

MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY

School Safety Advisory Board Meeting

February 2, 2026

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Welcome

MICHAEL BROWN: Everybody, we'll wait a couple more minutes and I see our wonderful chairman here. So, we'll get started shortly. All right, good morning everyone. Want to welcome everybody to today's School Safety Advisory Board meeting. Thank you for joining us this morning. Hope that everyone was able to stay safe and warm this past week. If you're like me, you did have some extra time off in the school system, so we enjoyed that. It is now 10 o'clock, so therefore I will call this meeting to order. Please confirm this meeting is being recorded for public posting at the meeting's conclusion.

AARON CHIUSANO: Yes, sir. We are recording and streaming live.

MICHAEL BROWN: All right. Thank you, sir. We will begin roll call of the advisory board members. So, please respond verbally that you are present when I call your name. We'll start with Eric Ebersole. Eric Ebersole? Karin Bailey? Dr. Kellie Anderson?

DR. KELLIE ANDERSON: Here.

MICHAEL BROWN: Morning doctor. Pamela Gaddy? Jacquetta Jacobs?

JACQUETTA JACOBS: Present.

MICHAEL BROWN: Morning. Natalie Miller?

NATALIE MILLER: Here.

MICHAEL BROWN: Morning Natalie. Jennifer Wimbrow-Jenkins?

JENNIFER WIMBROW-JENKINS: Here.

MICHAEL BROWN: Morning. Sheriff Matthew Crisafulli? Chief Paul Kifer? Patrick Graveline?

PATRICK GRAVELINE: Here.

MICHAEL BROWN: Good morning. Leigh Weihs? Laura Moody?

LAUREL MOODY: Here. Good morning.

MICHAEL BROWN: Good morning. David Engel? Zaria Naqvi?

ZARIA NAQVI: Here.

MICHAEL BROWN: Oh, good morning. Dr. Brittany Patterson? Megan Berger?

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MEGAN BERGER: Present.

MICHAEL BROWN: Good morning. Daniel Buck?

DANIEL BUCK: Present.

MICHAEL BROWN: Good morning. Gina James?

GINA JAMES: Good morning. Here.

MICHAEL BROWN: Good morning, Joseph Cormier?

JOSEPH CORMIER: Good morning. Present.

MICHAEL BROWN: Good morning, sir. Sergeant Kevin Britt? Dr. Maria Navarro? And Carol Ellen Johnson? All right.

SHERIFF MATTHEW CRISAFULLI: Can you hear me? This is Sheriff Crisafulli. I'm... I was having trouble getting on. I just got on at the end.

MICHAEL BROWN: I got you, sir. Thank you.

SHERIFF MATTHEW CRISAFULLI: Thank you, sir. Sorry about that.

MICHAEL BROWN: No, no worries. All right. Welcome, Miss Johnson. Can we please confirm we have a quorum?

JEANEEN JOHNSON: Good morning. Yes, we do have a quorum.

MICHAEL BROWN: Thank you. All right. Thank you, Miss Johnson. 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 approved. Are there any additions to today's agenda? No additions. Motion to approve the agenda?

SHERIFF MATTHEW CRISAFULLI: Sheriff Crisafulli. Make a motion to approve.

MICHAEL BROWN: Thank you, sir. Do we have a second?

GINA JAMES: A second.

MICHAEL BROWN: All right, that is Miss James. Thank you. Any discussion? All in favor?

All: Aye.

MICHAEL BROWN: Any opposed? All right. Motion passes. The agenda for today is approved. So, we will start today's meeting with the MCSS executive director Kate Bryan sharing some MCSS updates.

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MCSS Updates

MICHAEL BROWN: So, Miss Kate, you want to go ahead and take it away?

KATE BRYAN: Sure. Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, I just want to first say, it's nice to see everyone and hear everyone. I hope you're all staying warm. It's been an incredibly cold week. And I'm very sad to say that our dear friend and neighbor in Pennsylvania, Puxatony Phil, has said we're going to have six more weeks of this. So, not really looking forward to that because I walked in my office this morning and it was 55 degrees. It's warming up a little. So, I'm just going to give a few updates on some of the things that the team's been working on. You're going to hear from a few of the staff today on some of their programs, but just for awareness of other things that are going on in the agency.

So, first off, for training and professional development, our 2026 School Resource Officer and School Security Employee Training Academy kicks off this week. They're going to be down in Dorchester. They're virtual this week and they'll be in Dorchester next week. It's going to be the first of seven sessions for this year for the 2026 School Year. So, we're really looking forward to the new SRO's and School Security Employees that'll be trained throughout the school year. So, very exciting. Last fall, we were very happy to receive a recorded message from Governor Moore. That's actually now played at the start of every training session. So, that's very exciting. He really reaffirms the importance of the role of our school resource officers and security employees throughout the state. If anyone would like to participate and/or sit through a class or visit a class or provide any comments to any of the attendees, we welcome that. So, if you're interested, please let Kim or I know and we can coordinate with the team to get you down there to see a class. In addition to the Training Academy, we're kicking off the In-Service Training for this year. So, as you know, every school resource officer and security employee that completes the Training Academy every year has to go now through in-service training. So, that kicks off again this month. So, we're very excited about that.

