James T. Bell.

James T. Bell: Good morning, I'm here.

Dr. Michael Martirano: Good morning, Mr. Bell. Captain Patrick D. Herring. Thomas E. Alban.

Thomas E. Alban: I'm present. Thank you.

Dr. Michael Martirano: Good morning, sir.

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Thomas E. Alban: Good morning.

Declaration of Quorum

Dr. Michael Martirano: Lee-Nadine Oppenheim. And just for the purposes of our role, we do have three vacant positions. With this notation of our roll call, I need to make certain that we have a quorum. So, I want to welcome Mr. Dunklow. Please confirm that we have a quorum, sir.

Alan Dunklow: By my count, I think including you. Did we have 10 members present?

Dr. Michael Martirano: I believe so. That's what my count is. Kate, can you verify?

Kate Bryan: Yeah, that's my count as well.

Alan Dunklow: And did you say you had three vacancies? So, 24 is down to 21, so that would put us at 10 out of 21, which is just shy of a quorum. We can do informational items; you just wouldn't be able to take any boats until others jump on.

Additions to the Agenda

Dr. Michael Martirano: Okay. Yeah, I knew it was close there with that number. So, let's just be cognizant of that. So, I'm going to continue with our business. Mr. Dunklow, please advise me of anything that I get close to that. I don't believe there are any action items regarding this, so let's continue. The last meeting of the Advisory Board was in December. The December meeting was recorded, and that recording is available on the MCSS website. As such, there are no meeting minutes to be

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approved. So, at this moment, I want to make certain that we had reviewed our agenda and want to see if there are any additions to today's agenda. Seeing none, that there are no additions, I do need a motion to approve the agenda.

Thomas E. Alban: This is Thomas, so moved.

Dr. Michael Martirano: Okay. Do we have a second?

Chief Paul Kifer: Chief Paul Kifer, second.

Dr. Michael Martirano: We have a motion and a second. Any discussion? All those in favor say aye.

Kate Bryan: Aye.

Thomas E. Alban: Aye

Chief Paul Kifer: Aye.

Tyrone Bell: Aye.

05:00

2. Legislative Updates –Kim Buckheit

Dr. Michael Martirano: Thank you. Aye. Any opposed or any abstentions? Thank you. The motion passes. The agenda for today is approved. Let's continue with our agenda for today, and we will begin our meeting today, Members with an update on proposed legislation related to school safety. The legislative session is in full motion right now, and Kim Buckheit, who is the MCSS Policy and Communication and Engagement Manager, will

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lead us in this discussion. So let's, Kim, if you would welcome and thank you for providing this overview today.

Kimberly Buckheit: Thank you, Dr. Martirano. And I'll be joined for any technical questions that I can't answer by Mr. Dunklow. So, just a quick overview. We're going to go through those pieces, those Bills that we've been watching most closely at MCSS as they impact the work of the Subcabinet, ourselves at MCSS, as well as LEAs related to school safety. So, just a couple of reminders March 20th is the crossover date and April 10th is the end of our session, the sine die time.

So, the first one, House Bill 203 is related to Reporting Arrests of Students. This is a prior bill in our prior session. Particularly, the impact on MCSS would be that it actually requires MCSS to start gathering data that we currently don't. We currently don't collect any personally identifiable information related to particular students. So, if this bill does move forward, that will require MCSS to look at a data management system and method by which we begin to collect that, that would be a new collection for us.

House Bill 515 has been interesting. We've been very fortunate to engage with Delegate Solomon, in looking at how this bill moves forward with some amendments. And we did give it a favorable report with amendments, both in writing and in person. So specifically, it has an impact upon everybody. So, MSDE may collaborate with the Subcabinet to adopt Active Shooter Drill Regulations. This language actually remains the same in terms of what has been in prior regulation. What's most kind of significant for us to talk about is MCSS will be tasked with collecting survey data from LEAs. And I'll speak to kind of what that looks like below for the LEA. Using the data that we gather, we would then be partnering with a third party to provide that

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data for a third party to really look at the impact upon active shooter drill scenarios upon students, staff, and parents. So, what impact do those activities have upon those individuals? And then also what is new within this bill is that we would be collaborating with MSDE to develop some model content for safe gun storage. And that would really look like developing model content that is then pushed out to LEAs for them to be able to distribute to individuals to their constituents annually.

On the LEA side, what's really substantial in this is that it prohibits the use of any kind of sensory simulation in a drill that occurs within a school environment. So, if there is a drill that's happening during the school day when students and staff are present, it would not allow, it prohibits the use of anything that would mimic active gunfire, individuals replicating a situation of an active assailant type of dynamic.

It doesn't preclude law enforcement agencies from doing those things outside of the typical school day. So, it doesn't, on a Saturday when students and staff aren't present, or during the summer when students and staff aren't present, doesn't mean that law enforcement can't be doing drills and using some active or some simulated type of things. But when students and staff are present, it would prohibit the use of any simulations. It also requires notification to parents before and after drills.

10:00

So, this would also be new as a matter of practice. Some LEAs and schools may be doing this, but it would require schools and systems to notify parents, students, and staff in advance of drills. And then it also requires the collection of data. So, following drills, following an active assailant type of situation drill that staff would be prompted, students would be prompted to

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complete some type of survey information that then MCSS would collect and forward to this third party.

So really looking at what are the impact of these upon individuals as well as kind of the effectiveness of these drills. So, there are definitely a number of things in 515 that we're watching. And 515 actually has been given a favorable report by the House Committee, so, should be moving forward to the Senate.

The next one is Senate Bill 799. This is the Cyber Safety Guide. So, is requiring MCSS to collaborate with a host of state agency partners to jointly develop a cyber safety guide. And it specifically would include guidance on safe internet, social media, and technology usage for students, parents, and staff. And the intention is that that would be made available to folks for the 24-25 school year. So, a little bit of time is allowed in there for that to happen.

Senate Bill 811 may look familiar. Senator Washington used to be Delegate Washington has proposed elements of this in the past in the House. It adds some additional elements to it. So, Senate Bill 811, specifically would require MCSS to make updates to the school law portion of our SRO training.

On the LEA side, there are some interesting elements. This piece of legislation has historically in the past looked at reducing the disproportionality ratio, discipline disproportionality to 2.0 for those that are familiar with that initiative. It also requires that SROs are not involved in discipline-related interactions within a school environment. And what is new though within this particular iteration from Senator Washington is this kind of last section here. So, it very specifically defines this thing called a Behavioral Health and Safety Plan. And the requirement is that any school that has an SRO assigned to it or a school security

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employee employed at the school, the school must have a Behavioral Health and Safety Plan on record. And so, even before an SROSSE would be assigned, this safety plan must be developed. Within 811, it varies and specifically defines the requirements of what must be included inside of this safety plan. So, the 811 hearing is on the 14th of this month. So, we'll just keep an eye on where that goes.

House Bill, 738. So, again, a hearing is coming up, but it's looking at increasing grant funds for SRO adequate law enforcement coverage, basically doubling funds. So, going from 10 million to 20 million is what this bill looks at. So, definitely would impact the amount of money available to all LEAs as well as money that MCSS is looking at distributing and assisting with.

Senate Bill 677 is also another interesting bill. The hearing for that occurred last week. It is looking at installing a panic system in all schools across the state. So, a panic button system would be directly connected to all 911 Boards.

15:00

So, a very large lift. MCSS is identified as the agency that would be both procuring and training and doing all that needs to happen to put this into place and make it happen. It requires LEAs to share floor plans, emergency plans, and geolocation addresses. But MCSS is the primary agency with this. There is funding inside of this bill in terms of being able to purchase and use this. We did submit a written response that was favorable with amendments, which was really our recommendation. Currently, the timeline on this is that literally all of these systems happen by the beginning of the new school year. So, by September 1st, of this year. So, less than six months now for us to do all the things we need to do to make that happen. So,

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what we have proposed is a summer work-study to bring all the different people together that would be involved in making this happen to kind of look at the effective methods by which we could agree that this is something that would be very valuable but want to make sure that we can do it in an effective manner.

Kate Bryan: Kim, can I pause you just for a second? Can you flip back a slide? So, I just want to jump in. So, we worked very closely with the Department of Emergency Management, which is where the 911 Board sits. We also had conversations with subcommittees at MACO on this. And we were all in alignment with what our recommendation to the sponsor of the bill is. And that would be the summer study that Kim was speaking to. So, really aggressive timing, really unreasonable timing. It probably also is important for this group to understand that there are several of our school systems that actually already have panic button systems in place. The way the bill is drafted, our estimation is that there are probably only two vendors that meet the requirements of this bill, and neither of them are ones being used currently in school systems that we're aware of for this feature. So, a lot of concerns, and a lot of challenges on implementation getting them within each of the 911 Centers. So, just definitely something for anyone in the public school system realm or emergency response realm to just be aware of that this is on deck. Just so, you all know. We believe that a summer study would be actually a good idea. We're willing to lead it but the implementation as it's written would be incredibly problematic for everyone.

Kimberly Buckheit: Thanks, Kate.

Alan Dunklow: And Mr. Chair, I just want to let you know that it looks like we have reached a quorum, we had another member jump on. So, we have 11 of the 21 members serving.

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Dr. Michael Martirano: Thank you Mr. Dunklow. Appreciate that.

Kimberly Buckheit: All right, House Bill 185 has actually also crossed over already. This prohibits the use of corporal punishment in all nonpublic, private, and childcare centers. So, we did not do a written support of this in the first hearing, but we are planning in this second hearing to do a written response saying that we are in support of prohibiting the use of corporal punishment.

Senate Bill 938 is related to funding and also creates a kind of opportunity for funding to be used to expand these types of things that funding can be used for. So, this aligns with the previous piece of legislation with the doubling of the amount of money, and the appropriation that would go for our school safety initiatives. But adds the use of resolving disputes, so looking at mediation types of services to be something that money can be allocated to be used for as well.

20:00

I'll also ask Kate to jump in on this one a little bit. It adds the requirement for MCSS to be coordinating with MSDE and IAC to review the state of physical security every two years in promulgate guidelines. So, Kate, if you could maybe clarify for everybody, like what the current practice is related to that? I know you understand that a little better than I do right now.

Kate Bryan: Yeah, we'll go through that in the next piece. But currently, in 2019, the Safe to Learn Act required that every public school have a facility assessment done in June of 2019. So, those were done. The summary of those assessments were provided to MCSS. We put together a sort of overarching list for

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the Subcabinet so that they knew as they were approving school safety grants sort of where the physical security gaps might be. There are some existing guidelines that the IAC has specific to construction-related items and physical security for construction. This would require what I would consider probably a more extensive guideline be developed and it would require the three entities, our office, the department, as well as the IAC to review the facility assessments that are conducted by each of the schools every two years, which currently the statute does not dictate how often those facilities assessments are done. This would require us and the Subcabinet to develop regulations that would require them to be conducted every two years so that then we could review every two years the physical security in each of the school systems or each of the education agencies and then update any guidelines that we have related to physical security elements in the school.

So, I will also say that the funding piece, as Kim mentioned, increases from 10 to 20 million. But the appropriation for the 10 million currently in the Safe to Learn Act is just for SROs and adequate coverage in the year that it's appropriated. This would make it 20 million and it would make SRO an adequate coverage. One of the, what would now be 12 elements that are eligible under the Safe Schools Fund Grant. So, it would mean an increase to 20 million. It would mean the 10 categories that are currently allowed that the funds are currently allowed to be used for, or SROs adequate coverage or the mediation piece.

