

MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY

School Safety Subcabinet Meeting

August 14, 2023

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MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: It's 10:02 a.m. and I call this meeting to order. Please confirm that we are now live streaming.

AARON CHIUSANO: We're now live streaming and recording.

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: Thank you very much. Ms. Bryan and Ms. Johnson, do we have a quorum?

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

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: Thank you very much. The last meeting of the subcabinet was May. The May 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? Seeing none, no additions to the agenda. So can I get a motion to approve today's agenda?

KARL POTHIER: I'll move to approve.

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: Do I have a second?

COL. ROLAND L. BUTLER, JR.: I'll move to second.

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: Okay, we have a motion and a second. Unfortunately, I can't see who said that, so I'm hoping you guys can definitely record that. But all in favor, say aye.

GROUP: Aye.

Agenda

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: Any abstentions or anyone opposed? No. All right, let's go ahead and move forward. Kate, can you please provide us with some updates since we last met?

KATE BRYAN: Sure, absolutely. Next slide.

Agency Updates

KATE BRYAN: So we have a new representative, student representative, supporting

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MCSS, will be participating and listening in a lot of the subcabinet meetings. Zaria is hoping to be here today to meet all of you. So we're hoping you'll be able to meet her when she arrives in a little bit. So after that, I'm going to pass it off to Jesika McNeil, who's going to go through an overview of our summer conference that we just had.

Summer Conference Summary

JESIKA MCNEIL: Good morning, everyone. I just first want to start off by thanking the members of our subcabinet that participated and assisted us this year with our 2023 subcabinet, I'm sorry, our 2023 conference. And members of the subcabinet, we really appreciate everyone for their support with our welcoming ceremonies this year. This year, our goal was to have at least 500 people registered to attend the conference. We had well over 600 registered and over 420 participants this year. So we were well underway. In addition to that, we had over 30 dynamic speakers. We had our regular keynote general sessions, as well as our breakout sessions. And the event was held, as you know, at Turf Valley Resort, where we'll do the next two years as well. This year, we did a couple of new things. We introduced the new conference app, CVENT, to help assist with our registration and tracking process, which seems to work really well. We were able to get everyone in and process quickly. We had over 70% adoption rate for participants that actually use the app during our conference, which was great. And we got a lot of good data so that when we actually release the RFP for years to come, we have that information on what worked and what didn't work. So we'll be introducing that soon as well. In addition to the conference this year, our conference was approved for one continuing professional development credit with MSDE, as well as eight credits with MPCTC. Our goal for next year is to also have it approved with mental health coordinators, so we hope to work with April Turner and some others, and working on getting consumer education credits for the mental health coordinators that attended as well, and behavioral health professionals. In addition to all of that, we also introduced our art showcase this year, which we were very happy with. Watch the meetings over whenever you have a chance. You'll see all the art; all the submissions are posted in the back here so you can see them. The theme for the showcase is what does your school safety community look like? So you will see we had from grades three through 12 were able to submit artwork from private, public, non-public, community schools, any student in the state of Maryland. So you'll see not only their artwork, but also descriptions that they provided of what safety and their safety community look like. The table up front shows our first, second, and third place winners. And we were really pleased with the turnout that we had. It was a very diverse group. We had from Allegany to Wicomico winners from all Somerset, Wicomico, Cecil, Allegany. So we hope to do it again next year and have an even larger turnout. We did have this, we invited all the winning students to come and have photographs taken, which some of them did along with their parents and got a lot of good feedback from them as well. And we will be showcasing the artwork at the House of Delegates and also at MSDB. So House of Delegates, we are working with them now to finalize the date. It will be next week now and Thanksgiving because they're already booked for what session starts. So once we have the exact dates of when everything will be

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up, we'll let the parents know so they can have their families and everyone celebrate them as well. So that's the overview of our conference. If anyone has any questions.

