

Message from Our Chair



I am pleased to share with you the 2021 School Safety Subcabinet Annual Report summarizing the annual activities of the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS), a dedicated partner in delivering a world-class education to every child.

We thank our stakeholders for their commitment to Maryland's children and maintaining the safety of both our brick and mortar and virtual school communities.

With the reintegration of our students into an in-person learning environment this school year, the Maryland Center for School Safety continues to play an essential role in reimagining the future of our school communities.

The work of all of our educators, school staff and stakeholders working in collaboration will be especially critical moving forward. To protect the physical and emotional wellbeing of our students, we must rally around them, harnessing best practices and applying them to our new normal - because our past normal was not good enough. We can and will be better.

As we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic and implement the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, we have a once in a generation opportunity to bring real, meaningful change - and usher in a new era of true education excellence and equity.

Thank you to our partners who work to achieve the MCSS mission of promoting and enhancing safer school communities, including members of the School Safety Subcabinet, Advisory Board, and Student Focus Group, for remaining focused on ensuring that every Maryland school provides every student a safe, fair, and inclusive educational environment.

Mohammed Choudhury
State Superintendent of Schools

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About Us

The Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS), an independent unit within the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), collaborates with schools, educators, mental health professionals, law enforcement, students, parents, State and local agencies, and community and other organizations in order to provide a coordinated and comprehensive approach to school safety in Maryland. We share information on best practices, programs, and resources, provide grants, technical assistance, and training, collect, analyze, and integrate statewide data, and promote interagency efforts to ensure safe schools across Maryland.

Our shared efforts allow Maryland's diverse schools to better identify and address the needs and concerns of our students. In the process, we are creating inclusive educational environments free from fear, harm, trauma, and unnecessary hardship.

Mission: To promote and enhance safer school communities.

Vision: Safe schools, which are inclusive educational environments free from fear, harm, trauma, and unnecessary hardship.

Values: Integrity, kindness, service, respect, and professionalism.

Community Recognition



Nicete Moodie



Karen Crawford



Kate Hession

On March 22, 2021 Nicete Moodie, Maryland Association of Student Councils (MASC) Executive Director, and Karen Crawford, MASC Assistant Executive Director, virtually presented Kate Hession, MCSS Executive Director, with the Susan Nash Travetto Friend of MASC Award for 2021. This award was presented to MCSS in recognition of the agency's devotion of time, energy, and friendship to the Maryland Association of Student Councils, as evidenced by the MCSS partnership with MASC to launch and nurture the MCSS Student Focus Group (SFG), which gives students from around the State of Maryland a voice in important school safety discussions while developing students' leadership skills.

School Safety Subcabinet

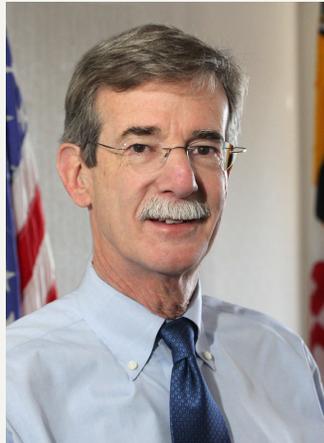
The Maryland Safe to Learn Act of 2018 (Senate Bill 1265), which was signed into law by Governor Hogan on April 10, 2018, significantly altered and expanded the role of the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS). It also established the School Safety Subcabinet and Advisory Board. The Subcabinet serves as a regulatory authority and as the governing board of MCSS.

In 2021 the School Safety Subcabinet began holding meetings in person again; yet, all public meetings continue to be streamed live.

2021-2022 Subcabinet Members



Mohammed Choudhury, Chair
*State Superintendent
of Schools*



Brian E. Frosh
*Attorney General
of Maryland*



Colonel Woodrow W. Jones III
Superintendent of State Police



Dennis R. Schrader
Secretary of Health



Carol A. Beatty
Secretary of Disabilities



Robert A. Gorrell
*Executive Director of the
Interagency Commission
on School Construction*

Recordings of School Safety Subcabinet meetings can be found and viewed at schoolsafety.maryland.gov.