Our School Safety Leadership Academy, this is our second cohort, the snow and ice and cold from last week, postponed the start of that. So, we will be kicking that off actually next month. It'll be our second cohort. And this is a training that's available to our public and private school leaders throughout the state. And then on our school resource officer and security employees, another exciting announcement for this year is last year, as you all know, we kicked off an SRO of the Year program. So, nominations for SRO of the year and this year we're going to have an SRO of the Year as well as a School Security Employee of the Year. So those nominations are now open and I believe the nominations are open through the end of March. So very excited about that. And big thank you to Advisory Board member, Pam Gaddy who's on our nominations committee. So, Pam, thank you for all your help and support in identifying the winners for the SRO of the Year as well as the School Security Employee of the Year. Some of our more collaborative school safety initiatives... So, the Handle with Care program is going really well. It's really regaining some momentum. There was sort of a pause for a little bit. Now that it's been taken over by our team as well as the Department of Education, we're able to...the teams have been coordinating with local leads on the Handle with Care program. So, it's really we're pretty close to bringing on all 24 to have active Handle with Care programs. So, we're very excited about that. For behavioral threat assessment, we're continuing our engagement with the local BTA leads. We have quarterly meetings with that group. That group continues to coordinate with and expand their partnerships with local, state, and federal BTA experts as they continue to develop new and needed resources throughout for our state

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and local partners. I'm also very excited to announce that we have welcomed three interns to the MCSS team for this semester. So, from the University of Maryland's fellow program, we're going to bring onboard three interns. You're going to be supporting our data visualization. So really helping us in that area of helping us to visualize our data as well as doing a refreshment of our website. Excuse me, a refreshment of our website that will hopefully allow the public and our partners to be able to find information that they need more quickly, make it a little more organized, and better organized as the state transitions to new state level templates. And then finally, just a couple of event updates. So, first off, our statewide tabletop exercise for public schools is going to be next week on February 11th. So, we're very excited about that. And then our PREpare 2026 Conference is scheduled for July 22 and 23 of this year. So, we really hope you'll all register, attend. We have some fantastic, I think the count was over 50 submissions for presentations this year. Some very exciting—the presentation committee is going to have a rough time trying to identify or trim down the number of presentations that will be held this year. But we're very excited about that conference as we are every year. We look forward to hopefully seeing you all there. Happy to answer any questions about any of the programs that are going on.

GINA JAMES: All right. I have a quick question. I think it's great that you have a lot of people that's presenting or want to present. Do you have any way of knowing what people are looking for to then guide your...

KATE BRYAN: Decision- making?

GINA JAMES: Decision making. Correct.

KATE BRYAN: Yeah. Yeah. Absolutely. Okay. So, at the end of every conference, so all of the attendees that come to our conference receive an evaluation form where we ask just that. So, we ask not just how did this year's conference go, but what are you looking for next year? Excellent. So yes so, we do that as well as we ask our partners throughout the year so we have various meetings with on the school safety high side, on the behavioral health side and we gather that information just prior to sending out the call for speakers. Great. So great question though. Thank you. All right, Mr. Chair, back to you.

MICHAEL BROWN: All right, thank you, Miss Bryan, for those updates and, you know, always get excited, especially about the annual conference. So, if you guys have not already saved the date on that and, decided to attend, I definitely plan on attending that myself this year and hopefully being able to help out in any which way that I can. Since there's not any more questions, we will move forward with the next agenda item.

2025-2026 School year Lockdown Drill Survey Data

MICHAEL BROWN: The next item on our agenda is Dr. Jerica Knox from the National Center of School Mental Health. She will provide us with an update on lockdown drill data from the 2025-26 school year. Dr. Knox, are you ready?

DR. JERICA KNOX: I'm ready. Can everyone see my screen? Yes. Okay, very good. Welcome to the wonderful world of data. Yay. So, I am just going to share some updates from

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this school year on the effectiveness and psychological impact of lockdown drills in Maryland public schools. So, survey participation is where we see the most dramatic change from last year. So, as a reminder, we built the surveys fall, summer, and fall 2024. So, data collection only occurred during the spring 2025 semester for last school year. So, for this school year, starting August 2025 through the end of January of this year, we have a total of 202 schools that have filled out the school context survey. So more than triple last year's total. On one hand, this is awesome. we're steadily increasing participation. On the other hand, 202 out of 400 schools in Maryland says that we still have some work to do. And then I also have some district breakdowns. If anyone's interested in that, feel free to, you know, put in the chat or interrupt at any time. We're also seeing some increases across the stakeholder group. So, around 9,000 students have participated in the student survey. 2400 for school staff and that's up from 1,000 last year and then 1300 parents and that one is up from 700 parents last year. So overall increases in participation but a priority is figuring out how do we get even more the students and staff and parents who have filled out these surveys thus far provide us with really good information on lockdown drill experiences in Maryland public schools but with only 202 schools thus far participating there's only so much representation. So basically, broader participation helps us to reduce the risk that our findings are being driven by a small subset of schools. So that's participation and then some key insights from the survey or surveys. As a reminder, we did ask questions related to the domains that you see at the bottom of the screen. So, planning and preparation communication implementation experience and of course effectiveness and psychological impact. Starting with planning and preparation, we're continuing to take a look at the extent to which lockdown drill planning teams are multidisciplinary. So, this is best practice of course because stakeholders from different disciplines and those who hold different experiences and perspectives have different but complimentary knowledge to share with the team to make the drills effective like what you see here on the screen for each planning team stakeholder. According to the participating schools, most include a school admin on the planning team and then the numbers drop significantly from there. Most include a school admin, right? But then classroom teachers, school resource officers, only half include them. And then only 34% include a school mental health professional, and only 4% include a community member.