2022-2023 After-Action Review

KATE BRYAN: Any questions for Jesika from the conference? All right. Thank you. Next slide. So I'm going to review one of the handouts you received today, which would have been item 2C. So this is the 2022-2023 After Action Review Summary. So members of the team here, if there are specific questions. But as you know, the center is required to collect after-action reports following critical life-threatening incidents inside a public school in the state. So last year, last school year, we had 18 critical life-threatening incidents that were reported to us. The school systems conducted after-action reviews of those incidents. And of those incidents, we came to pull together for you some common themes that we're seeing throughout the state. You'll notice, if you remember our report from last year, we submitted this last year to you all, some of the themes are continuing, so they're the same, especially if it relates to communication and coordination, but I'll go through those. So specifically for communication, ensuring that responders and school officials establish and test their methods of communicating. So whether that's just their systems or their process to actually communicate among local law enforcement, local first responders, as well as the school system. The second was that the anonymous reporting system, whether the school had one directly or the school used Safe Schools Maryland, which is the state's school safety anonymous reporting system, that proved to be beneficial for several incidents, especially in um, threats of mass violence and the ability for the school system to start investigating those incidents. Um, the need for school systems to have multiple methods of communication, right? Not just one way to communicate with staff and students and families, um, and parents, but also, um, backup communication methods and that they test all of those, um, methods on a regular basis. Next slide, excuse me.

Coordination

KATE BRYAN: So the next were related to coordination. Again, that's coordination among whether that's responders in the school system or within the school system itself. So establishing information sharing procedures among the different agencies is really important, especially when it comes to behavioral threat assessments. So again, behavioral threat assessments are a team of school-based personnel, but when they conduct those threat assessments, they are required to pull in a law enforcement representative when they do those threat assessments. The coordination of messaging. So there were a couple instances where first responder messaging differed from the messaging from the school system. So really ensuring that those two entities work together, so that there's one unified message that's going out to the public during incidents. And then for coordination, the final one was ensuring that they're training and rehearsing their procedures and their plans, right? It's great to have procedures and plans, but if they're not practiced, if they're not tested, if they're not refined, that can cause problems. So ensuring that they do that.

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Emergency Preparedness

KATE BRYAN: Next slide. Emergency Preparedness items, so there's a... we have quite a few of the school systems, I think there's over half right now that are using a common standard response protocol in each of their school systems. So that's common terminology right, so when we say lockdown in one school system or one school, it means the same thing in another. Not every school system is using that same standard response protocol. So the agency is going to be working with our school systems to see if we can get the rest of the school systems to transition so that the entire state is on one common response protocol. The second is, again, conducting appropriate drills for the level of the individuals that are participating in those drills. And by that, I specifically mean the students in particular. So the first responders, some of the school system leads certainly need more advanced training, right? Especially on the law enforcement side and the first responders, they need some more tactical-based training. But the students that are participating, when you have a fifth grader participating or a second grader participating, the drills themselves really need to be appropriate for that level of students engaging and participating in the drills and exercises. Those of you who have managed many, especially large-scale incidents in the past, you'll know that recovery needs to start immediately. So the minute the incident begins, the recovery needs to begin at the same time. Certainly not the same individuals, but there needs to be a group of individuals focused on recovery. So that was another item that came out of the incidents. For resources, two big resources, again, bleeding control kits being available inside the schools. And then the second is ensuring that there's mental health supports, again, not just for the responders, but also for students. for staff and personnel who may be involved in responding to or recovering from these instances. So what does that mean for us? So over the course of the next year, the center's going to be focusing on some very specific things. So the first is increasing the knowledge of the behavioral threat assessment teams throughout the state. We've already started a lot of that work already. We're going to be refining that, working some additional implementation. We have an implementation guide that's already been published, and we're going to be working on some additional specific training for individual schools and school system teams. Improving awareness of Safe Schools Maryland. I think there is a really good use of Safe Schools Maryland throughout the state. But we would like to ensure that every student, every parent, every community member knows that that resource exists and that it can be used by them to ensure that or support the safety of their students. Again, we're going to be working to support school systems in hopefully getting the majority of the school systems using the same standard response protocol. It's going to require some of them to change some of their terminology, but it's not a complete change. And it certainly will support better response, especially in a large-scale incident where responders and or supports need to come from other counties. So if another school system needs to come into the school and support response to a major incident, there'll be people in that system will be using the same response protocol from the school that they left. So the next, as they get the slides up, the next is producing, we're going to be producing some reference materials, including infographics and communication templates that speak to the public, right? So the audience

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would be the general public on how schools investigate and respond to threats, whether those threats are on social media, whether it's called into the school, but what that process flow is. So we've been working with the School Safety Advisory Board. We've been working with some local school systems and local first responders to put together some materials so that really parents know what's going to happen and what's happening at the local level when these threats come through.