Kimberly Buckheit: Yeah. So, it's one we're really watching closely, and again, we've been fortunate to be able to have some interactions with Senator Hester early on. But it currently is still in the first reading in the Senate rules committee. So, we've just been watching to see how that may move.

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House Bill 849 actually was one that we wrote a letter of opposition for. It was specific to Montgomery County stop arm cameras. So, basically, violators within certain conditions of four-lane highways, and in certain situations would be given a free pass on the first offense. And we don't agree with any free passes for passing buses when you shouldn't.

Senate Bill 340/House Bill 745 is one that really kind of directly connects to one of our workgroups will be talking about in this next hour. But it is related to the threats and swatting. So, false statements, this Anti-swatting Act of 2023. So, the current status, both the Senate hearing that occurred in February as well as the House hearing, there hasn't been any kind of updated status posted just yet related to that. We didn't specifically take a position in the first round of hearings, but would definitely consider probably in the second round seeing what happens.

25:00

Senate Bill 935 is very specific to Baltimore City Police Officers and School Resource Officers related to being able to carry a firearm. It is definitely a local bill. We don't plan to necessarily take a specific position one way or the other on that one. And actually, the last one I'm going to let Mr. Dunklow weigh in on. This is one that my school administrator's brain has a hard time wrapping itself around, so I'm going to pass it off to Mr. Dunklow.

Alan Dunklow: Sure. So, the sense I get from this bill is that there's a current prohibition on willful disturbance or willfully preventing the orderly conduct of activities within your elementary, secondary, and higher Ed schools. This exempts from the penalties in that section, students who are currently attending those schools or students who are attending another

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school but are participating in an extracurricular sporting event at the school where the offense occurs. And so the sense I get is that the goal would be to move this out of what would be criminal penalties to sort of more of a school discipline focus.

Kimberly Buckheit: Thank you. So, those are the specific bills that we've been watching closely and responding to. Are there others potentially that folks would like some feedback from any of us particularly Mr. Dunklow is with us also?

Thomas E. Alban: Kim, this is Thomas E. Alban and not really an additional bill, but I would just ask, first of all, I appreciate all that the Center does for non-public schools. I was just disappointed to see specifically that issue related to "The Panic Button" situation applies only to public schools. And I'm sure Kate runs for me once in a while because she knows I'm coming down the hall to talk to her about how we can include non-public schools in the notification process. Because we're really out of the loop and anything either that you all can do to advocate for non-public or if we can at least somehow be considered if we can tag along with this project if it's not a significant cost to put it into place. But to me, I think regardless of where a child is educated, they're all valuable and we shouldn't exclude this opportunity for our non-public school children and staff.

Kate Bryan: Yeah. So, Tom, I'll jump in. So, interesting that you say that there is actually a piece in this legislation that ties directly to private and non-public schools. It's not exactly clear what the intent is. Again, I think there's a lot of challenges and problems with this piece of legislation, but in our conversations with our partners at MDM and 911 Board and MACO and the public safety realm is that conversation of what was the intent of the bill specific to the privates and non-public. And it's basically, if you actually look at the bill language, which I can send quickly

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in the chat to everybody, there is a section on the notifications that is a mechanism to notify private and non-public schools.

Thomas E. Alban: Right?

Kate Bryan: It does not seem like it's including panic buttons in your facilities, but at least getting you a notification when a PSAP is made aware of an incident nearby.

Thomas E. Alban: Thank you very much.

Dr. Michael Martirano: Hey, any other comments? I would just like to double back around on House Bill 811. Do you have a sense of where that is, is there support for that?

Kimberly Buckheit: Yeah, we haven't really had any conversations, Dr. Martirano with anybody related to it. If you were following a related bill in previous sessions. So, I don't know, I can't speak to that specifically. I don't know if Mr. Dunklow or Kate has any other info.

29:45

Dr. Michael Martirano: The reason I bring it up, it's one of those, you know, sort of boots on the ground issue that I navigate all day long and have included that language in my SROMOU, so that, I hope that if it doesn't even pass that we can give a nod to it as far as a good practice and how we talk about that in general. But navigating the role of the SRO and the administrator and how that gets blended at times, I've extremely been very vocal to my own administrators about making sure those lines were very clear and where we were with that. But also, there are some complications when SROs do see things and they have to get involved. Extremely supportive.

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Kimberly Buckheit: Yeah. I think what's interesting in 811, there are almost four sections inside of 811. There's the disproportionality ratio moving that, there's a high suspending school piece, right? Identifying this high suspending school. Those are two separate things. Then there's this third of SROs not being involved with discipline, right? Which also, again, Kate or Dino, and others can correct me. I really feel that within the SRO training, that is something that is discussed and, really kind of SRO is understanding the role and differentiating how school-based discipline, right, occurs separately. And then this fourth element now, which is brand new, because this has been a bill that I was watching very closely on the MSDE side doing disproportionality stuff for a number of years. The related bill is what's brand new to this language now is this plan, this Behavioral Health and Safety Plan is something that we hadn't necessarily seen and it's connected directly to SROs. So, it's not necessarily connected to the disproportionality or the high suspending school piece, which is interesting. It's hanging on, if you have an SRO, you must have this plan in place. So, there are four big pieces inside of 811.

Dr. Michael Martirano: And that's important. And I really appreciate you explaining it that way because I'm isolating just that one issue. And I just, and also what you said that that is part of the SRO training, so thank you for that. Okay. Any other comments or questions about any of the overviews of which we just received?

Payton Alridge: Good morning. Could we go back to SB938 really quickly?

Dr. Michael Martirano: Sure.

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Payton Aldridge: I wanted to know because it appears that the bill beginning in 2025 gives the Subcabinet discretion for rewarding funds in the grant. Has any thought been given to how the discretion should be exercised?

Dr. Michael Martirano: Kate, do you want to take that?

Kate Bryan: Yeah, so I'll ask, was that Payton?

Payton Aldridge: Yes.

Kate Bryan: So, Payton, what is the specific question? What do you mean?

Payton Aldridge: So, in the bill, it seems that starting in 2025 how the funds are going to be awarded is based on the Subcabinet's discretion. So, when it comes to the disbursement of those funds, has any thought been given to how that discretion will be exercised?

Kate Bryan: Not at this point. So, the Subcabinet always has discretion under for Safe Schools Fund. In the past when the fund was appropriated 10 million, let's take the SRO appropriation separately. There were periods of time when the Subcabinet showed to include non-public special education facilities in those grants. I can't say for sure if the Subcabinet would consider doing that again. They may and I think the last time they pulled off; I think it was about 5,000 per non-public special education facility. Unfortunately for the private schools, there was no appropriation available for them. I will say if that was specific to your question about appropriation for schools, the way the language is written currently, the existing 10 million for SROs is broken out per school facility. And so, the 10 million breaks out to about \$7,000 and changes per school. This would

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increase it to 14,000 assuming the Subcabinet didn't pull any portion of the funding to provide grants to non-public special education facilities, for example. Does that answer your specific question about the distribution?

Payton Aldridge: Yes, it does. Thank you.

Kate Bryan: Sure. I will say we didn't bring it up here because nothing is set in stone until the budget bills pass. But the governor did include in his budget for MCSS an increase in our funding for Hate Crimes Grants.

35:00

So, it went from 2 million to 3 million. There is a possibility and we hope that the legislature will keep that increase in appropriation. And then there was an MCSS that will have 3 million for and hopefully allow for another grant for local education agencies. Unfortunately, that will not be available to private or non-public schools.

Dr. Michael Martirano: Okay.

Kate Bryan: But sometimes it does generally have some autonomy to make various types of decisions about how the grants will be administered.

Dr. Michael Martirano: Good. Any other comments Members on the legislation?

Michael Brown: I have one quick comment. I'm not quite sure about the House bill name because we were going through it, and I jumped on a call a little late. Well, the one in Baltimore City with guns in schools. Yes, 935. I know it's strictly for

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Baltimore City at this particular time, but do we know if this bill could be broadened in the future? Because I know that there are other possible school districts where this also may apply as well. Is that something that could possibly be broadened at some particular point in time?

Kate Bryan: Dr. Michael Martirano, do you want me to jump in?

Dr. Michael Martirano: Yes.

3. Safe to Learn Act 2018 Progress

Kate Bryan: Okay. So, nice to see you, Michael. So, currently, there is not a prohibition for law school resource officers to carry firearms, with the exception of Baltimore City. So, whether or not they have some local policy that I'm currently not aware of, I'll let Dino jump in here as well. The only jurisdiction that does not permit them to be carried during the school day is Baltimore City School Police. So, Dino, I don't know if there was something else.

Joseph Dino Pignataro: Yeah. When I first came to the center, this was the first project I was assigned to help work on. Baltimore City Schools police when they were created, there was a caveat that didn't allow them to carry weapons when they were in the schools. After 911, it became a practice to carry. At some point afterward, it was determined that practice was ongoing, and moves were made to rein it back into the way in parameters of the law. And ever since, this has been an ongoing issue there that they've done different programs up there where they'll have assigned SROs and check their weapons 30 minutes after school starts into a lock box in their office. They'll get 30 minutes before school releases. And the remaining of the SROs in the system were moved into community beat teams and they rotate

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through a school wearing their firearm for no more than 15 minutes at a time. Just like a walkthrough check on patrol. So, since that went on, this has been a bill that's been introduced since 2015 or 2016 when I began. There are no other jurisdictions in Maryland that I know of that have a policy where they're forbidding their local SROs from wearing their weapons in.

Michael Brown: Okay. I know there were some other school districts that it may not be something that's as formal as Baltimore City, but I know that having them in the building, per se all day is something that they've kind of worked around. So, it's not something that I think is a law. But I know that there are some other school districts that I know I have SRO that's assigned to my building all day every day with a firearm. But I don't think that that's necessarily everywhere, but I was just curious about that.

Dr. Michael Martirano: Okay. Continuing to move along. Thank you for that comment. Any other comments from our Board Members? Okay. Seen none. Once again, let's thank Ms. Buckheit and Mr. Dunklow for the overview and the comments also made by our director regarding the legislation. Obviously, sine die, I believe is on April the 10th, and there are miles to go before that. And so, we'll need to continue to watch all of this legislation as it advances through, as it pertains to our schools overall.

40:00

And it's also interesting that a number of these items as far as the legislation also have been things that we've discussed as far as recommendations. So, I believe in many cases there is some alignment of the conversations that we've had thus far. With all

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of that. The next item on our agenda is the review of the progress in the meeting requirements defined by the Safe to Learn Act. MCSS executive director, Kate Bryan, and Deputy Director Joseph Pignataro will lead us in this overview. Director Bryan, please begin the conversation for that. Thank you.

Kate Bryan: All right, thank you. So, everyone received it, and I think one of the team has put the link to the document. So, I think it's important we are coming up on the five-year anniversary of the Safe to Learn Act. So, the Safe to Learn Act was enacted in April 2018, and it went into effect on June 1st, 2018. So, a lot of incredible work has been done over the last five years by the Subcabinet, by members of the Advisory Board by our team, and by our local education agencies, as well as our private and non-public school partners and school safety partners across the state. So, when we presented to the Subcabinet last month, we had put together for them sort of a four-and-a-half-year update of where we are with the Safe to Learn Act.