We also ask about accommodations for students with disabilities and English language learners. For students with disabilities, only 36% of schools said yes, we do provide some accommodations for those students. So, this included things like noise-cancelling headphones, using social stories and just other sensory sorts of tools if necessary. And then even lower for English language learners. So only 12% of schools. And this looks like having flyers and announcements translated in different languages just depending on who the students are in that particular school for communication. So, we want to know about when students were not, oh excuse me, students' parents and school staff when they were notified of the drill and the quality of that communication. For students, most of them at 80% reported being informed in advance. Only 53% of parents reported the same. So, some work to do there. And then we also asked parents about notifications after. So, it did increase there. About 72% said yes, they did receive some sort of notice that the drill happened. We asked about quality for school staff. 86% agree that they received enough advanced notice to prepare for their role for the drill. So pretty good on that front, but again some work to do in terms of notification by stakeholder groups' implementation experience. So, we asked students, were they able to follow the steps of the drill easily and 83% of them agreed said yes absolutely. Just to note, we do have the same—we asked the same question from school staff as well though it's not reported on this

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slide but just wanted to share that we are getting multiple perspectives here. Now, while 83% of them said yes, we were able to follow or I was able to follow the steps of the drill easily. 14% also said that they did see mistakes during the drill. This is pretty similar to last year. I believe it was around 20%. So, a little lower but again, with more participation we're getting a more accurate representation of the mistakes during the drill that happen. So, this is an area also where we reported or excuse me probed for more open-ended responses and the main mistakes that students said were happening were other students talking phones, out playing music, talking, laughing, that sort of thing. I saw a chat. I think it was revolving county reports. Yes. We are able to create county reports for the school year. So, if you have a request for that, just let me know.

Effectiveness. So, did the drill improve participants' feelings of preparedness and confidence? 57% of students said yes. So not where we would want that number to be. I believe last year was around 80%. For both school staff and parents, 71% said yes, the drill helped to improve my preparedness or for parents. Yes, we gained confidence in their child or children's school safety procedures. And then finally, psychological impact. So, 8% of students reported feeling upset or scared during the lockdown drill. And then we also asked the same question to school staff and parents. Around the same amount saw the same thing. So, 5% of school staff and 7% of parents said yes, they did see students feeling upset or scared either during the drill or for parents after they came home. Here are some sample quotes from the surveys just to shed some light on some of these findings. We're continuing to see the same sorts of themes as last year. So, the first two quotes are related to what-if sorts of questions. So, a student said, "I feel like we should do drills during lunch or gym because what will we do in those spaces or if we're in the hallway getting to class, what if you're midway in the bathroom?" And then school staff endorsed the same sort of thing with that second quote. "A student asked what to do if I'm left or what to do if left in the hallway related to the mistakes happening during the drill." The third bullet is from a student, excuse me, is from a teacher who was affected by it with all of those mistakes. "So, as a teacher who has previous trauma with gun-related incidents in a school setting, I feel very" com excuse me, "uncomfortable with my students' performance in the lockdown drill. They didn't take it seriously. Were laughing. Caused me to leave the" school day or excuse me "school early for the day and then finally communication on the drill." So, a parent said "I believe in lockdown drills however I was not able to access information regarding my children's drill on any platforms. So just signaling the need for clearer and available communication on the drill." So those are just some key findings from this year thus far. Again, we've been able to increase participation in surveys, but still have a long way to go. and again, the more schools we get, the more accurate picture we'll have of lockdown drill experiences statewide. We saw some similar findings as last year, like the need for increasing multidisciplinary planning teams. Making sure that students and staff and families are notified of the drill before and after, and then making sure that trainings include situational guidance for all of those what if sorts of questions that occur. So, that was a super-duper high-level findings presentation. Hopefully that was helpful to give you a snapshot of what's been going on this year. Any comments, questions or guidance on how to get more schools involved? That would be wonderful too.

LAUREL MOODY: Hi Jerica, this is Laurel Moody. On the first slide when you listed 202 schools participating, are you able to share is that like counties? Is that heavy in certain counties? Is the distribution across the state? Where is the participation heavy? Where is the participation lacking? Thank you.

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JERICA KNOX: Yeah. Yeah. I have... I can put this in the chat. I am not a Marylander so I can't tell you regions but I can tell you the specific counties and where everyone is coming from. So, a lot from Baltimore County, Carol County, other a few from others as well. So, I just put that in the chat for you.

LAUREL MOODY: Great. Thank you.

MICHAEL BROWN: Any other any other questions? All right, Dr. Knox, I really do appreciate it. Being a high school principal myself, like this information is very useful for me and I also have seen a trend in in our students you know definitely having more anxiety when it comes to our drills. And you know, as a building level principal trying to communicate things in advance lowers that down extremely so I've seen a lot of students reach out to me individually wanting to know every month like touching base with need just to know when drills are going to take place. So, this information is going to be super useful for building principles and local LEAs. So, thank you for that.