School Safety Advisory Board

The Advisory Board provides the Subcabinet with school safety recommendations.

In 2021 the Subcabinet, MCSS, and Board bid a fond farewell to departing members Jayshree Srinivasan, Dr. Chanta Booker, Rachael Faulkner, and Jon Carrier. We thank them for their dedication to public safety and service to the Board, Subcabinet, and MCSS, and we wish them well in their future endeavors.

2021-2022 Advisory Board Members

Dr. George Arlotto, Chair

Superintendent of Anne Arundel County Public Schools

Eric Ebersole

Maryland House of Delegates

Katherine Klausmeier

Maryland State Senate

Dr. Sharon A. Hoover

Center for School Mental Health

Karin Bailey

Maryland Association of Boards of Education

Dr. Kellie Anderson

School Psychologist

Pamela Gaddy

Maryland State Education Association

James T. Bell

Parent of a Public School Student

Lourdes Padilla

Department of Human Services

Andrew Tress

Department of Juvenile Services

Detective Lawrence E. Smith

Maryland Association of School Resource Officers

Nicholas Shockney

*Director of Special Education
Representative of a Non-Public School*

Sheriff Scott Adams

Maryland Sheriffs' Association

Chief Paul Kifer

Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

Scott Tiffin

Maryland Assembly on School-Based Health Care

David Engel

Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center

Laurel Moody

Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems

Claire Cabral

Maryland Association of Student Councils

Manfred Reek

Representative of School Bus Drivers

Megan Berger

Disability Rights Maryland

Dr. Jodi Colman

School Principal

Captain Patrick D. Herring

Parent of a Child with Disabilities

Thomas E. Alban

Representative of a Non-Public School

Lee-Nadine Oppenheim

Representative of Non-Public Special Education Facility

Recordings/minutes of Advisory Board meetings can be found and viewed at schoolsafety.maryland.gov.

Student Focus Group

The inaugural Maryland Center for School Safety Student Focus Group (SFG) accomplished a great deal during the 2020-2021 school year. The twelve passionate founding members provided MCSS with invaluable feedback about how it can better engage with students across the state, and participated in live conversations about teen mental health, which were shared on MCSS social media accounts.

The twenty-five middle and high school students who are a part of the 2021-2022 SFG continue to provide MCSS with feedback and recommendations regarding school safety issues while diving deeply into timely and important school safety topics with national and state experts in school safety.

2021-2022 Student Focus Group Members

Melany Benites

Prince George's County

Claire Cabral

Baltimore County

Mason Carter

Frederick County

Emelia Crown

Baltimore City

Lucinda Diehl

Carroll County

Brendon Dunne

Worcester County

Panagiotis Fafalios

Baltimore County

Lena Fisher

Frederick County

Taylor Gepes-Carroll

Frederick County

Abigail Giroux

Baltimore City

Roah Hassan

Baltimore County

Ye ji (Sophie) Kang

Howard County

Julianna Lewis

Cecil County

Peyton McDonald

Allegany County

Henry Meiser

St. Mary's County

Jordan Mueller

Anne Arundel County

Bethany Niehaus

Dorchester County

Paige P.

Calvert County

Jack Putnam

Frederick County

Raine Schultze

Frederick County

Heidi Stephens

Cecil County

Pranshu Tyagi

Montgomery County

Schuyler Ward

Anne Arundel County

Hailey Wildesen

Garrett County

Claire Woynerowski

Anne Arundel County

Staff

The individuals who each day work to promote inclusive educational environments free from fear, harm, trauma, and unnecessary hardship.