So, the document that you have includes some hyperlinks to many of our reports and requirements that we have developed and that the Subcabinet MCSS and the Advisory Board have put together over the last five years. So, for the Subcabinet requirements, there were some very specific and are some very specific requirements for the Subcabinet. Those include administrative requirements. In the document that was shared with you so that you all have it as well, a link to your advisory board recommendations for 2022. That is the document where your work session that you're going to go into next, where those recommendations came from. And as Dr. Martirano mentioned, there is definitely some alignment this year with some of the legislation that we're seeing coming out of Annapolis.

So that is incredibly telling of the good work that everyone on

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the Advisory Board has done over the last five years. So, we thank you for all of your help and support. The Subcabinet also has regulatory responsibility currently, and again in the document is a link to all of these materials. Currently, there are five regulations. Two have gone back out for public comment for some changes. The public comment period ended last week, last Tuesday. So, we are gathering the public comments, we're going to review those and then make a decision of whether or not we request that the Subcabinet publish the draft, or the changed regulations as written or if we make some additional comments and/or changes and send them out for public comment. The State Behavioral Threat Assessment policy. So, this was a policy that was required by the Safety Learn Act and was established and written, and published in 2018.

Over the course of the last year and a half another workgroup has been working on an implementation guide, which has been finalized. And we are going to be publishing that in the coming weeks. We also have a plan or rollout of some other behavioral threat assessment training, for example, tabletop exercises that schools and school systems can use specific to behavioral threat assessments.

The Behavioral Health Services Gap Analysis Report. So, this is a report that was developed by the Department of Health who is the secretary is a member of the School Safety Subcabinet. There's a link to that document again in your report. There were some recommendations made on page 35 of that document. And I will say that several of those recommendations have already been started and worked on by various entities in the state.

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The annual report is published every year. There are hyperlinks to all of the annual reports over the last five years. And then specific to grants, there's a hyperlink to the grants page. Again, MCSS, the Subcabinet administers, the SRO Adequate Coverage Grant. The Safe Schools Fund Grant and MCSS administer directly the Hate Crimes Grant, as well as two grants that are actually Interagency Commissions on Public School Construction Grants. So, we have one grant for local education agencies and one grant for private and non-public schools for safety and security improvements.

For MCSS, the Safe to Learn Act, as you all know, you've heard me say how excited we are many times that we get to expand our personnel because originally it was just two individuals, the director, and the deputy director. But very excited to say we have 15 positions as part of MCSS. Additionally, the SRO and security employee training as well as training we provide to school safety coordinators. We talked about it in a couple of our meetings where the team internally did a really good job of listening to what was coming out of Annapolis, as well as many of our advocates. And the original training that was developed back in 2018 and delivered in the summer of 2019, the team spent time in 2021 and 2022 during the pandemic updating that training curriculum. So, we have an expanded training curriculum. There's a hyperlink in your document that was provided that will explain those changes in that curriculum, why we did it, and what's been added and modified, and expanded.

We believe that there is always new information and new things to learn. So, we will continually provide updated training to school resource officers and security employees, as well as our school safety coordinators throughout the state on a regular basis. Adequate Coverage Report, so we continue to collect the SRO Adequate Coverage Report every year prior to the start of

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the school year. The link to those reports is again, in your document. I would like to remind you, I think this is really good for the public to understand, and that is the school resource officers in the state are required by law to take the school resource officer training that we provide. But it is important to note that there are only a little over 400 school resource officers in the state, and there are only about 273 public schools that have an assigned school resource officer. And that's out of 1400 plus. I think now the count is about 1427 schools in the state. So, I think it's important for the general public to understand that not every law enforcement officer that shows up to a school is by definition a school resource officer, and may not have gone through our school resource officer training.

The Use of Force Report, we've been collecting that data for three years. Again, the links to those reports are in your document. Safe Schools Maryland has been around since 2018. And that is the statewide anonymous reporting system, so a really good and free tool and it's free to our public schools as well as our private and non-public special education facilities. And just an excellent resource across the state. I mentioned the Grants that MCSS administers. And then finally the Critical Life-Threatening Incident Reports. So, there is a requirement in the Safe to Learn Act that as a critical life-threatening incident occurs inside a public school that those notifications are made to MCSS and Dino's going to talk a little bit more about how that impacts the local school systems.

Joseph Dino Pignataro: Good morning. The impact on local school systems for the Safe to Learn Act that we went over earlier, in the school safety evaluation summaries.

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We recommend that their schools conduct a safety evaluation of each facility at least once every two years by August 1st, and then submit that report to us. One of the reasons we ask that is because we try to figure out how to plan for grants and keep an eye out for things that folks might be able to use in their grant applications.

Emergency Plan Performance Report. It aggregates data about threats made against any school or school system facility. Information about lockdowns evacuations, and other emergency responses that occurred during the preceding school year. Anything that takes away learning time is what they report to us. Drills, emergency drills, impromptu drills, everything's required to be reported to us annually on August 1st.

Emergency Plan Updates. Updates to all the emergency plans that have been submitted to our office.

We aligned our requirements from August 1st to September 30 to work better coincide with the school systems and their internal workings, we found a lot of administrative changes happened early in August. So, by allowing new administrators to get in, get on board and into their new schools, and then work with their SSCs and their SROs and school security employees, if they employ them to work on their plans and update their plans and submit them to us by September 30th every year.

After-Action Review Reports. A critical life-threatening incident requires an After-Action Review within the school system. So, they must notify us within 24 hours if they had an incident. Thankfully, a lot of them will notify us right away when it's going on, just to give us a heads-up, so we're very thankful for that. They're required to conduct an After-Action Review meeting with one of our staff in the meeting also. So, usually, it's a regional

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assigned to that area will attend within 45 days of the After-Action Review they have to report to us a report on what happened following each critical life-threatening incident. After that, we'll go through that, and we report to the legislature and the governor a report of what happened.

Use of force requires a report of an incident of use of force on a student by a school security employee or school resource officer. That, again, is reported to us on or before August 1st for the proceeding school year. And that data is submitted to the governor and general assembly as an independent report.

School Resource Officer Adequate Coverage Report includes the public schools that have an LEA, any LEA that has an assigned school resource officer, or adequate coverage, enforcement coverage. This can incur as, and they're in the MOU and all of them of increased patrols, lunch with a cop, that kind of thing. There have been creative ideas that have been out there for letting the kids and the students and the officers on the beat intermingle with each other and get to know each other. This report is due September 1st, every school year, and we again, forward that report to the governor and general assembly. Do you want me to go into the activities?

Kate Bryan: You're good.

Joseph Dino Pignataro: All right.

Kate Bryan: So, Dr. Martirano, that is a breakdown of the document that was shared with the Advisory Board. Again, all that document includes hyperlinks to all of our reports, all of our data, and I think it's a really good sort of multi-page way for individuals to sort of see the progress that's happened over the last five years with the enactment of the Safe to Learn Act. So,

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again, really great work by the School Safety Subcabinet, the Subcabinets Advisory Board, the MCSS team, all of our law enforcement and public safety partners throughout the state, as well as all of our local education agencies, and private and non-public special education facilities. So, just really fantastic, a lot of work, a lot of deadlines in a very short period of time. But everybody has done a really fantastic job of pulling together and working toward really the same goal, which is to keep our education environments, and our educational institutions safe for our students and the staff.

Dr. Michael Martirano: Excellent work to both of you and to the entire staff at MCSS. I really appreciate it. A couple of comments. I'm just reflecting hard to believe that you started off your comments by saying; this is the fifth-year anniversary of the Safe to Learn Act. My notes take me back to just a brief period of time.

55:00

It seems like when I was giving feedback on the initial act in 2018. That's hard to believe five years have passed already, and I'm really happy to hear that you now have scaffold supports for the overall staff that you have, 15 positions you said, is that correct?

Kate Bryan: Yes, that's correct.

Dr. Michael Martirano: That is absolutely excellent. And just one more thing for public relations. It's an incredible amount of information that you have shared and all the hyperlinks. Can the community at large members of our state find that on the website? Is all that linked there for everyone if they wanted to?

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Kate Bryan: It is. So, if you go to our website, it is on our legislation page. And it is linked at the bottom.

Dr. Michael Martirano: Okay. Very good. So, thank you. Members, are there any questions or comments for the MCSS team? Okay, once again thank you very much Ms. Bryan and Mr. Pignataro for your wonderful presentation. And there are lots for us to read if we want to follow those hyperlinks. And again, I would like to remind the Board to visit the website on occasion for information about registering for the summer school safety conference, which I'm seeing lots of information coming out in a variety of emails on that, and a student art contest can be found there as well. And I also understand that the emergency preparation tabletop exercises are being utilized at an increasing level across the state. So, thanks for all the information. All right, Board Members, as we continue with our meeting, are there any updates from the Board on important projects or discussions or items or new resources that you would like to share with the group at this time? If so, raise your hand. So, I can see you and call on you. Any comments from Members?

Okay. It's a Monday morning and we're quiet. I understand that. And we will now prepare to close the open session of our meeting and move into the workgroup portion. Board Members, as you remember, you've been divided into two workgroups that will be focusing on recommendation 3.1, which was Behaviors of Concerns, and Recommendation 6.1 Threats and Swatting. I want to thank you for all of your continued commitment to the safety of our schools and our students. Next week, the Board will receive copies of all workgroup notes for the purpose of allowing you the opportunity to be informed and provide feedback on recommendations made by each workgroup. Additionally, I will ask MCSS to ensure that all workgroup

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meeting materials are made available online to the public as well.

So, that brings us to our closing items in our next meeting. The next advisory board meeting will occur virtually once again, virtually on April 3rd, 2023, mark your calendar. And the next subcabinet meeting will be held in person on May 8th, 2023. We are now at the portion of our meeting where we're going to adjourn. Do I have a motion for adjournment?

Thomas E. Alban: So, move. This is Tom.

Dr. Michael Martirano: Thank you, Tom. Do I have a second?

Michael Brown: Second. This is Michael.

Dr. Matthew Martirano: Thank you, Michael. I appreciate it. All those in favor say, Aye.

Michael Brown: Aye.

Kate Bryan: Aye

Tyrone Bell: Aye.

Dr. Matthew Martirano: All right. Thank you. Board Members, you will now be sent directly to your workgroups for our digital meeting. Thank you very much and thank you to the MCSS staff for all that you do. Appreciate it.

Kimberly Buckheit: We are going to record for everyone to be aware. We were in three workgroups in December. And for the purposes of us trying to really come to a conclusion, we made sort of the executive decision to move everybody into two work

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groups for today. So, if you are joining the Behaviors of Concern Group for the first time, welcome and thank you for being with us. So, I am sharing on the screen, just to kind of recap for folks, we had a very robust conversation in our December meeting. And the outcome of that was that the group really felt it was important for us to make some changes to the recommendation statement. Because folks were feeling that the prior one was potentially allowing the opportunity for folks to embed it inside of it was potential behavior threat assessment type of language and work and that was not the intention of the workgroup. So, we added what you see in purple so, that it would read develop or expand information materials and training to educate stakeholders, including students, staff, parents, and communities on how to promote pro-social behaviors and decrease maladaptive behaviors.

01:00:00

These resources should incorporate students' voices. So, we had added Claire to our group, and I'm not sure if Claire's with us today or not, but Claire Cabral from our Student Focus Group can participate, and join us if she is here.