Standard Response Protocols

MICHAEL BROWN: We're going to move forward the next item on the agenda which is Mr. Ron Pierce from MCSS. He will now share information with us related to the Emergency Standard Response protocols. Mr. Pierce, the floor is yours, sir.

RONALD PIERCE: Thank you, sir. Appreciate that. I hope you guys hear me okay. So, I think many of you are probably familiar with this from our last survey from late last year. We talked about this about 3/4 or more of the school systems in Maryland are using the Standard Response protocols from the I Love You Guys Foundation. So, this is probably a bit of a preach to the choir kind of situation, but for those who not familiar with this, we'll go over pretty quickly. Thanks to Kim for making this very succinct. This is a much larger and longer presentation. If it's done you know at a school level or for parents but for you all this is kind of an overview. So next slide. So, these are the five actions that are part of the Standard Response protocols. I put 2025 up there. There is a new operational guidance booklet. So, if you want the whole you want the whole shebang, you go to the I Love You Guys Foundation, download that that PDF booklet. It explains each of these actions in great detail. We're not going to go into that kind of detail today, but there's a few changes to it regards to transitioning that are part of the 2025 updates. Transitioning is fairly important and it happens every day. And it's something that I think more and more school systems are kind of working out the bugs for. Thank you, Aaron, for the link too. So, just real quick too, before we go to the first action, in case you don't know, the I Love You Guys Foundation was started by John Michael Keys and his wife following the death of their daughter at the Black Canyon shooting in 2006. I Love You Guys. It's kind of interesting name, but the reason it came about was because that was the last thing that she texted to him before she died. So, they've this is done in her honor essentially. There's a better way to mitigate these types of circumstances. It's a noble calling and they're pretty passionate about as you can imagine. So, HOLD is the newest one of the actions. In the upper left corner, you'll see hold in your classroom. That's actually what's announced. That's what's said over the PA or through the communication app you use or however these kinds of communications are done HOLD in your classroom. I would say and I

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tell a lot of folks when I teach this in your current room because if they're in the library, if they're in the you know somewhere where they're eating cafeteria, let's say they're to remain in whatever room they're in. So, the protocol—the way it's put out is in your classroom. Most students, probably during the day, are in the classroom. So that's where it reads, but it's to stay where they are. The doors, the interior doors are locked. So, you want to keep the hallways clear. There's a few situations where this is useful. You're trying to get someone who's injured or ill out of the building, let's say on a gurney. That can happen indoors or outdoors, but you're just trying to keep the hallways clear. There could be... I've been some situations where there was some blood spilled in a hallway. So, to clean that up, you know, you're going to want to keep that area clear. So that's the first protocol. That's can also be combined with secure, and I'll talk about that in a second when we get to the next slide. Go ahead.

SECURE is the next one. And interesting thing is this with this is probably this is the problem exists outside the building. So, the hazard, the threat, whatever it is outside the building and everybody should get inside. All the students currently outside the building should get inside and the exterior doors are locked. That's the action that's put in place by whoever makes the announcement. SECURE—get inside lock exterior doors. This, a lot of times, gets confused with lockdown by local first responders who, let's say, are as I used to be, chasing people through neighborhoods looking for individuals. And if you're anywhere near a school, local law enforcement might let you know, hey, you need to, unfortunately, they won't use the word SECURE, but they say we're there's a problem in the neighborhood. We need you to lock the school down. Well, what they mean is they want you to secure the school to make sure that nobody's outside the exterior doors locked. A lot of school systems, we've been working with them recently, there's a ration that's going on for several years with bomb threats or in some cases swatting. So, they'll call and say there's a shooter in a school when that's not the case and that's it's unfortunately very common. A lot of school systems are putting a secure in place with a hold so that they can search the school for what I like to call an FED, which is the same as an IED, except it's a fictional explosive device. You're walking around the school looking for something out of place. And there's a lot of training available. FBI and FEMA has some printing available for what you're looking for basically. But they do a quick search of the school and then they release from the hold so that students can go back to what they were doing without having to evacuate the school. A lot of have chosen to make that call now and that's how and why you would use the HOLD and SECURE together. Next.

So, this is the one everybody would think of when they think of a school emergency. So, the danger, this is this is important. Danger is really inside the school. So, it's too late to lock it out. Something's gotten in and you're trying to keep the kids safe. The action is LOCKDOWN-LOCKS-LIGHTS-OUT OF SIGHT. And that's always all of these are always repeated. So, when you just don't say it once, you say it twice. Object: lock the classroom door, turn off the lights. You're going to move to a location in the room, out of sight from the vision panel in the door or from any interior window that might exist. So that's when we tell people to close those blinds that are on the door or that shut, you know, basically sometimes it's just a piece of paper that they put over the door. But in any case, you want to try to limit the vision into the room. Again, the problem is inside. I get a lot of questions from schools like, well, what if we're outside on the playground and they call a lockdown? Well, the problem is in the school. So, would you really want to go back in? And the answer is no. There are evacuation points off campus predetermined by the school should be. That's where you'd go, right? So, there's a lot of situations and I get a lot of what-ifs and if you think of any while we're talking about this, please let me know. That's you know, it's always helpful. Talk those things through. Any