Leadership



Kate Bryan Hession
Executive Director



Joseph D. Pignataro
Deputy Director

Finance, Data, and Administration



Gifty Quarshie
*Fiscal & Grants
Program Manager*



Jeyan Jebaraj
*Business Solutions &
Data Manager*



Jesika McNeil
Executive Assistant

Operations



Ron Pierce
Regional Manager



Michael Rudinski
*Regional Training &
Certification Specialist*



James Hott
*Regional Training &
Certification Specialist*



Sandra Caldwell
School Safety Analyst

Engagement



Craig Meister
*Communications &
Engagement Manager*

Maryland Office of the Attorney General



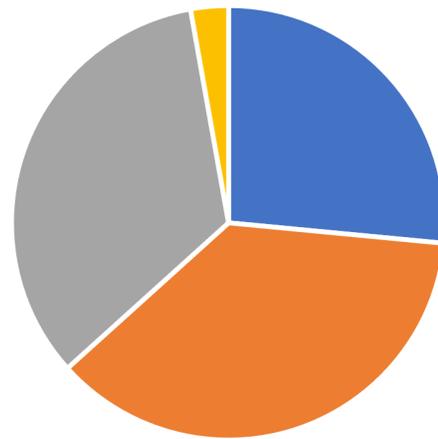
Dawn Luedtke
*Assistant Attorney General &
Counsel to MCSS*

Training for Today and Tomorrow

As pandemic restrictions eased by Summer 2021 MCSS had transitioned all of its Maryland Model SRO Training for School Resource Officers (SROs) and School Security Employees (SSEs) from independent study format back to synchronous format. At the same time, and in consideration of public feedback and evolving professional practices, MCSS redesigned the training to become even more robust. Increasing from forty to eighty hours by early 2022, the Maryland Model SRO Training will include even greater attention to topics ranging from restorative approaches and normative adolescent behavior to crisis intervention and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). These enhancements augment pre-existing modules that cover school safety planning, implicit bias, behavioral threat assessments, and hate bias/hate crimes.

In 2021 MCSS also continued to provide safety partners, educators, students, and parents additional training covering a variety of school safety topics. Examples include the Understanding the Role of the SRO professional development course, School Safety Coordinator Certification Training, which is a hybrid of MCSS SRO training and FEMA Incident Command System (ICS) training, and new this year, Potential for Violence – Return to School, which addresses important issues related to the return to in-person learning after pandemic-related campus closures.

Number of Students



- SRO/SSE: 198
- Understanding the Role: 275
- Potential for Violence: 253
- SSC Certification: 21

Recognized for Excellence

This year, MCSS school safety analyst, Sandra Caldwell, was honored as an instructor of the year by the Maryland Police Training Commission for her role in training SROs and SSEs throughout the year and for her ongoing commitment to training community members and school officials how to use the Safe Schools Maryland Anonymous Reporting System.



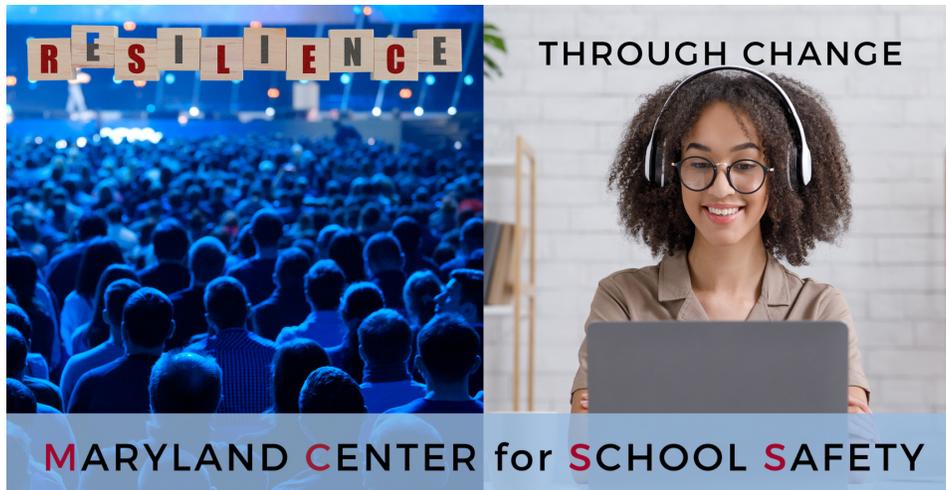
Training and Engagement

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Summer Conference Returns



The MCSS School Safety Summer Conference made a triumphant return in July 2021, albeit in a fully virtual format. Attendees were challenged to harness adversity and develop "Resilience Through Change."