So, just to recap that. So, our goal today is to actually come to a conclusion to wrap this up a little bit. So, I have kind of some guiding questions to help with that. The first of which is to ask everybody to maybe narrow the scope. So, one of the narrowing of scope that I would prompt the group to respond to is to define the target audience right now for communications. So, as we look at that, who do we think if we were to prioritize audiences what makes sense? MCSS staff to develop an informational bulletin of some sort, materials, or training for whom? Okay. In order to look at promoting pro-social behaviors and decreasing maladaptive behaviors, who would be our maybe top two target

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audiences?

So, when we think about parents, educators, students' legislators, and law enforcement, right? Officers, right? A variety of stakeholder groups that touch school safety. As Advisory Board Members, when you think about this recommendation item, what makes sense as the starting point? And I'll actually add the recommendation statement in the chat box.

Laurel Moody: So, Kim, this is Laurel. I may be off base here, but I sort of believe, surely students are the focus. But I also believe that school staff and parents are probably observing these concerning behaviors as well. Not only during the school day. So, I guess that's why I'm a little bit torn if we have to identify two. With students being the priority, I still think parents and schoolteachers, and school staff are in that top tier.

Kimberly Buckheit: Other thoughts? Okay, so Laurel's, kind of recommending parents and educators, our school staff as a target audience for, again, information materials and training related to educating them on how to promote pro-social behaviors and decrease maladaptive behaviors. I would just ask whether others are in agreement with that or another option.

Michael Brown: I agree. Just like somebody put in a chat two isn't really enough to be honest, so choosing two, you just have to go with what would you prioritize as the most important two. So, outside of kids, as Laurel said, you have to go with educators, you have to go with parents as well. I think those are important.

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Kimberly Buckheit: Yeah. The reason why we're asking to try to narrow it is because this is so huge, right? That we need a starting point in terms of developing information, right? That potentially then can be used to spin off and add other audiences. We need a starting point. We, as MCSS staff need to know where to begin.

Pamela Gaddy: Well, only asking, I believe it would have to be parents.

Kimberly Buckheit: Sorry Pam, can you say that again?

Pamela Gaddy: If we're only asking for two my strongest beliefs would have to start with parents and the school staff.

Kimberly Buckheit: Okay. All right. So, I'm going to expand on that, then ask you to think about and talk to me about what does a product looks like. What type of product would be most effective, okay, for a parent audience, or then let's just talk about the parent audience, okay? What type of product, method, and tools, what does that look like to be able to interact, and engage with, a cross-section of those individuals in the state of Maryland?

Pamela Gaddy: We definitely have to start small like having a town meeting, but specifically to that school zone area. I would think having it more intimate here, we're more familiar with our administration, our child schools. So, having it and starting small then branching.

Kimberly Buckheit: So, Pam, when you are talking about that, I'm hearing what you're saying also is that it's an in-person kind of interaction then?

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Pamela Gaddy: Yes.

Kimberly Buckheit: Okay.

Laurel Moody: I'm thinking along with Pam's idea, however, that interactive sessions developed, I think there should be certainly, parents and school administrators, but I think the student voice could be represented in that interactive session as well.

Kimberly Buckheit: Okay. So, think out loud for me a little more about what that interaction looks like. Meaning, 30 minutes, is it a training kind of thing or is it different? Whenever I think of training, when I use that word, I'm like sit-and-get kind of thing or is there another method of maybe in person that may be more effective than a sit-and-get 20 PowerPoint slides? Pam, you're muted.

Pamela Gaddy: Well, I was just trying to raise my hand. So, what I'm thinking, again is to incorporate the students and focus more to identify with some of the behavior concerns, maybe we need to use some of our House slides. What started this behavior, get some feedback from them, and then ask the kids, what is it that you need from us? What is it that we're not providing? How can we be of support? Get that data from the students first. This is our concern. This is what is happening in our school system. Before there is any training, we have to do that.

[Inaudible 01:09:27].

01:10:00

Kimberly Buckheit: Okay. So, Pam, your audio is a little muffled.

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Pamela Gaddy: Oh, I'm sorry.

Kimberly Buckheit: No, it's okay. And I'm going to recap. So, tell me if I'm on point. So, what I'm almost hearing is a town hall forum focus group kind of dynamic where we create some type of methodology where we're creating a way for people to bring them together. So, I'm very restorative in my thinking. So, I almost imagine a restorative approaches' kind of circle of people where we're asking those people to identify for your particular school community, what are behaviors of concern, and to then use that as a way to flow into a sort of functionality in terms of why those behaviors potentially are occurring to allow that team very local, what I hear you saying, right? That very organic school, organic system to then say, this is what's happening, this may be why it's happening. Here are some potential solutions for us as an organic community. Did I capture that?

Pamela Gaddy: For the most part, yes.

Kimberly Buckheit: That's much better.

Pamela Gaddy: Yeah. It's like a broken window theory, so before we can go large, we have to start small. And the beauty of it is, if we're doing multiple ones of these, we realize that there's a commonality. And then when we start training and stuff, we are being more specific and intentional with what we are asking from our stakeholders about how to resolve. And it's not just the school system trying to resolve everything. We're actually taking organic input and responsiveness from our community.

Kimberly Buckheit: Right. Others response? Yes. Actually,

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Pam, that's better now. Yeah.

Pamela Gaddy: Okay.

Kimberly Buckheit: Yeah, go ahead, Michael.

Michael Brown: I'd agree with Pam. The sit-and-get is not going to get it done. When you're talking about training, I would say probably the most impactful is, especially from the education side, is actually hearing from the students directly. It just has a far greater impact that makes the work actually hit home, so to speak for everyone. And I think hearing from them and gathering that, data and then attacking it from the professional development side, the training at that particular point, take on a whole different meaning once you go forward with some of those things. Because, depending on the kids and those types of things, it is really, really powerful to hear from them on some of the things they're going through or have gone through. I've done it myself at my school. It's different and educators can't ignore when kids talk about these things. It's nothing that you can do but really take that in. So, it just makes the work relevant and real.

Kimberly Buckheit: Laurel?

Laurel Moody: Yeah, I also like what Pam mentioned about sharing data, for parents that think it's not an issue in their school or their school community, I think we get folks' attention that this is important when we can share real data about what's occurring in our school communities, and not just necessarily the individual school. I'm thinking about maybe some of the feeder schools, you know if there was a clustering of that. You've got a lot of elementary school parents or maybe even middle school parents that don't have any idea what's going on at the high

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school, but yet their kids are going to be attending those schools, and it gives parents an opportunity to start the conversation or continue the conversation with their kids long before they get to the high school setting.

01:15:00

Kimberly Buckheit: Okay. This is great. I love where you're going with this. So, I'm going to ask Tia and Peyton, in particular also to weigh in here. So, this takes courage, what you're talking about, and I've done it as a building administrator. I'm sure Michael can also share. It takes people being willing to listen to sometimes what's hard to hear, right? So, help me think about the way in which MCSS advances that, right? Advances this. How do we encourage people to hear that, you know what I mean?

Michael Brown: Kim, are you sure we are just talking about from a data perspective?

Kimberly Buckheit: Not necessarily. I mean, honestly, I love Laurel, right? I'm very data, right? Like, to be able to give or so let's just say Michael, it could be prompting people to pull their school climate survey, right? Recent school climate data down or data, right? Here's a data profile to consider looking at in terms of, again behavior, right? Behaviors within an environment. But I think what's, as educators, that's not as overwhelming for us to look at, right? We're used to that. What is somewhat more challenging is hearing from students. So, what Pam's talking about, right? Is this kind of open forum or we could do it in a way that's kind of not open, open somewhat smaller, right? Defined where we strategically are pulling individuals from different groups. But when you put those people together and you start asking the tough questions and wanting people to be

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honest about responding to those, right? That's the courage, right? So, as a building administrator sitting in that circle or a system leader and hearing kids share their authentic stories, right? Is harder for some folks to really do. Go ahead, Tia.

Dr. Tia McKinnon: And then if we take on that approach, the inclination of human beings will be to respond with emotion. When it's data, when it's numbers, we remove that emotion. And so, it would be very difficult to keep the conversation focused in a way that produces some results, because this could end up being a session where we hear a lot of complaints, maybe not related to what we are focused on, and then the community or whomever the audience is, will be expecting some action based on what was shared and that may not be possible. So, I think barriers and challenges with that approach, then not.

Kimberly Buckheit: Yeah, I'm trying to, in my mind. So, like, even it takes master facilitators too, right? When I've done this really well and that could be so when, again, I'm thinking of the scope of work that MCSS do, it could be that MCSS's training facilitators to be able to lead this work within systems. And, again, could create a procedure and a model in terms of training and helping people with some of that conversation. I'm trying to imagine what this looks like for us to develop a product.

Dr. Tia McKinnon: And I know that based on my comments, I'm looking at it from a challenging lens, but also when we have the anecdotal input, how will we quantify that? Because if we're hearing stories and even with whatever the facilitator's questions are the most well-defined questions if they're open-ended, we're going to have anecdotal data and how are we going to quantify it? Because it'll really highlight the experience of who's sitting in the room, not the experience of the state necessarily.

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Laurel Moody: It's Laurel again, Pam help me with this because are you still with Baltimore County Schools? Okay.

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So, it's been a number of years since I've worked in Baltimore County and been a Baltimore County parent, but we used to have a student handbook and every year that handbook goes home to every parent, right? Parents are supposed to sign it, the students are supposed to sign it. I wonder if that could be a tool. I don't know if other jurisdictions have something similar like a code of conduct or something like that. I'm sure they do.

Kimberly Buckheit: Everyone does Laurel, yeah.

Laurel Moody: I figured that. So, I'm wondering if that could be a tool to look at, to see what areas in the individual jurisdiction, student handbook could be enhanced. Whether it's resources or more language or whatever. Since it's my understanding that's been a requirement, I don't know how many parents really look at it. They probably just sign it, so their child gets that checked off at school. But if we could use those resources, maybe have a keen eye looking at them to see how we could expand that either into a more interactive resource, just as a thought.

Kimberly Buckheit: Thanks, Laurel. This is good in terms of us thinking about what are entry points, right? What are the methods? And so, maybe it's a menu of options, right? So, let me ask the group then, because one of the questions I also had was related to, do we define, so let me clarify and see if I'm hearing you all. One of the questions could be, do we define what these pro-social behaviors are and what the maladaptive behaviors are? What I'm hearing, so tell me if you're in agreement, is that we're allowing, that we're creating a method

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by which the organic, right, the school and the system are defining those for themselves rather than MCSS Advisory Board kind of defining some of those. Go ahead, Pam.

Pamela Gaddy: No, we wouldn't be able to define it for ourselves unfortunately, because then we'll have way too many terms, and not everything necessarily will apply to each situation. It would have to come down to one central definition example per se. But we have to have some guidance for that piece that we would have someone else bring down a definition.

Kimberly Buckheit: Okay. So, let's just take pro-social behaviors. So, in our recommendation statement, we have to promote pro-social behaviors. What are pro-social behaviors? Do we need to define that as a definition, and do we define that in terms of a sentence or two or in terms of a list of desired behaviors?

Kimberly Buckheit: Go ahead, Tia.

Laurel Moody: I'm sorry.

Dr. Tia McKinnon: Not a list that was on my only input, not a list. Because it could be misinterpreted as exhausted.

Kimberly Buckheit: Yeah, go ahead Laurel.

Laurel Moody: I guess, I want to think that all parents will understand what pro-social behaviors mean.