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questions on that one because that's a big one? That's one that once it's in place, the only way to release those classrooms is with either an administrator with a key or by a law enforcement officer who has a key. You don't want to try to make an announcement and to basically to go release the lockdown. Because that could be unfortunately you know that could be something that's done as a way to increase the number of targets for somebody who's trying to do something really bad. Only the police or the administrator should release from a lockdown. Next slide. EVACUATE. So, everybody does this when they do fire drills, right? That's kind of what we think of. building for whatever reason is not safe to remain inside. Gas leak, fires, and fire drill is another one example, but the students move orderly outside. Following the chief's directions, you're going to evacuate to a named location. If it's fire drill assembly **points**, if it's some other place that's a little further away. I know some schools have separate evacuation points or if they get bomb threats because Fire Board who usually has most of the explosive and bomb squads will advise them, look, you need to be 300 feet away. This evacuation point you use for fire is not far enough away. So, you have to say specifically where you expect them to. That's important. Any questions on that? Next is SHELTER. So, for a hazard using a safety strategy. So, if you're sheltering for a tornado and that's what you say, you're going to go to those special locations inside your school that you've designated as a shelter for tornadoes. Safe zone somewhere away from windows, especially in a hallway for example, in a lower part of the building. For earthquake, it would be drop cover hole and I think there's a day every year we're actually supposed to practice that or for if in a hazmat situation something outside the building you probably just close the windows and doors it's probably the best you're going to do not any other way to seal the building really unless you know how to turn off the HVAC system. But you have to state what the hazard is and what action you want folks to take. This covers really three of the required drills in the CO in COMAR. If you're talking about severe weather, you're talking about earthquakes, you know, and a shelter in place is also in there. It's just for these kind of situations. So, any questions on that one? Okay, next slide.

So, this is part there's a part of the 2025 version of this that's new. It talks about how to transition between some of these things. Just really quickly, we mentioned the fact that the police department might call and say, "Hey, you lock the school down because there's someone running around the neighborhood." That would actually be a SECURE, but it happens in a situation. We've had it happen several times. Something happens outside the school. It could be some kind of violence, maybe a shooting, and so the school goes into a secure mode because they don't want what's outside getting in. On a couple occasions, unfortunately it happened where somebody involved with that situation actually might have made it in the building before they're able to lock the exterior doors. So, they shift from SECURE to a LOCKDOWN. It's really just based on the environment. It's based on what information that you can get and gather at the time. Make your best call and be willing, you know, be able to make those transitions u to as the situation evolves. That's kind of it for me. Any other questions on this? I think most of you probably already know this protocol. So, any questions? Any what-ifs?

DANIEL BUCK: I have a question that's probably specific to our school. I don't know if you saw my email, but so we're not a public school. We're a private school and we're on like a small farm, right? So, we're like a campus with old buildings and I know you've been to the campus. a few years ago, before we adopted this the I Love You Guys plan. The staff used to run drills where they would have like basically like a fleeing drill like evacuation drill but like

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if something happens where the students would basically like run into the forest. Obviously, there are situations where depending on what happens, like that might make sense. But I'm wondering if you recommend us continuing those drills in case something that happens that it's not, you know, one of these types of drills, but I continually get questions from the staff about this.

RONALD PIERCE: So, it would be pretty rare occurrence, but it could happen, right? So, I remember yeah I remember what you were talking about doing. Unless depending on the age of the it depends a bit on the age of the students right? So, if they're older and they've got their phones with them, yeah sure but I you know, if they're younger students where do you take because you have preschool too so where do you take them during that drill yeah?

DANIEL BUCK: So we actually haven't done the evacuation drill yet this one like the say the normal But I think what they used to do before my time, they would they would practice running into the forest nearby. Even the preschool students would...

RONALD PIERCE: Even preschool students?

DANIEL BUCK: I think so.

RONALD PIERCE: I mean, they'll probably follow and they'll stay with the teacher. Yeah. So, you need some off-site evacuation points and I remember you were kind of still working on that. Trouble with that, right? Because of where you're located. You need a few spots off campus and that's what you basically tell folks and let them in some cases it's going to be haphazard how they get there. It's probably going to be on their own if they're kids, you know, over a certain age. But yeah, try as best you can and if it's in the woods then that's where it's going to be. I we were hoping that you could use I believe one of the local one of the neighbors. Right, that out or...

DANIEL BUCK: Yeah, we do. So, we have a neighbor that that's willing to do that but basically the staff wants to know if we should be practicing once a year just this like fleeing drills.

RONALD PIERCE: You know, I'd almost rather it's more practical probably and we tell folks this to try to practice some kind of organized evacuation offsite. That's, you know, because if something happens, one of the buildings is unsafe, you're going to have to that's how you're going to work it out. You're not you're not really going to flee in terror. You know, you're basically your you have to evacuate campus for some reason. You have to work out transportation. You have to try to work out some kind of reunification. That's a little more practical, I think.

DANIEL BUCK: Got it. Thank you.

RONALD PIERCE: Sure.

MICHAEL BROWN: Any other questions for Mr. Pierce? All right. Thank you, sir. As usual, appreciate your presentation. We're going to move forward with the next item on our agenda,

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which is Miss Sandy Caldwell and Miss Brittany Florey from MCSS.