During the four-day conference over twenty presenters shared valuable content, experiences, and best practices while providing actionable and practical takeaways that attendees were to bring back to their communities, schools, and school systems. Topics covered included the intersection between school safety and resilience, social media usage, restorative practices, sexual abuse/human trafficking, ransomware attacks, drug abuse, mental health, and recently-passed legislation.

The conference received 550 total registrants, including sixty-six from out of state. In addition, seventy-six participants earned either one or more continuing education credits or in-service hours through The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), The Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commission (MPCTC), or The National Association of Social Workers (NASW), which required attending and reflecting on the content presented during the conference.



Maryland Governor Larry Hogan, Student Choralsists from Carroll County Public Schools, and State Superintendent of Schools Mohamed Choudhury all made appearances at our virtual summer conference.

Training and Engagement

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Safe Schools Maryland

Communication and Collaboration

Communication is key, especially during times of great uncertainty. MCSS has always held regular information-sharing calls with our school safety partners; yet, as the pandemic has made abundantly clear, there is not a one-size fits all approach to school safety.

Therefore, at the start of the 2020-2021 school year MCSS launched an ambitious plan to offer five unique collaboration calls every month - each with a different targeted audience. The multi-directional flow of communications ensures MCSS best serves its various partners by supporting call participants' diverse disciplines and communities.

School Safety Coordinators

School Safety Coordinators (SSCs) and local school Security Directors serve as the leads for school safety and security within each school system. These calls focus on safety and security issues, concerns, and trends within the twenty-four local school systems.

Mental Health Coordinators

Mental Health Coordinators work within the central office of local school systems to ensure students who are referred for mental health services obtain necessary services. These calls focus on behavioral health concerns, trends, and promising practices within the twenty-four local school systems.

Private and Non-Public Schools

School heads, administrators, and safety officials at private and non-public special education schools throughout Maryland ensure the safety of their schools and students. These calls focus on concerns, trends, and promising practices within the private and non-public school communities.

School Resource Officers

School Resource Officers (SROs) are sworn law enforcement officers who serve in public schools throughout Maryland. SRO Supervisors oversee and manage SROs and evaluate school-based police officers and/or programs. These calls focus on security and safety concerns, trends, and promising practices throughout Maryland.

Professional Development

MCSS school safety partners in and outside Maryland join together to learn from a guest presenter and discuss a topic of shared concern.

Training and
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MCSS Administered Grants

MCSS administered three grants in Fiscal Year 2021. These include the Safe Schools Fund Grant, the School Resource Officer Grant, and the Hate Crimes Grant.

Safe Schools Fund Grant

During FY2021 approximately \$554,000 in grant funding was awarded to Maryland school systems. Grants funds were used for various school safety initiatives including providing comprehensive wellness programming for at-risk students, installing exterior lighting control systems to address the issue of trespassing and vandalism on school grounds, training of school staff on Social Emotional Learning (SEL) programs, mental health awareness programs, and other wrap around services installing CCTV cameras, emergency communication devices and other safety and security equipment in and around school facilities, deploying software to monitor student technology use on school-issued equipment, providing outreach to the broader school community to improve school safety, providing mental health services for students and their families, and conducting and training teams to conduct school safety assessments

SRO/Adequate Coverage Grant

The School Safety Subcabinet awarded \$4.685,000 in grant funds to Maryland's local school systems and local law enforcement agencies. Grantees used the funds to pay for salaries of officers assigned as full time School Resource Officers (SROs) and overtime pay for officers providing adequate coverage.