Kimberly Buckheit: We can't assume, right? We know that it's really important that we not assume. And so, then I would also say the importance of us really being mindful of the cultural bias that is inherent in the term pro-social behavior too, right? And

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how do we account for that?

Laurel Moody: Yeah, I think it's hard not to have a list, although maybe there needs to be a qualifying statement that it's not an exclusive list.

Dr. Tia McKinnon: Yeah, maybe it could be such as just behaviors that are helpful to your co-humans to society and so like helping, cooperating, things of that nature.

01:25:00

But I mean, they may not see that as, I don't know. It's just with the intent of being good, but then we have good, which could have some cultural implications, so we're in this circle.

Kimberly Buckheit: And I would also though, so I would also prompt the folks. I think what can be a guardrail somewhat is learning, right? Like we're talking about pro-social behaviors that do not allow an individual to be a learner and allow other individuals within that community to also learn, right? So, creating a little bit of guardrail as we define that term with regard to school and learning.

Laurel Moody: Yeah so, I think a little bit more of an expansive definition of pro-social behaviors is probably beneficial for some individuals within the context of the learning environment, for sure.

Kimberly Buckheit: Others? Michael, thoughts on pro-social behavior?

Michael Brown: I agree originally with what Pam was saying. I think we have to have that defined. If you leave it up to

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everybody to do that, that's just not a wise decision with that, that will create a lot of confusion along the way. So, I believe if that's something that they're already coming to the table as far as the definition, it kind of simplifies things across the board where things aren't as choppy as more concise, so.

Kimberly Buckheit: Okay. So, Alice is our note-taker. So, I'm going to kind of prompt Alice to make sure she has in our notes that we need to define the term pro-social behaviors. And then I'm hearing that there may be some value in kind of listing, but being clear that not an exhaustive list there then too. So, then let's turn to the maladaptive behaviors. Do we take the same approach with that?

Dr. Tia McKinnon: Yes, I think so.

Kimberly Buckheit: Okay.

Laurel Moody: I agree.

Kimberly Buckheit: So, again, focusing on individual behaviors, again, within the guardrail of those things that are interfering with learning and teaching, right? And that's what's like really important I think as we look at this, that we're remaining mindful that we're talking about school, right? So, we're not talking about necessarily while we want those things to bleed over into the community and life and other aspects that we're talking about school, bus trips event, school events, right? All of that is inside of the scope of that, but still, school related. Okay. So, the how, so that word, how, right, so this is kind of, then the next question is that, so when you read the statement, within this statement, you actually say on how to do that. So, your kind of the verb that's used there. When I think about the product or the what, as a Board MCSS we're doing is that we're

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providing something to teach, and help others know how to go about doing that. Is that the intent? Do you understand what I'm saying? Right. The word how that we have, that we're providing materials to folks on how to promote and decrease.

Laurel Moody: I think that is important that we provide those materials or resources because obviously, that information's not going to be able to be captured in a meeting or one session. And for some parents or even students that might not feel comfortable reaching out independently to be able to have a place where they can go and get more information, I think is really important.

01:30:00

Kimberly Buckheit: Which makes me think about, so going back in this conversation where we were coming up with a variety of methods or how's, right? So, Pam kind of starts with this focus or town hall is a how, a way to go about, right promoting and decreasing. It could be a menu of some options potentially.

Michael Brown: Yeah. I think being a support individual on like you're talking about the how on how you're going to do that, I think is going to be pivotal just because it's a good idea. It's like I said, getting students involved in those types of things. However, if people don't know how to do that, it's not going to be an effective practice. So, whether that is, like you said initially, Kim organization being involved in doing some of those training for those individuals before they even get to that part of the process, I think that's where we can kind of fit in at is giving them that, how some of those training. So, when that process takes hold, then they're able to be more effective and get something out of it from that standpoint.

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Laurel Moody: Kim, it's unfortunate that our student rep is not with us on this group today. I just think it's so important that we hear from our student reps as to what they see would be helpful. You know, what do they see would help achieve some of these goals?

Kimberly Buckheit: Yeah. And I can follow up with Claire also. Great, as I sketch out some of this stuff that we're talking about. So, is this menu concept good or bad? To do something well you have to kind of focus on something and do it well, right? And sometimes what I find is if I give a menu of options to people, they start just kind of picking and choosing and not being very focused on their work. And I know kind of Tia and Michael know what I mean about that a little bit.

There are ways that I probably could do a menu that is tiered, right? In terms of, so, if you're choosing this methodology, let's go with like a town hall forum or focus groups, right? Step one, is X, and step two, is to lead people over time because focus groups done well aren't just a one-time sit-in front of people, right? It's thoughtful preparation on the front end. It's the hosting it and then it's the follow-up and then it's the implementation of things and probably bringing that group back together. So, that menu idea would have to be dimensional, right?

It couldn't be something where I just checked do that, I had a town hall done, right? So, the other option is that you kind of just build out a training series. The other methodology that's super beneficial is like a train-the-trainer type of dynamic, right? This is advantageous when we're doing stuff across the state because you can kind of have experts within the different jurisdictions that can serve a role. Think about what has worked. So, what is something that you've recently maybe engaged with

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that has been really beneficial to you as a practitioner from a methodology standpoint?

Laurel Moody: I wish there was some means to have an incentive. I know that's a big ask, but tend to get more participation when there's an incentive. So, I know that's probably unrealistic, but I just felt like I had to throw that out there.

01:35:00

Kimberly Buckheit: Pam, were you going to say something?

Pamela Gaddy: I love the incentive and I was just thinking of some, but I think another piece is, I think whereas a stakeholder where sometimes not truly valued as meeting when there's no follow-up. We definitely have to, and my suggestion is if we sat down on March 6th at the initial meeting, March 6th is also when following up as well. So, that shows preparation and planning, however.

[Inaudible 01:35:43].

Kimberly Buckheit: And Pam, it can be more harmful if you listen and then don't do anything with what you heard what we know, right? Are there some current initiatives out there happening maybe that we piggyback on? It's another maybe way to think about this too.

Pamela Gaddy: Again, we're talking community involvement. My first thoughts are it doesn't matter what the subject is. So, we were having a meeting at the high school, we're inviting them to the school and maybe the restaurants in that area were to donate free pizza. Something of that nature that will promote a

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little togetherness for the community again, to further strengthen. Because that's where the behaviors are. That's where the center of everything, that's my thoughts within the house, try to buy into one another.

Kimberly Buckheit: So Michael, is there anything happening on the MASSP side of the shop or the MASSP side of the shop that aligns with this, that you know of?

Michael Brown: You know, it's not directly related. I would say, there are some things that are parallel as far as the implementation of large-scale programs and professional development. Right now, MASSP, they have partnered with a private organization to provide leadership direction with this leadership academy. So, it's not directly run by MASSP, it's kind of a joint partnership, if you will. But a lot of the resources are provided because MASSP, we don't have a lot of money, so a lot of the resources are being provided by that private organization. But MASSP is a part of it and allowed to be in the process of leading some of those professional developments. But, say if it's a speaker or say if it's somebody that's going to cost money to come in to provide a service to that group, that private organization is flipping the bill for that. So, if you're talking about also in the aspect of when we're talking about data analysis and those types of things, again, they have the resources to provide that on a larger scale than what we as a local organization are able to do. So, I don't know if that's something that we can look into if there is more of an organization that's in the private sector that'd be willing to provide some resources and help us in this regard. It may be and that might be something we could look into.

Kimberly Buckheit: That's helpful to know, right? As we talk about leadership capacity, which is overlaid a little bit, right?

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The capacity of local leaders to be engaging with their parents in a way, right? To be engaging with their students in a way that hears, is a two-way communication.

01:40:00

Here's what's going on and responds to what they hear is definitely a leadership skill, right? One of our things. Tia, anything on the Special Ed side of the shop state or local that you can think of? Go ahead.

Dr. Tia McKinnon: Not particularly this time.

Kimberly Buckheit: Okay. Yeah, so I really appreciate this group and this recommendation area because it's something that everyone talks about, right? News, social media, your dinner table yet is something that there isn't necessarily an agency, a group that has a plan necessarily, right? It's an unmet need. All right, so I'm going to ask you to go just back to the statement again. So, develop and expand informational materials and training to educate stakeholders on how to, and then resources would incorporate student voice. So, we have to define pro-social behavior. We have 10 minutes left. Can I prompt you to help me, and let's spend five minutes on pro-social behaviors? So, if group members could maybe just kind of do a shout out, call out of what are pro-social behaviors within a school-based environment? As we think about school, as we think about learning, and the ability to teach, what does pro-social behavior look like? Anyone, feel free to unmute and shout out.

Laurel Moody: I like helping.

Pamela Gaddy: Helping, nurturing.

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Dr. Tia McKinnon: Including everyone.

Pamela Gaddy: Inclusive.

Kimberly Buckheit: Go ahead. Keep going. Payton and Sam, feel free to help.

Payton Alridge: Collaborating or cooperating.

Laurel Moody: Sharing.

Michael Brown: Mentoring.

Laurel Moody: Volunteering is also in the definition of pro-social behaviors.

Pamela Gaddy: Encouraging.

Kimberly Buckheit: I missed that, Ms. Gaddy, what was that?

Pamela Gaddy: Encouraging.

Kimberly Buckheit: Encouraging. Thank you.

Laurel Moody: Kindness.

Pamela Gaddy: I was going to say kindness.

Dr. Tia McKinnon: Positivity.

Kimberly Buckheit: Empathy.

Payton Aldridge: How about persistence for a student that doesn't always have things going their way? Persistence.

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Kimberly Buckheit: All right. So actually, you did that in two minutes. So, let's talk about decreasing maladaptive behaviors. So, let's identify some behaviors that interfere with an individual being able to learn with others, being able to learn around them, and interfering with teaching from happening.

Dr. Tia McKinnon: Bullying, cheating.

Laurel Moody: Anger.

Michael Brown: Substance abuse.

Sam Deschenaux: Maybe this is a bit vague, but just, you know, general outbursts.

Laurel Moody: Withdrawal.

01:45:00

Michael Brown: I'm going to say an addiction. It could come in many different things, but it could be sexual addiction, addiction to drugs, alcohol, or whatever.

Laurel Moody: Disruptive or destructive, aggressive.

Pamela Gaddy: Physical abuse.

Payton Aldridge: I did want to make a quick comment regarding some of these maladaptive behaviors just from Disability Rights, Maryland's perspective. A lot of these behaviors that we consider maladaptive, some for kids with disabilities can be directly related to their disability. So, we just want to be mindful when we're using certain language that some of these things,

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like aggression, and disruptive behavior, can be directly related to a child's disability. And we want to make sure that we find a way to address that as well.

Dr. Tia McKinnon: But I think in the context of this statement and how to promote and decrease, it wouldn't matter if it's related to the disability or not. We still need to decrease the maladaptive behaviors of aggression and disruption. Do you mean ones that they can't control? Maybe stemming that someone could interpret as disruptive, but it's not something that this student is in control of. Is that more of what you're talking about?

Payton Aldridge: Right. Like non-violent, but also non-traditional behavior that could be considered disruptive.

Dr. Tia McKinnon: Okay. Got it. I talked my way through that. Thank you.

Payton Aldridge: Of course.

Laurel Moody: Is lying another one.

Kimberly Buckheit: I'm still trying to figure out how to verbalize what you were just saying in that little conversation with Tia and Payton. Do you want to send that back to me in a statement? So, I'm having trouble kind of getting my head around what you just said for notes.