Safe School Maryland Anonymous Reporting System

MICHAEL BROWN: They will now share information related to the safe schools of Maryland anonymous reporting system. So, I want to welcome Miss Caldwell and Miss Florey. The floor is yours ladies.

SANDRA CALDWELL: All right. Thank you so much. Good morning, everyone. Thank you for having us. So today we are going to do a quick overview of the Safe Schools Maryland anonymous reporting system. Next slide please. You can keep going. One more. All right. So, we're often asked, what is Safe Schools Maryland? What exactly is this system? So, it is a way for anyone to report any school safety concerns anonymously at any time of the day. This is a 24/7 system. And it is meant to be a prevention tool. So, this is here for people to hopefully report before something happens when they see something brewing to just to let somebody know. So, this system, one of the great pieces of this, is that it is free. So, it's free for those who want to make a report and then it's free for all of the schools and school systems that want to participate. We have there are approximately 25 other states that also have a system like this. So, this isn't something new. When we joined in 2018, we were probably about the 10th state somewhere around there to get one of these systems. And it just keeps growing this this idea of a statewide reporting system. And they are a great resource. We meet with them monthly to share ideas, best practices, and also, see kind of what's trending in each state so that we can see if we're off or if things are different here. And we have over 1500 public and private schools participating in the system currently. Now, we do like to remind people that this system does not replace calling 911 in an emergency. For students, we remind them that this doesn't replace telling a trusted adult. So, if they have a trusted adult that they can speak to that can help them with situations, we want them to go to that person. But if that person isn't available or they just don't feel comfortable telling them, they can certainly use Safe Schools Maryland. We also remind everyone that you would never make a false report to 911. You don't want to do that with this system either. Next slide, please. All right. So, the purpose of this system—so these systems are in place to help school administrators get ahead of things. So, this will hopefully prevent incidents from happening or from them becoming a larger problem. Maybe something small has happened and it's starting to escalate. This system gives students or whoever a way to report that they think that you know something might happen or something might get worse. We also know that people feel more comfortable reporting when it's anonymous. So, this allows tipsters to feel comfortable reporting. and it encourages that culture of reporting or speaking up. Especially in bullying, we always tell students, you know, speak up, tell someone. You know, the see something, say something program has been around for quite some time. This really lends into that. So, it's kind of just an extension of that. and the system makes it really convenient. The fact that it's 24/7, maybe they want to tell somebody at the school, but it's, you know, 900 p.m. and their student just told them. This way, they can report it. it gets right over to the people who need to get it. And they know that it's going to make it there. Also, this allows schools to kind of keep an eye on the climate of their school. Are they getting a lot of tips about maybe a certain social media challenge or drugs or bullying? It helps them to kind of keep a pulse on what's going on in their schools. And most importantly, this system can save lives and it has same thing nationwide with the other systems as well. So, we just do want to remind people that this is a tip line. So, it's a

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proactive system. it's not a complaint line. Those kinds of reports really need to go elsewhere. again, never make a false report to Safe Schools Maryland. Next slide, please. So, our system was launched, as I mentioned, in 2018, October 3rd to be exact. And again, this is a 247 system. It is anonymous. And we've had over 5,400 tips received since then via one of the three ways to report, which I will go over in just a moment. So, our top categories overall over the you know since the launch have been assault or intend to harm others, bullying or cyber bullying, general school complaint and planned school attack and those are just in alphabetical order. Next slide please. So, the system has a number of features that make it unique and really kind of give it some power. So, this system is available in other languages. So, if someone doesn't speak English, they can still report. They can still speak up and get their concerns to who need to the people who need to get them. This system also allows the tipster to attach photos, videos, or documents to their tips, which can be very helpful to the school or whoever is investigating the situation. When the tipster submits a tip, they are going to get a tip ID and a password and we want them to save that because that allows them to log back in to give more information or to add additional photos, videos or documents. Also, our there's a two-way dialogue feature. So, this allows tipsters and the contacts who receive the reports to communicate. So, for example, if a tip is submitted and they forget to put the name of the student involved, they can go back in and do that or the contacts can ask for that information or any other investigative information that they may need. Next slide, please. So, there are three ways to make a report. The first is our hotline. This is your age-old pick up the phone and call. So, you're going to call, talk to our tip takers. They'll take the report and enter it into the system and get it to who it needs to go to. The second way to report is the web form. So, from any browser, go to safechoolsmd.org and click on report a tip. This will bring up a form and you enter all the information that you know or want to give and submit that way. And then the third way is through our free app that you just download from the app store if you have an Apple device or Google play for Android and then you use that similar to the web form. Next. And then from there the system so the tip comes in the person hits submit it is immediately received into the software or our tip takers are entering it. So, our operation center gets it and they are going to triage the tip meaning kind of assign it a level and determine who needs to get this. The tip is going to be forwarded to the right contacts. In some situations, that's just the school or school system level contacts. In other situations, that will also include first responders. Once that tip is sent off, those contacts get a tip report via email. They get an email notification and a text notification. And this just lets them know that they have a tip in the system. They need to log in and view it. and then from there they investigate it, they act on it, and then they go in and update it and close it. So that part really only takes about 60 seconds to do. The investigation part is probably the part that takes the most time out of the whole process. Next, so here's these are just some statistics over the last five years including this school year. So, like I said, we started in 2018. but remember we had we started in October. So, our tip reporting years go August to July. So, I think the first year we were in the 400s. Second year in the 400s but then we started to shut down for COVID then we had COVID. So, these statistics are post-COVID numbers. So, you can see you know going from the 400s when we first started to starting in the 700s post-COVID and then increasing from there. As I mentioned there you're going to see planned school attack and bullying, the general school complaint, assault, and/or intend to harm others. So, all of those are there generally in the top. They do change up a little bit year to year. And then this school year so far, we're at about 575. Now looking at that number compared to last year; we're down about 18%. This is a phenomenon we are hearing nationwide. So, the other states are saying they also are seeing a