Hate Crimes Grant

MCSS awarded \$2,000,000 to private, non-public, and public schools and childcare centers determined to be at risk of hate crimes. Forty-eight grantees used the funds for security related training, additional security personnel, security related equipment, security related technology, door hardening, and other security related facility upgrades.

In addition to the three grants it already administers, MCSS will administer two additional grants in fiscal year 2022. The two new grants are the School Safety Grant Program and the Nonpublic School Security Improvement grant. These grants were previously administered by the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC); yet, during the 2021 legislative session, the administration of these grants were reassigned to MCSS.

FY 2022 Grants

School Resource Officer (SRO) Grant
School Safety Grant Program (SSGP)
Nonpublic School Security Improvement (NPSI) Grant
Hate Crimes Grant (HCG)
Safe Schools Fund Grant (SSFG)

FY 2022 Appropriation

\$10,000,000
\$10,000,000
\$3,500,000
\$2,000,000
\$600,000

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School Emergency Plans

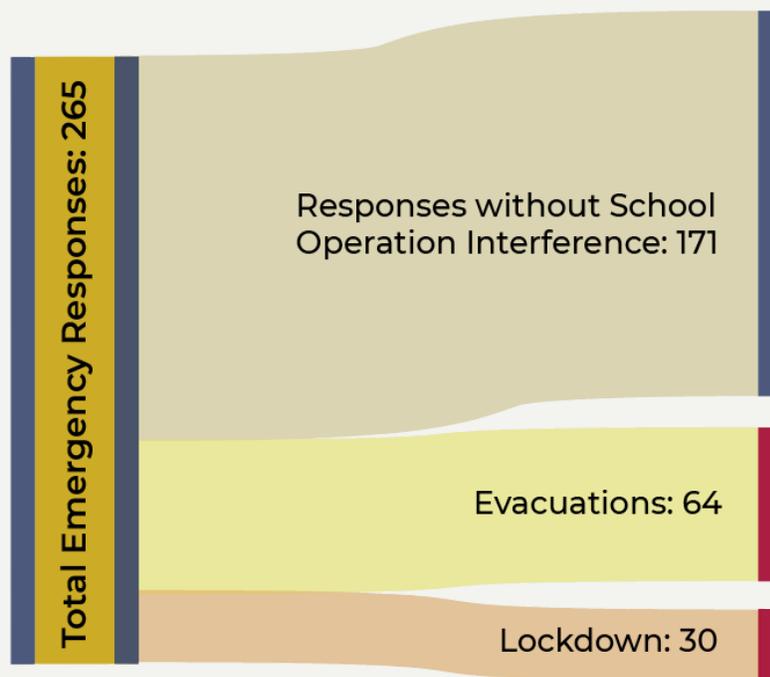
In 2021 MCSS completed reviews of all the school emergency plans submitted in 2020. MCSS regional staff reviewed and provided feedback on these emergency plans to each local school system and noted both the completeness of each and what areas could be improved. MCSS staff provided such feedback through meetings with each local school system and via a new school system-specific data dashboard that both centralizes information and feedback for emergency plans and provides one location for submitting annual emergency plan performance reports and updated emergency plans for review.

Threats, Responses, and Drills

Beginning in 2020, each local school system submits an annual report to MCSS for the immediately-preceding school year, which includes aggregate data on behavioral threats, information on school lockdowns and other emergency events, hours spent on drills or actual emergencies, and information regarding incidents when a school's emergency plan failed to perform as anticipated in a drill or actual emergency. The chart to the right includes data from the twenty-four local school systems that submitted a summary report for the 2020-2021 school year. In the 2020-2021 school year, there were a total of 68 threats made to a school or a school system facility.

Emergency Responses

265 real world (non-drill) emergency responses to public school facilities were reported. These emergency responses resulted in 30 lockdowns and 64 evacuations. A total of 180 school hours were spent engaging in actual emergencies.