Payton Aldridge: Sure. I can type it out.

Kimberly Buckheit: Thanks, Payton. All right. We have four minutes. Thank you, everybody. This was great. So, last few minutes, kind of final thoughts related to any of what we've

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talked about this work, and know that like as this hour wraps up, does not mean that you're thinking or communicating back with me, has to wrap up too, right? So, if you have some other thoughts or think of resources, please send me an email, and let me know, some stuff for us to add.

Laurel Moody: Can we add self-harm under the maladaptive behaviors, self-harm?

Kimberly Buckheit: All right. This was helpful. I am probably, as I'm going to definitely before the end of the day today, try to type out some of what we've talked about in terms of product. So, I don't lose it, but I think I really understand where you guys are kind of going with this. Not to say that Kate's going to be like, oh my gosh, what have you done?

We only have 15 people, Kim. But I think it's reasonable that there are some things that we can do again sometimes really capitalizing upon resources that are already out there in terms of people willing to do this work, so. All right, if there are, Payton, thank you. We see that in the chat. Again, feel free as you guys, as you continue to think, to reach out to me, I appreciate all of your hard thinking and efforts with us today. So, on that note, have a good rest of your Monday. It was good seeing you guys.

01:50:00

Payton Aldridge: Thank you.

Kimberly Buckheit: All right, Alice, do you want me to capture the chat, or actually, I think Aaron captures it, right? Do you want to stop recording?

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Ron Pierce: Well, welcome. I just want to say welcome back. The meeting, this particular group is working on 6.1, I wanted to mention some of you, we all spoke in the past meeting about this, but I know we have a couple of new members because I think we rearranged the groups a little bit. So, very quickly, I'm trying to see. Dino, do you know how many should we have in this meeting, in this group?

Joseph Dino Pignataro: It would've been four and Ms. Bailey had to drop out. So, we have everybody we have assigned today that are here.

Ron Pierce: Cool. So real quick, my name's Ron Pierce. I'm the training administrator for Maryland School Safety. If you wouldn't mind just introducing yourselves real quick and your roles in your agencies.

Dr. Michael Martirano: I'm Michael Martirano, Superintendent of schools for Howard County, representing Passm.

Chief Paul Kifer: I am Chief Paul Kifer with the Hagerstown Police Department.

James Bell: I'm James Bell. I'm a parent at Great Mills High School, also a coach and a teacher there.

Dr. Michael Martirano: Good to see you, Mr. Bell.

Joseph Dino Pignataro: I'm Joseph Dino Pignataro, Deputy Director of the Maryland Center for School Safety.

Brittani Ayers: I am Brittani Ayers. I am a regional with MCSS and today's lovely note-taker, so bear with me.

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Ron Pierce: I'm going to test your typing skills, Brit.

Joseph Dino Pignataro: All I'm going to say is thank you, Brit.

Ron Pierce: Yeah.

Brittani Ayers: Of course.

Ron Pierce: Okay. There are a couple of questions we're going to work our way through, and I think as part of this, we're going to try to come up with some action items. I think that if we're talking about putting together a protocol or a procedure for dealing with Threats and Swatting, we're going to try to put together, put some meat on those bones. I think I got a note here that Tom Alban might be joining us, but we'll go ahead and toss out the first question here and get some feedback on it. And Brit, if you're ready, we'll get started.

So, I think most of you are aware of the original recommendation regarding this. We've been through it, but lets just go through it real quick. Guidance on criminal and administrative investigation, and response to social media threats made against schools that could be both anonymous or not anonymous. I know both are kind of a plague these days. This should include the development of a public infographic to explain the process from the identification of the threat through investigation and resolutions. And that's going to include swatting as well. And I think some of the questions we had to get this rolling.

So, what particular conditions would require different responses? Maybe some examples, time of day, day of the week, the origin of the threats, social media, if they commence some other way,

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emails are an example in the specificity of the threats. So, what conditions would require different responses? Does anybody have some thoughts on that?

James Bell: Wouldn't where the threat happened? I know one issue that we've had at school is we'll have something that happens over the weekend, like on a Friday or Saturday night at the park with two particular parties. But then when we get to school, those particular parties are, it's easy for them to find each other and then it disrupts our whole day. And it's hard to deal with that because obviously, we can't do anything that happens in public, but then when they bring it to school, it's something we kind of had a hint that it might happen already.

Ron Pierce: So, I can't quite see what Brit's notes, but yeah, you're talking about the proximity to the school and how specific the threat was.

James Bell: Correct.

Ron Pierce: Change my view here a bit. Does anyone else have some thoughts on that?

Dr. Michael Martirano: I think, for me, it's everything that happens in school during the school day versus everything outside, they are divided into two different categories inside the schoolhouse during the school day, and things that happen after hours.

01:55:00

Joseph Dino Pignataro: To help kickstart a little bit. One of the questions we had when on this recommendation, which is to develop guidance when criminal administrative investigations is,

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who would write that guidance? Would it be a team effort? Would it be administrative guidance on one page and criminal guidance on the other? We didn't get that far when we originally met, and that was one of the questions folks have been trying to figure out.

Dr. Michael Martirano: And that's still a question at the local level. I'll say that I live it all day long. I'm in the middle of hiring my director of safety security and emergency preparation and that was interview questions that we had brought up, how we determine these. It goes back to the credible threat again and who determines it.

Chief Paul Kifer: I think it also goes back to the availability of the local law enforcement agencies that cover that school district as well. Some agencies are bigger than others and may have a different response that they can do than a smaller agency could. So, I think it definitely has to be at a local level for that. I think the particular response also would come from any intelligence that's been gathered from around the country or regionally when there's been swatting incidents that are specific. When we know that going into a swatting incident here in Maryland, we may know that it's similar to ones in Texas or Arizona or whatever. That would also dictate the type of response.

Ron Pierce: So that kind of leads us to the second question as well. So, everyone, all school systems have a behavioral threat assessment policy, and there's usually a procedure that accompanies that. Do you feel the swatting is different from the threat or not? And if it is a bit different, what defines it?

Chief Paul Kifer: I don't see it as different from the response standpoint. It's coming in as a threat. And it may be different when it comes to the investigation once you are into it, but the

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actual response to it, to me is the same as any other threat that you're getting in.

Dr. Michael Martirano: And let me build on that with what the Chief has just said, I have to respond at the local level the exact same way, a threat, is a threat, is a threat whether it's swatting or however it comes in. What becomes clear is if I put that in as the marker and I treat them all, I'm going to react, then they start going down different paths. Swatting is different because maybe the intel is that we're able to quickly find out that, that number, the last one that we had, was a major concern. Do you remember when I said this came in from Australia? That's a whole different ballgame than if I have a more specific voice on the line with a local number. But again, it's that determination and I like what the Chief said earlier about as much Intel as we can possibly have to help us in that decision-making because simultaneously what is happening, the machine starts going and social media starts going, and rumors start flying and it elicits a major response and rightly so. But then when we find that it's non-credible, it creates another set of issues for us.

Joseph Dino Pignataro: And Dr. Martirano and Chief, we are working on revising and revamping the non-disclosure agreements with all the SSCs and the school systems. So, once we have this information, we do get it, we synthesize it down to what's needed to know, and we can push that out to the SSCs. And Mike tries to push it out to the SROs whenever he can. So, in the meantime, your command staff may want to check with the SSCs when something starts coming around in your systems So, they'll probably be the first ones to know when something starts happening either statewide or nationwide to help drive how your investigations go.

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Ron Pierce: And just to add to that the school safety dashboards that are available to all the SSCs have a form on it called the Trend, I believe it's School Safety Trends or something like that. It's basically just a way to collaborate. They can each see what was entered, but if they see somebody shares a Snapchat picture of a gun and it's directed to a certain school, and then that same picture gets passed around at three other jurisdictions, they can kind of share that information. So, they know, oh, this is just a rehash of something, to give them some idea whether or not this is really focused on where it started.

Chief Paul Kifer: And a lot of swatting-type incidents that we get are just like, that's something that's shared across, not necessarily intentional from the original swatter standpoint, but they push that across. And for us, it's usually intelligence we're gathering and investigations we're doing before school starts. We get it late in the day, we get it from a parent, schools are already let out, and then we're investigating it after hours to try to get it gathered and concluded before the school day starts the next day.

Ron Pierce: Tom, I don't mean to put you on the spot, but just curious from your school's systems standpoint. How do you handle these types of events and either threats or swatting?

Thomas E. Alban: Well, I guess the way we do approach each of these is we consider them to be authentic from the beginning and you really don't make that determination that is, "the Swatting Incident" till after the fact. So, again, we would approach this just the same until we determine it is in fact just, you know, a situation where somebody's setting it up. But I would also add that I think what's important too is that we don't become so saturated that we then start categorizing things as a

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swatting event, when in fact it potentially isn't. So, I think it's important to maintain, if you will, a standard of care that we don't just become dismissive that, oh, well, because it was in another state, that it's not authentic or real to us. So, I do think there still needs to be guidance or certainly a good understanding that you got to go through certain steps to at least get to the point to determine it is in fact a false situation.

Ron Pierce: Correct.

James Bell: I just want to say, I think social media has kind of changed how we look at it too, just because simple things, what kids see as entertainment on TikTok that we have to take seriously, and sometimes, we have an instance where people are doing a simple video, they think it's fun on TikTok, and they're not being specific about where they're going, but the moment that we don't do something about that or don't research that is the moment that we find ourselves vulnerable.

Thomas E. Alban: I guess if I could just ask, being kind of in a different circle, I mean, how prevalent would you say this currently is? I mean, I'm not aware, but maybe a handful of instances, the one in Howard County.

Dr. Michael Martirano: Well, it's like everything else. I'll go back to mine in Howard County. We had a spate of these based upon the fact that we had a swatting event that came in from I believe Australia. And then we learned later that there were like 75 plus of those kinds of attacks across the nation. And again, I like the choice of the wording. I have to identify each one of those as being authentic and never being dismissive of any of them. And then it created a whole level of copycats almost the contagion effect kicked in. And those were coming in from other sources that we had as well. So, these bad actors out there give ideas to

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others and it created a whole series of responsiveness for us for about a two-week period.

Thomas E. Alban: Oh, Okay.

Dr. Michael Martirano: Yeah. So, when I think about the number that I've had, they come in from a variety of sources. The first one is the issue associated with phone calls coming in, and I want to talk about that in the next question regarding what are those protocols. Because we could have people just walking by the phone and helping out members of our support staff from other parts of our staff, and they don't know what to do with that. So, the protocols have to be very clear, assuming that anybody who's a staff member can pick up a phone and take that in.

02:05:00

Thomas E. Alban: Thank you. And I will just compliment you because you must have done a good job because really, as far as what hit the media that I remember, it was really just that one. So, you guys obviously did a good job containing it after that.

Dr. Michael Martirano: Well, but the other point is, and I want to lift it up, how were we able to do that though? Because then we started using the technology and the identification of numbers and saying that the cooperation between myself and the police became critical in determining whether it was credible. I'm never going to be put in the position of superintendent to be dismissive and say, oh, that's not credible. How do we do that?

Thomas E. Alban: Right

Dr. Michael Martirano: Because just the one time that we

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dismiss it, then that's something that actually is a real one.

Thomas E. Alban: Absolutely.