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decrease in their tips as well. The big question has been is this because of the cell phone bans in the schools? Certainly it doesn't mean that you know we shouldn't have limitations on cell phones that we're just kind of now looking at when are the tips coming in. Are they coming in more after school versus during school when students maybe don't have their phones. So, we are going to be looking more into this to kind of see how this is playing out and what we can do some ideas to make sure that students can still report if they need to. Next slide. Next slide, please. There it goes. So, this is a QR code. You're certainly welcome to scan that. And so, that will take you to the reporting system. So, this is just kind of an overview. Again, this is an anonymous app, phone system, and web form that's available 24/7 to all of our pre-k to 12 private and public schools throughout the State of Maryland. And there again are the three ways to report. So, if you're using the app, you want to go to the app store or Google Play to search Safe Schools Maryland. And then the other two ways to report. Next slide. That's all I have. So, I'll take any questions. Go ahead, Eric.

ERIC EBERSOLE: Hey, thank you. I'm looking at the slide that had the statistics for the number of calls for the year and underneath of it, you had a bunch of reasons there. Thank you. Nicely done. That I see a bunch of different reasons. I don't know if they're different in each year. So, are you highlighting the most significant ones? I was trying to listen. I might have missed you saying that. Or in other words, I see guns in one of them but not in the others.

SANDRA CALDWELL: Yes. So, these are the top five categories for that reporting year which is August 1st to July 31st. So again, you know, those same topics tend to pop up over and over. but like you mentioned that 23-24 year, that was the very first year we ever saw guns in the top five. And now the difference between guns and planned school attack is that planned school attack tips tend to say this person's going to shoot up the school. It's a very kind of generalized threat. Whereas guns can either be this person is posting pictures of them holding a gun. They have a gun. or they said they're going to shoot this person. So, it's more specific. It's a more targeted threat.

ERIC EBERSOLE: Thanks. And are they ordered from top to bottom?

SANDRA CALDWELL: Most at the top.

ERIC EBERSOLE: Okay. And you probably some of this I was poking around at something else. So, you I'm sorry if everyone if I'm having Sandra repeat herself here. No, I didn't be doing some work on this. I wanted to make sure I understood that data right there. So, thanks so much.

SANDRA CALDWELL: Yes. Thank you for asking because I clarified it. I was able to clarify.

ERIC EBERSOLE: Thank you.

SANDRA CALDWELL: Cheers.

MICHAEL BROWN: All right. Any other questions for Sandra? All right. Appreciate you, Sandra. Thank you so much. Yeah.

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2026 Legislative Session

MICHAEL BROWN: Yeah. We're going to move forward with our last agenda item. and this is going to be Miss Buckheit explaining the 2026 legislative session. Kim, are you ready?

KIMBERLY BUCKHEIT: I am. I don't know that I'm going to explain the legislative session. I'm sorry, Delegate Ebersole, but I will. I will share some of the bills that we are tracking.

MICHAEL BROWN: You will do amazing.

KIMBERLY BUCKHEIT: So yes, here are some bills that MCSS is tracking. generally, what we do is...so actually Kate and I review all the bills that are proposed every day and we pull out those bills that will have a direct nexus to the work that MCSS does. Or an indirect so may sort of impact what our schools may be asked to do as well. So, the first one is HB 326. We are very excited in that, it was scheduled for a hearing. So this would actually codify the anonymous reporting system that Sandy just spoke about. So, within this bill, it would codify that Maryland has a statewide anonymous reporting system. It also directs MCSS to develop operational guidelines and procedures related to the system. requires each public school system to participate or operate a substantively similar system and it protects the information which would be new as well. So, Delegate Ebersole is our bill sponsor for this and we very much appreciate him doing that and all the work that that entails. So, thank you. Thank you. So, and we would also say any members that are on today's call, we've also reached out to our Subcabinet members to ask folks to provide a letter of support, offer testimony, anything to help us move this forward to enacting it. House Bill 311 relates to individuals with disabilities, the accessibility and emergency planning elements. So, this really, what it would do is actually add an additional element to our annual report. So, public school systems annually report a host of data summaries for the year. This would just add another data point to that summary information that they provide to MCSS. Senate Bill 51 actually is in hearing at some point this week. Relates to video recording devices in self-contained special education classrooms. So, defines that there's at least one camera recording when students are present. Defines who can view the footage from these cameras. As well as the reporting mechanism if misconduct is observed. Law enforcement is to investigate for criminal misconduct based on this video footage. And it allows for So we've seen this is this year a couple of bills that have this interesting dynamic flexible manner to procure the cameras. So, it'll actually allows for fundraising, donations of cameras, other methods by which these could be procured to have placed in classrooms house. So, that's a good example though of one that doesn't have a direct nexus to MCSS other than potentially related to the investigation and viewing but is definitely something that we watch because it may have some indirect implications. House Bill 14. County boards of education related to the bully harassment intimidation report. So, for those who have been on our advisory board for a couple of years, we, the MCAC, Coordinated Analysis Center, has come and shared the hate bias report and the data from that in the past. So, this is an element to look at how collection within a school environment related to hate bias incidents could be created could be collected in a in a different manner. So, it would require local boards to post on their local web page the number of incidents motivated by hate bias disaggregated by the motivation. So, we, MCSS, did do a letter of support for this and it was in hearing actually last Thursday. Interesting hearing. Thank you Delegate Ebersole for some great questions in that hearing. Senate Bill 71 and Senate Bill 158 each relate to safe