2020-2021 School Year

Emergency Drills

2,534 school hours were spent engaging in a drill or exercise during the 2020-2021 school year. There were a total of 2 incidents in which the emergency plan, in part or in whole, failed to function as anticipated in an emergency drill.

Training and Engagement

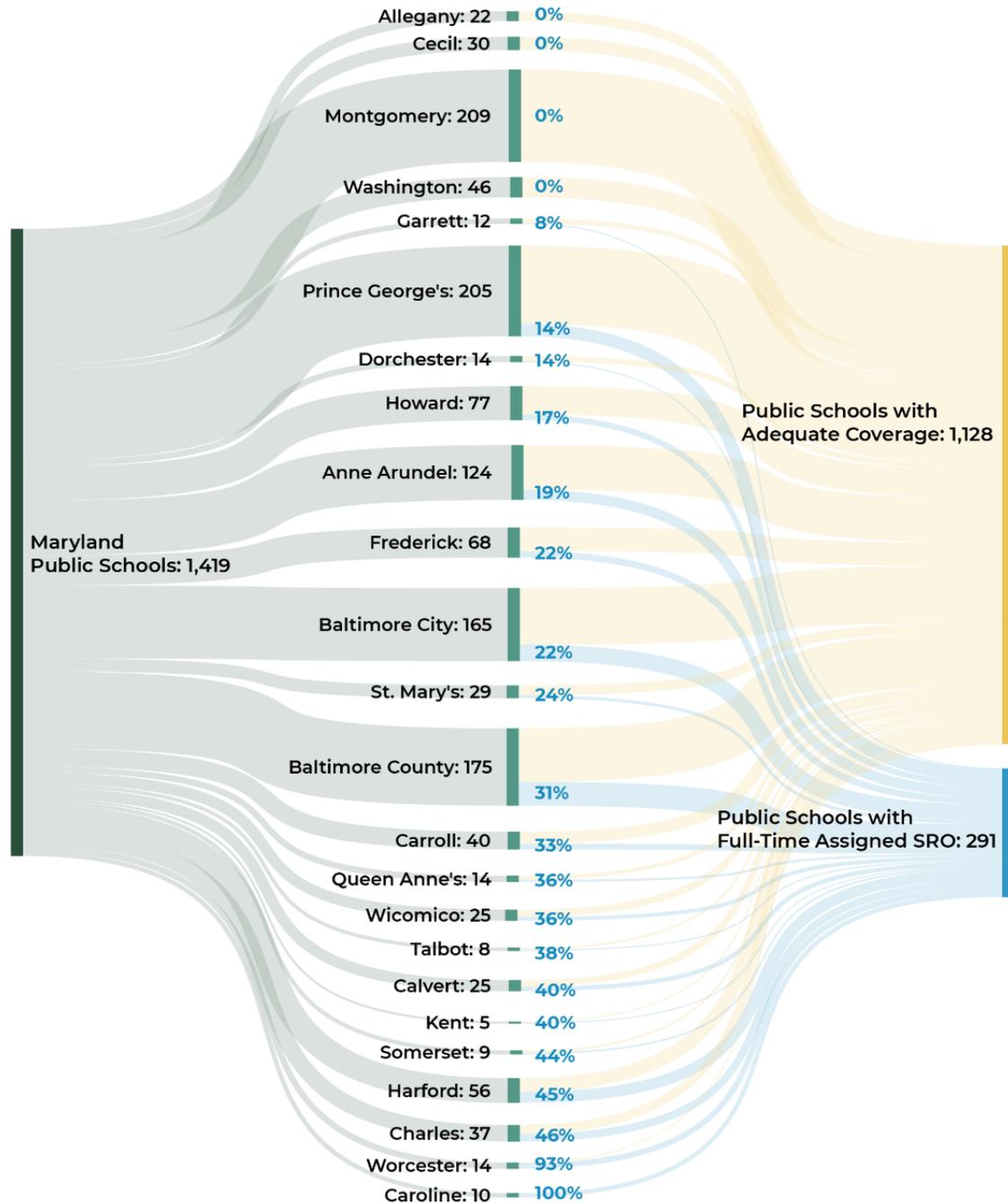
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Safe Schools Maryland