Chief Paul Kifer: And we're not going to be able to control the copycats, at least outside of our jurisdiction. So, if that copycat happens within your school district, Doctor, then law enforcement and schools can deal with that. And that's how you minimize the very localized swatting that gets picked up. But if it's been picked up by other actors around the nation or around the world can't really control that, but I agree. All these come in, they're treated the same at the very beginning. I equate these like we do any death investigation. Death investigations we do in law enforcement are always investigated from the perspective of homicide first. And then when you realize that's not what it is, then your investigation changes, but you can't go back and change if you don't treat it as a homicide from the very beginning, you lose things or you don't do what you need to do to further that investigation. So, swatting, and any other threats have to be treated very seriously, even in the very beginning. And then you can quickly, in some cases, determine that it's a shared photo or a shared video that's not regional. And you can, you can learn that pretty quickly, but the investigation still has to be taken seriously from the beginning.

Dr. Michael Martirano: Absolutely.

Ron Pierce: So, now we're getting into the steps, right? So, that's kind of what the next questions are about, the process and the protocol for responding to swatting and threats, basically the same thing. We agreed by law enforcement and by school personnel. So, obviously different paths, different protocols. In what ways are they similar? How are they different and what information's most important to communicate to the different

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audiences, the stakeholders particularly the public and parents?

Chief Paul Kifer: Well, from our perspective, there are certain things that we want to control going out. If we learn that it's something that's truly an investigation that we're going to move forward on trying to determine who did this and prosecute that information has to be kind of held a little closer to the vest, so it doesn't interfere with the investigation. And that's where good communication between our agency and the schools and the PIAs that are putting stuff out would have to be coordinated. If it's not something local, if it's determined pretty quickly that it's truly a swatting incident and I think again, that communication has to be clearly defined both with our PIAs and yours to make sure the same message is going out to the public. So, they're not getting two different messages coming from law enforcement, Facebook page, or whatever and the school systems media release.

Ron Pierce: Thanks, Chief. From the school side Dr. Martirano, does anybody have a perspective on how their protocol for responding to this in terms of communication?

Dr. Michael Martirano: Yes, thank you, Chief for what you provided already. One of the things that I want to add that I'm really going to be insistent about is making certain that we have the ones that come in as phone calls. And I already talked about this, that's in real-time. Somebody's on the phone, somebody picks up the phone, and then what do we want the people to do who pick up the phone, I guess that is what I'm trying to say, that's the question. What do we know? What do we do when we know, what we know is my guiding question. So, this is triggered by somebody making a phone call to the school, someone picks up the phone, and then what do we want them to do is a critical piece of information.

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02:10:00

And I keep using the very broad terms because it's not always an administrative assistant or secretarial staff. It could be a teacher in a planning room, it could be a variety of things. So, how do we have a very clear cogent checklist that is consistent for gathering information that will be helpful to us in identifying who it is? So, I mean, I'm really making that a point here in Howard County, but is there any state guidance that we should be taking into account that all LEAs would benefit from that, so that's the telephone issue. Social media, we always take that from a vantage point of screenshots, and we actually have something in writing in front of us that we're reacting to, that's a second category. And a third one is what I call different kinds that don't necessarily fall under social media or telephone calls. Someone may write a note or write something on a stall in a bathroom, and we don't have a time basis of when that had actually occurred or when that note is found, or when certain things happen that we're not reacting to in real-time, but we still have to react to. So, I put them into those three categories that also require a level of responsiveness from us. I'm caught up on the word dismissive. I can't ever dismiss any of these from my sphere once it comes to my attention.

Chief Paul Kifer: Well, and I would just add real quick, I mean, my immediate thought where I would go, at least on the telephone call when it would seem and I know we really haven't done it proactively, but certainly in thinking about this, I would take what we currently have in place for bomb threats that come in telephonically and modify those guidance documents that we have to all faculty and staff that if you're the recipient of this call, kind of a step-by-step similar to the bomb threat protocol, but modify to address circumstances unique to a potential, whether

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it is an actual threat of an act of assailant or whatnot versus a swatting incident.

Dr. Michael Martirano: And that's a good start. But I found myself as we were in this moment where this was happening, asking a lot of the same questions to who, what, when, where, why, how, I mean, lots of things, and maybe we didn't cover it all that would be needed to help identify who this bad actor may or may not be.

Ron Pierce: Just to add to what Tom said, I looked at about a thousand emergency plans a couple of years ago, and most of the systems I looked at had a checklist for bomb threats. And it's collecting that type of information is very similar. I think you're talking about a phone call. I mean, does every system have that? It's just not something we regularly train teachers or potentially anyone who could pick up the phone how to use or how to find.

Dr. Michael Martirano: That's what I'd want to know. I think as we're looking at expectations and training SROs and including things, I just think we need to give a nod to this because it's becoming more prevalent and we never know when it's going to happen.

Chief Paul Kifer: Well, and I think from the standpoint, I like the bomb threat analogy in terms of the protocols. I think that modification could be very minor modifications to that. You're still gathering the same type of information. I think the additional training for staff is to pay attention to those, other cues that you get in a phone call that during that threat phone call, typically this person taking that is under stress and they're not, thinking as clear as they normally would. So, you're looking for background noise, you're looking for just is there an accent to

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the person that's calling, you use the Australian situation there, things like that help us move the investigation forward. Paying attention to what comes up on the screen in terms of does a number come up. I know they can hide their numbers now and they can mimic those numbers. But it gives us some starting points for investigative avenues. But asking those very poignant questions when there's somebody on the phone specific, you're saying this is going to happen when and where, and try to dime them into something specific, and then what is the response?

02:15:00

Not just what they say, but how they say it is key to helping to determine a lot of times if it's going to be real or not, or at least gives us some way of starting to look at these things. It worked for us here for us several years ago when we were having bomb threats and we went in and trained the school staff that would primarily take those phone calls and it really stopped that localized bomb threat coming from the kids in the schools that were calling them in for the various reasons they were doing. So, that's just my suggestion.

Ron Pierce: Let me add a fourth scenario in there for you that came out of Baltimore County and they did a great job handling it. So, an email gets sent out to the PTSA for an entire school, in this case, Towson High School, that's how this comes in. And it actually got repeated twice more, I believe, Brit can correct me if I'm wrong. But when we reviewed that, it essentially went to the public first, so you can imagine their response, handling that was certainly going to be a little bit different from the law enforcement and from the administrative standpoint. That's something I've seen once or twice too, so the public gets a hold of a threat before we hear about it. Picture that scenario as we're talking about these protocols.

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Chief Paul Kifer: I think in that situation, you're going to be handling it much like a tip line. You're going to have a lot of people calling in that they saw something, they hear something, and having both law enforcement staff and school staff trained on how to take those tips, take that information. If it's just a repeat of the same information, there's has to be some additional questions to get asked to see if they have something that someone else before them didn't provide. That's just another way to help move an investigation forward. It's 50 tips coming in, and it's exactly the same thing. I saw this, and I have no further information that helps in the sense that it's very narrow to that email or that one out where someone else may it say, well I heard so-and-so called so-and-so, and then, you know, there's something else on social media that's different, it helps the investigation. So, I think just treating it almost like a tip line coming in would be very beneficial, and getting some training on how to do that.

Ron Pierce: Right. The training's important. So, gathering enough information to hopefully do something with. What would be the next step for both school administrators and school system administrators and for law enforcement?

Chief Paul Kifer: I think we're back to the technology part. Let's go back to the phone calls and how the school system tracks those phone calls coming into that school, getting on that as quickly as possible helps. Camera systems that are within the school, if it's something written on a wall in the bathroom, and you can narrow down that timeframe a little bit, start looking at the camera systems, the school systems, looking at those things. Those are just that available technology that schools have at their fingertips and getting on that quickly and knowing that's part of the protocol. When these come in, that notification goes

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to their IT department to start pulling up the phones to see what they can find, so that that information gets shared with us as quickly as possible can help determine pretty quickly maybe if it's a swatting event, if it's real or not.

Ron Pierce: True. Anyone else have let's say from the school side, a threat comes in, you've gathered the information, law enforcement takes a step to identify how they got it, who might have sent it? In terms of communication, the next piece of that question, what kind of communication should be sent out to parents at that point, this is pretty early on, right?

Dr. Michael Martirano: Right. I mean, we have a whole series of protocols that we follow and we are always airing on the side of communicating too much, as far as letting them know something's happening because when this is happening it's that really tense space where we're trying to determine what's happening. We start ringing the bell within the school and then kids are sending information out to their parents, and then they start that whole level of I don't want to say panic, but it is panic in many cases where we're living in a space where we don't know exactly what's happening, but yet it's happening.

02:20:00

And so, we have a way of communicating that by placing things on our website, pushing out information to the community, and making sure certain we have the technology to do that. We've upgraded our telephone systems in our county so that we are able to push out an email communication or text messaging communication to our parents, but even then, rumors are flying within the school. One thing I can't control is the communications going from students to their parents who are then advancing rumors based upon what they see and hear.

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James Bell: Yeah, I was going to second that is a huge problem that the opinion of what's going on is always going to supersede the actual facts that we can offer. And it doesn't matter what technology we used to get out, it's always going to be too late to actually deal with that. And once those opinions are out there or what people think is being done. A lot of parents are going to react and respond off of that. And then, of course, you have to send another message to clean that up. Even if you were to guide them with a little bit of information in real-time, you're still going to have the same problem. Like, oh, I don't think they're doing enough, but they can't tell you everything, like that's part of the deal. And the only thing I can say as just being part of the community and listening to the people, and you're not going to reach everybody, but it's just one of those things playing in the process. Look, this is what's going to happen, this is how we're going to do it. We'll get the information to you as soon as we can, but you got to understand we have to do this way in this order, so we can get the proper information and keep everybody safe. But even that for a lot of parents are going to run with what their kids said, or sometimes it's even teachers, some of our educators will send something out. With the technology and the instant communication that we're having nowadays, it's going to be a tough thing no matter what you do.

Dr. Michael Martirano: Well, one piece of advice that I took from a parent many, many years ago that I still used the guiding dictate in my head when the events occur, was asking me when an event is happening, just let us know that an event is happening and more information will come, so that we hear from you as the superintendent or the school system is aware of it helps to allay the initial concerns that we know it's happening and that more information will be forthcoming. And I always lead with that when I talk about being in the space of

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communication, because we're all trying to find out what's happening, but trying to be a voice from the official voice, something is happening, more information to come, this is where you need to turn, has actually really assisted us in managing these processes that have, so many tentacles that can get out of control real fast.

Ron Pierce: Is there any product that you guys have found works better than others in terms of how to reach some of these folks? I mean, you're not going to reach everybody like Bell said, does any of them seem to work for the most part better than another?

James Bell: Yeah, I would say something like Twitter and the phone out probably happens a little bit faster than the email, and that's only because most people are actually on the Twitter page or has their phone with them at all times. And any communication, they go directly to their phone, it works out a lot faster than something that's more written that they have to read, something they can hear or a quick response to seems to work a little bit faster.

Dr. Michael Martirano: Yeah, taking advantage of everything that's available to you is what we try to do. Saturate the space by using our website. Twitter, as has already been mentioned, emails although it may not be the fastest, somebody's looking at those. And then any kind of text messaging system that the schools have to push out information to their school community, usually we're working with the principal then to push that message out specifically then to their database through emails, text messaging, and phone calls, phone messages too.

Ron Pierce: Thank you. Okay, so we've talked about communication. What would be the next step? We talked about

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gathering the information, putting something out initially, and tapping the technology to give us more information we could use to follow up. Anything else in terms of protocols we could kind of a wireframe here?