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pathways to school taking two different approaches. 71 is looking at developing a commission that would identify, coordinate and secure funding for safety pathways for students traveling to and from school. So walking, riding a bike dynamic. The 158 also though is looking so titled safe alternative routes to public schools. So requires local boards to post annually safe pathways to school and then requires counties to review the report and construct sidewalks and crosswalks to create safe routes. So, two bills that are interesting for us to watch. And I'll say that too, folks may or may not know realize MCSS has requirements in the Safe to Learn Act related to transportation and safe passage to schools. Senate Bill 81, House Bill 329, a cross file, speaks to SRO's being added to the existing law enforcement official prohibited for engaging in sexual contact, with a student, an individual who is a student of that school. Last week came sort of on the tail of this a little bit. House Bill 501 actually expands that to any person of authority prohibited from engaging in sexual conduct. defines a minor inside of that bill and also defines criminal charges, misdemeanor and felony related charges. 501 does. Let me read your note, Dr. Patterson. Yep. House Bill 12, the juvenile sex offender registry. So, our local, all of our local systems... there was a bill roughly three years ago, four years ago requires a model, a policy, local policy related to juvenile sex offender. Which is very difficult for folks to know who is on the juvenile sex offender registry. This bill would actually add local school superintendent to the list of people able to access that registry. House Bill 123 related to reportable offenses and it adds child pornography to the list of required violations that are reported to schools. It also adds the higher education institution. So if there's a school who is dually enrolled, is attending a public high school potentially and a community college often doing a dual enrollment situation and there is a reportable offense on that individual that the public school is made aware of. This provides some provisions for that institute of higher ed to also be made aware of that reportable offense.

House Bill 222 makes it acceptable and legal for individuals to possess Naloxone and other reversing medication when on school grounds. It also includes some liability limitations for individuals who administer it. House Bill 76 relates to our school safety grant allocation and indicates that in the spring roughly any money that has not been used by jurisdiction can be reallocated to jurisdiction who have used all of their funds basically. And Senate Bill 218, our State Superintendent of Schools, it gives currently her, Dr. Wright, the authority to declare a state of emergency that impacts schools directly. So, it has some provisions in it. If something an event is happening that would prohibit in-person attendance for at least 14 consecutive school days, the State Superintendent of Schools would have the authority to declare a state of emergency. And we did submit a letter of support for that today. I believe that is it. Any questions? I am by no means an expert, but am welcome to try to answer a question, find an answer, or open for discussion. I'm going to go all the way back to this very special one, HB 326.

MICHAEL BROWN: Any other questions or comments? I know it's a lot to take in. It's a lot of juicy stuff here. So, you might get some questions and stuff later after the meeting. But yeah, the safe pathways SB 71 and SB 158 that comes in really heavy today because we've had bus companies that just told us out of the blue that like, well, they're not picking up kids today because it's too much ice and stuff. So, how are the kids going to get to school? So, that's going to be an interesting one. But we don't have any more questions or comments. I appreciate taking the time out. We do have one here. Mr. Ebersole

ERIC EBERSOLE: Sorry rolling up at the last minute there. Kim, I'm sure we have access to

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this document somewhere. Is that true? To make it go faster for me, would you mind putting it in the chat so I can just grab it up real quick? Yeah. Thank you so much. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Closing

MICHAEL BROWN: Yes, sir. All the time. All right. So, the next advisory board meeting will be on March 2nd. Can't believe we are rolling through the winter months here. It will be from 10:00 a.m. to 12 pm. Please don't hesitate to contact Miss Bryan or Miss Buckheit with any questions or additional items for the agenda that may need attention before the May meeting. All right. Do we have a motion to adjourn the meeting?

GINA JAMES: A motion to adjourn.

MICHAEL BROWN: All right. Who is that? I couldn't see.

GINA JAMES: Gina James.

MICHAEL BROWN: All right. And do we have a second?

JOSEPH CORMIER: I'll second.

MICHAEL BROWN: Okay. All right. Thank you so much Mr. Cormier. All in favor?

All: Aye.

MICHAEL BROWN: Any oppose? All right, everybody. Please make sure you enjoy the rest of your week and stay safe out there. And thank you guys so much for attending the meeting today. All right. Thank you. All right. Thank you. Thank you.