School Resource Officer and Adequate Coverage

As part of the Safe to Learn Act of 2018, MCSS collects data on public schools in Maryland with an assigned School Resource Officer (SRO) and/or adequate law enforcement coverage. Of the 1,419 public schools in Maryland, local school systems identified 291 schools with full-time assigned SROs and 1,128 schools with adequate coverage. The Sankey diagram below is a visualization of the proportion of public schools in each local school system that are served by a full-time assigned School Resource Officer (SRO) versus law enforcement adequate coverage.



Safe Schools Maryland



Safe Schools Maryland is an ANONYMOUS reporting system that allows students, parents, and community members to easily and anonymously report school or student safety concerns anywhere in Maryland. Reports received via app, [SafeSchoolsMD.org](https://www.safeschoolsmd.org), or 1-833-MD-B-SAFE (1-833-632-7233) are routed to school, public safety, health, and/or social services personnel for appropriate follow up.

Since its launch in October 2018, Safe Schools Maryland has received nearly 1,200 anonymous reports. Though anonymous report volume was down during the 2020-2021 school year, the first several months of the 2021-2022 school year has seen a strong rebound in anonymous reports. This dip is in line with trends experienced by other school safety reporting systems across the country and can be chalked up entirely to school building closures as a result of pandemic mitigation efforts. In addition to all Maryland public schools, over 172 non-public schools have joined Safe Schools Maryland. Through targeted outreach campaigns our goal is to grow that number even more over the coming months.

MCSS provides regular live webinar-style training, which gives school contacts the opportunity to brush up on how to address, update, and close the anonymous reports that they receive and ask any questions about the system.

Safe Schools Maryland was also the topic of various 2021 MCSS staff presentations. Audiences included students, educators, school administrators, parents, student government associations, and professional organizations.

Training and
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Anonymous Report Data

Top 10 Anonymous Report Types By School Year

	'18-'19	'19-'20	'20-'21
1.	General Complaint	Assult/Intent to Harm	Bullying
2.	Bullying	Bullying	General Complaint
3.	Planned School Attack	General Complaint	COVID-19 Related
4.	Drugs	Drugs	Drugs
5.	Assult/Intent to Harm	Planned School Attack	Child Abuse/Neglect
6.	Building Safety	Building Safety	Anger Issues
7.	Bus Safety	Bus Safety	Suicide Related
8.	Smoking/Vaping	Smoking/Vaping	Hate Speech
9.	Guns	Anger Issues	Sexual Misconduct
10.	Child Abuse/Neglect	Child Abuse/Neglect	Building Safety

Anonymous Report Submission Method Performance Over First Three School Years of Operation



Phone

Web Form

Mobile App

1st Yr

27%

39%

33%

2nd Yr

28%

49%

23%

3rd Yr

22%

60%

18%

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Awareness and Outreach

Starting during the 2020-2021 school year, Maryland schools began earning the distinction of being named Safe Schools Maryland Gold, Silver, or Bronze Schools by meeting the following criteria.

Bronze School Qualifications: The Maryland Center for School Safety must deliver a live 30-minute (or longer) presentation during the school year to all students at the school.

Silver School Qualifications: Fulfill Bronze School qualifications and the Maryland Center for School Safety must deliver a live 30-minute (or longer) presentation during the school year to all student-facing staff members at the school.

Gold School Qualifications: Fulfill Silver School qualifications and the Maryland Center for School Safety must deliver at least one live 30-minute (or longer) presentation during the school year to the school's parent/guardian population.

Gold, Silver, and Bronze schools are provided the Gold, Silver, or Bronze Safe Schools Maryland seal in decal and .png formats in order to display the school's commitment to school safety both on the school's physical campus and on the school's website/print materials.