02:25:00

James Bell: I would say we probably need to stay up to date on what's the current thing. At one point in time for all of us, it's probably Facebook that you put something on Facebook, everybody knew about even Facebook Live, but now a lot of our young people don't use Facebook at all. They call us old for actually using Facebook. And a big thing for us is Twitter, we talk about Twitter all the time, but then I'm watching some of our young people don't only even use Twitter that's not where they're getting information from, it's from Instagram or all different type of Snapchats, stuff like that. So, I think making sure that we are updating at least yearly on whatever the trend is in social communication, and that way we can send the information out through that particular communication as soon as possible and I think that's kind of important.

Joseph Dino Pignataro: I have a question for the group. I've heard of coordinated communication several times, and I'm just going to ask, do your individual PIOs work with each other or even get together and know who the respective agencies are that they're working with or need to work with? Or is that something we might have to try to facilitate maybe not a conference, but a gathering regionally with folks?

Dr. Michael Martirano: Well, it goes back into that protocol piece as far as communications, again, what you're talking about. All these things that are happening simultaneously, I am in communication with the chief of police as an open line, and have

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my phone glued to my ear with conversations with the Chief. At the same time, my PIO and the police PIO are communicating because they're getting calls at different levels from the community and then the other piece is managing the media to serve as a source of all of this. So, it behooves us to have that cross-communication and link to each other because the Chief of Police is getting different information than what I'm getting. So, it begs for that cross-communication and PIOs to be in direct sync, and anything that we can do to encourage that or training, I'm always supportive.

Joseph Dino Pignataro: Right.

Ron Pierce: So, since we're talking about putting together a product basically to kind of inform the public essentially about how these investigations occur, what we do and that was the infographic part of that recommendation that came out. What could we say about an investigation that wouldn't of course compromise an investigation, which is that's primary, but what could we say to the public about how we're doing this and in general terms what we're doing in order to stop the threat?

Chief Paul Kifer: Without getting into specifics, because each one's different. Obviously, to say there's an investigation that doesn't hurt the investigation that it's already out there or something's happened, so that doesn't hurt. We could easily say we're using all the available technology at our disposal, both the school systems and ours, and law enforcement to investigate the incident that's going on. But we're not going to share intimate information about potential suspects or things like that because that's where it does hamper. And I think just getting that message out that, we may be looking at a suspect, but we're not going to necessarily say that. The clear message is that the students and staff are safe and that we're investigating it, that's

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the first and foremost of what the investigation's for. And then moving into the actual investigation to get to a conclusion of prosecution is secondary to that. But I think sharing that information out, that we're making decisions based on the information that we have collaboratively, both law enforcement and school to determine what's the safest pathway for the staff and students at that very moment.

Ron Pierce: Yeah, I like the way you worded that. You got all that right, Brit, I'm just kidding.

Brittani Ayers: Reflecting on the recent after-action that we did in terms of a swatting, well, it wasn't a swatting incident, but it was handled like we've already discussed, you have to take every threat seriously and keep investigating. And I think that the police their greatest asset during that was the term open investigation.

02:30:00

And so, you can't please every parent, you can't please every community member. But, time and time again, they said throughout November through the time the person was charged, this is an open investigation. We're doing everything that we can to keep the students safe, we'll keep you posted. And I just think that was my biggest takeaway from that to the point where I added it to my report for Kate. So, I'll just copy and paste what I wrote a couple of weeks ago.

Ron Pierce: How about naming partners? You've pulled in every available resource, the FBI, and Secret Service, they did that in the case of Baltimore County. I'm just curious. Do you have any value to that? Do you think that would be important?

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Chief Paul Kifer: I think just putting it out as a general, not necessarily having to go specifics.

Ron Pierce: Right.

Chief Paul Kifer: We're doing that because that's what we do.

Ron Pierce: Yeah, absolutely.

Chief Paul Kifer: That adds to some transparency and also some confidence, I believe to the public.

Ron Pierce: Leave no stone unturned, right?

Dr. Michael Martirano: The other piece listening to the Chief and others that I include early on in the message is there's always some kind of reaction from us, whether it's a lockdown, a modified lockdown, or shelter in place. We identify that early on in our messaging. And that is contained on my website so that parents are educated about what that means because I can't tell them all the specifics. But if I say there's an event at the school and we are at a lockdown that's serious and parents know where that information is, so they can at least say their children are safe and that the school is following the lockdown procedures and has become extremely helpful to us as well.

Ron Pierce: So hopefully they don't all show up and want to pick up their kids all at the same time?

Dr. Michael Martirano: Well, yes.

Ron Pierce: It's part of the reason.

Brittani Ayers: And I think from a timing perspective as a

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parent, I think that most schools and liaisons with the police are handled pretty well. I know recently I was out of town and my son was still here in school and at the end of the day, an incident had happened in Cecil County, and they told the parents at the end of the day. So, my first thought was, I wish I would've known about this right away, but then my second thought as an MCSS staff member was what could you have done? So, it's like, the timing is kind of crucial in the sense of how soon do you tell them, how much you tell them, and what do you tell them. Because I don't know, the crazy in me might have shown up. Had this position for the last year, but knowing what I know and knowing that there isn't much that I can do, and the school mitigated the threat as best that they could in a timely manner you know, it was very beneficial to my psyche.

James Bell: I would say as I was going through the incident that happened at Great Mills High School many years ago that just information, I remember getting phone calls from people in other states asking me, how I was doing and how they got the information was not from schools and they heard from other people. I think sometimes we have to use cheesy as it sounds in terms like our reactive team or investigative team is working. Because when they hear the word team, a lot of times it puts people at ease, right? Here's a group working together. But I also believe that you'll want a message as soon as possible. So, as much as you don't want that message to be generic, you do need to get a message out quickly saying that our whatever team is aware of what's going and on the investigation has started. And then as Dr. Martirano said, you letting them know that, we are on lockdown, something like that helps out. And so that parents once again, don't rush to the school to come pick up their kids, which could be a detriment to what we're actually trying to accomplish at the same time.

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Ron Pierce: Any advice to folks on other systems? Let's say that as in the case of Towson, this went on for a couple of weeks, it happened in Howard as well with the swatting. What do you tell parents? What do you tell folks when this thing's going on for a few days now and there's no real conclusion in sight, but they want updates? So, any advice on how that should be shaped? I know it's a tough one.

02:35:00

All right, it's probably going to depend a lot on the incident too and what's occurring, if it's just a repeat of what's already been put out. Anything else on this last question?

Chief Paul Kifer: Ron, I guess it depends on the public's interest too. If you're getting a lot of inquiries about it, you're going to have to respond publicly out and it's like press releases for us. We don't only do press releases if it's a danger to the community or then the community needs to know based on that, or we're asking for help from the community or the media and everyone else is starting to put a story out that's different than what is reality. So, you start putting that information out to get ahead of it again. So, in this case, if you've got an incident that's going on multiple days. If the interest isn't there from the public, they're satisfied with what we're doing, the school system's doing, then there's no need to just keep putting it out there when there's nothing new to put. But if you start to get some momentum in the community, whether it's from media that is putting out false information or bad information and or you're getting bad or false information coming from parents and students and everyone else, and you got to put something else out again to kind of reassure everyone that you're still moving on that and everyone's still safe.

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Ron Pierce: Okay. Kind of to dispel misinformation and potentially, not the incident I'm thinking of course there were several threats they tend to be, and as they continue to receive these threats, more questions came from the public like, well we're still getting them. What are you doing? You've got to address that, right?

James Bell: We actually had that situation happen when I was in high school and we had a year that we had several bomb threats come through and actually, I can't know what number it was decided, but the public started looking at it like, all right, here's another one. The school's handling it and that's because of the information that was put out by the school, the way it was handled, and this was before we had all the social media we have now. And by the time we got to the last few, everybody was like, all right, here's a routine, let's go out to two stadiums, sit down and the parents didn't even come to pick up the kid anymore. They kind of knew the school and kind of handled it. And that's only because of how the school handled the situation and the communication they had with the parents. So, yeah, I agree. Once you get the information out there properly in a timely fashion, the public will gain confidence and well you do your job.

Ron Pierce: So, the last question we're working on is what type of product would be most advantageous? We talked about social media products that are the quickest way. Probably the one everyone has already in their hand. I think the recommendation had to do with some kind of infographic to explain the process of identification or threat through investigation and resolutions. Anything we could put together to help explain how schools handle these types of issues and law enforcement as well. So, that the public knows in advance how seriously we take them and what we do about them in general terms, right?

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Closing Items

Dr. Michael Martirano: Yeah, I mean I think with the last meeting we discussed some of the content for this and just build that out. And then again, what I'm talking about is checklists for staff internally about it and we can contain that infographic, some of the things which we've discussed here about our communications and partnerships with our parents and what we're doing for safety for kids in general. On that note folks, I got to go. So, thank you and I'll look forward to the rest of the notes. Bye, everyone.

Ron Pierce: Thank you, sir. All right. Any final thoughts on these? We're getting close to the end here for all of us.

Joseph Dino Pignataro: For those of you who are remaining on here, my internal notes and personal notes that I took, I'm looking at possible products, a checklist for threats that system employees can use. Social media checklist or social media product of some type, generic, what we should put out, how we spread out when we should put out and an infographic basically going to the general public. If we receive a threat of any type, this is how it's maybe even a dual track of how it's investigated by the school system and by law enforcement. And the outcomes vary depending upon what the investigation leads to, is that what I'm seeing? Okay.

02:40:00

Ron Pierce: In terms of resolution, because that's part of the question. I know that varies a lot by jurisdiction and that's what I think we probably should stick with, only because we have some jurisdictions that are charging 12-year-olds with making

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threats of mass violence even when they can't be charged because they want to say that they did something and there's other jurisdictions that know that that's futile, so they don't do that. How do you handle that's really up to the jurisdiction and what the particular feelings are in the prosecutor, the juvenile services office is about that. So, I'm sure the Chief has dealt with some of those, and then on the school side, of course, there's the administrative path, like there's the discipline that's involved with something like that as well.

Thomas E. Alban: I was just going to say as I was listening to, you'll talk, I mean, I appreciate that it's greatly varied. What are the consequences? But I do think it's always good to message that it is a serious situation and there are consequences, whatever they may be. It's not a practical joke, it's not funny, and somebody could get hurt in response. So, just that there are consequences, I think should be part of that diagram of the process.

Ron Pierce: And I agree.

James Bell: Yeah, I was going to say on that, especially since I'm in the special education department, when we have a manifestation of other kids that did something, we're going to look at the IEP and see if that was the cause. But us looking at the IEP and the decision that we come up with because of that might not satisfy the public. Especially if your kid's coming to school and you feel like this was an incredible threat, but now we're saying, well this kid's IEP is the reason why it calls, so we're going to put them out for X amount of days and so on forth. I don't think a lot of parents can comprehend how that actually works. And it might be something that somehow needs to be explained in the situation, but that can be an issue too.

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Ron Pierce: Yeah. That the consequences vary by student, not just the type of event. Absolutely. I know that's happened several times that I'm aware of. And of course, the IPS, you adjust the response based upon what the student understands, what he knows, he or she does.

Any other thoughts on that? All right. Well, Dino, I believe we're done now that have completed this segment of this. So, unless anybody has a final comment, I'll bid you adieu. We'll talk again soon.