Live Presentations

The seamless online sign up process for schools to set up MCSS-led live (virtual or in-person) Safe Schools Maryland appearances, demonstrations, presentations, webinars/seminars, and/or trainings that last anywhere from a few minutes to one hour has attracted more presentation requests and allows MCSS team members to present at a greater diversity of events than ever before. These include Student/Parent/Teacher Orientations, Back-to-School Nights, Professional Development Days, Class Meetings, Board/PTSA Meetings, Club Meetings, Special Event Days, and School Assemblies.

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Awareness and Outreach

Maryland Middle School Mentor Program

In order to promote school and student safety, kindness, and inclusion year-round, students in grades six through eight are encouraged to become a Safe Schools Maryland Middle School Mentor. A mentor signs the Mentor Pledge and commits to:

**Brand New
Engagement
Programs -
for Schools &
Students**

- work with school officials to place Safe Schools Maryland posters, stickers, or other promotional materials around the school building;
- promote Safe Schools Maryland on social media and linking to Maryland Center for School Safety blog posts and/or social media posts that promote Safe Schools Maryland;
- be kind to students being bullied, including them, sitting with them at lunch or on the bus, talking to them at school, or inviting them to do something;
- practice random acts of kindness at school;
- set up a buddy peer support system for students who are new to the school; and
- share inspirational messages that motivate students to act kindly toward each other.

Names of officially approved Safe Schools Maryland Middle School Mentors will appear on our website at safeschoolsmd.org.

MENTOR

PLEDGE

I pledge to be a middle school student who will:

- Stand up for others when they are bullied;
- Mentor younger students at my school who may be experiencing or engaging in bullying;
- Advocate for all of my peers;
- Report bullying and other inappropriate behavior to a trusted school employee and encourage my peers to do the same;
- Engage in as many Safe Schools Maryland Middle School Mentors initiative as possible;
- Make my school a safer and more welcoming place for all students; and
- Strengthen my school's commitment to promoting Safe Schools Maryland as a resource to anonymously share school or student safety concerns anywhere in Maryland

Student Printed Name _____
Principal Printed Name _____
School Name

Student Signature _____
Principal Signature

MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY



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Awareness and Outreach

High School Chapter Program

In order to promote school/student safety awareness, kindness, and inclusion year-round, high school students can start a chapter of Safe Schools Maryland within their community starting in the 2021-2022 school year. Safe School Maryland chapter members - known as Student Ambassadors - engage members of their school and greater communities by taking part in activities including but not limited to the following:



**Brand New
Engagement
Programs -
for Schools &
Students**

- liaising with school officials to place Safe Schools Maryland posters, stickers, or other promotional materials around the school building;
- organizing a school- or grade-wide events that focuses students on bullying, cyberbullying, depression, self-harm, or suicide; examples include welcoming Safe Schools Maryland or other speakers who can help address topics that influence school climate and/or the safety and well-being of students;
- promoting Safe Schools Maryland on social media and linking to Maryland Center for School Safety blog posts and/or social media posts that promote Safe Schools Maryland;
- designing/creating Safe Schools Maryland posters, flyers, or video/audio messages and sharing them with their community;
- encouraging fellow students to join the chapter and become Safe Schools Maryland Student Ambassadors;
- writing articles promoting Safe Schools Maryland for their school newspaper/news website;
- being kind to students being bullied, including them, sitting with them at lunch or on the bus, talking to them at school, or inviting them to do something;
- composing regular announcements about issues that impact students (e.g., bullying, cyberbullying, all forms of violence, depression, anxiety) and promoting local, state, and/or national resources to support peers at risk and or the school at large; and
- coordinating a #NoOneEatsAloneDay, which teaches everyone how to make friends at lunch.

To start a Safe Schools Maryland chapter at a high school (1) a student must have at least three committed student leaders and an adult advisor who works at their school, (2) all founding student members must sign the Student Ambassador Pledge and have it signed by the chapter's adult advisor, and the chapter must also register as an official student group at their school.

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