2023-2024 Priorities

KATE BRYAN: And then finally, we're on the priority slide. And then finally, it's a coordination at the state level. We've already been doing some work here. So several of our departments and agencies State Police, Department of Disabilities, Department of Education, the Center, as well as many other state agencies have been working on a coordinated response plan for a school-based incident. So as we know, if there is a major incident that occurs within a school or school system, it is going to require a lot of coordination at the state level, not just at the local level. So our hope and our work over the next year is going to be getting those agencies together so that in the event there's a major emergency, we're not duplicating effort, that we're coordinating resources, coordinating communication. So really doing our best to ensure that state level support is coming down to the local school systems in a coordinated fashion. So those are the TAB, those are the major priorities there's the major outings I'm open to questions from the group, from the subcabinet on any of those priorities.

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: All right, seeing no questions, we'll move on. We have a couple of items to adopt as well as another presentation that's coming up. So we'll move on to our fiscal year 2024 Safe Schools Fund grant applications. I believe we have two of them today. So Ms. Quarshie, Gifty, can you please go ahead and present them and I think we'll just do them one at a time. I know last time we did them as a block because there were so many, but there's just two, so we can just do them one at a time.

FY 2024 Safe Schools Fund Grant Applications

GIFTY QUARSHIE: Good morning. Good morning, members of the subcabinet So, yes, we only have two Safe Schools Fund grant applications to present today. The distribution or the allocation is still the same, \$25,000 for a local school system for fiscal year 24. The total appropriation for fiscal year 24 is \$600,000. And so, so far, we have received two applications. The jurisdictions have up until September the 29th to submit their applications. And it is likely as approved in a prior subcabinet meeting that we will hold one just to review all of the applications that coming from today up until the 29th. So with that said, I will start with Charles County. This is a repeat grant over the last three years. So Charles County is requesting to use their \$25,000 to continue this subscription for their BART software service, which they use to actively monitor their digital learning management platform, as well as your Office 365 platforms. We have requested the report from Charles

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County, which shows all of the incidents that, you know, the system has been able to help them prevent and mitigate against. We do not currently have that report, but it was presented last year when they used the same software and used these funds for the software. And so the fiscal year '24 request from Charles County is a repeat request to continue to use the funds for their BART subscription.

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: Okay, do I have a motion to approve Charles County's application?

KARL POTHIER: So moved.

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: We have a motion, second?

ARABIA DAVIS: Second.

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: Alright, any discussion? Seeing none or hearing none. All in favor, say aye.

GROUP: Aye.

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: Anyone opposed? Any abstentions? Seeing none, motion passes.

GIFTY QUARSHIE: So the next application is from Allegany County, another repeat request. They use their \$25,000 to pay for overtime wages for their public school safety officers, which are employees of the, excuse me, employees of the school system. These school safety officers assist with school-based incidents inside and outside of its school buildings. They also provide support for other school-based events, such as sporting events and home visits for truancy or absenteeism. And again, this is a repeat request that the subcabinet approved over the last three years, and Allegany County would like to continue to use their Safe Schools Fund grant for the same purpose.

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: Okay. Do I have a motion to approve Allegany County Public Schools application?

COL. ROLAND L. BUTLER, JR.: So moved.

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: I have a motion. Do I have a second?

KARL POTHIER: Second.

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MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: Seconded. Any discussion?

CECELIA WARREN: I have a question on behalf of Department of Disabilities. This would be best suited for Colonel Butler, but is it customary to use officers to go to do room visits for absenteeism is something typically handled by a pupil coordinator or pupil case manager.

COL. ROLAND L. BUTLER, JR.: I want to say, you're going to say a typical encounter, it's probably something better handled by the school and a case manager. If there's something extraordinary, whether it's to check the welfare component to it, it'd be within the realm of normality to send an officer to make sure everything's okay.

CECELIA WARREN: Thank you.

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: Any other questions? Okay, we do have a motion and it's seconded. All in favor say aye.

GROUP: Aye.

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: Anyone opposed? Any abstentions? Seeing none, motion passes. All right, we will move on to our next item, our subcabinet bylaws.

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: So it's very important that we do have bylaws and we haven't had them. And so Kate and team worked closely with our council to establish the bylaws. And so I'll have council walk us through. Ms. Johnson, can you please walk us through our draft subcabinet bylaws? And we will also consider an adoption today unless there are lots of questions and we need them to go back to the drawing board or something like that.

Subcabinet Bylaws Review and Discussion

JEANEEN JOHNSON: Good morning members of the subcabinet. As Dr. Choudhury said, the purpose of these bylaws is to provide the subcabinet with rules and guidelines for governance of the board as it pertains to the board conduct of duties assigned under Maryland law. We will start, I guess, I would like some feedback as to how the members would like to proceed. If you'd like me to go through each section of every article, or I can do it article by article, and then if there are any questions, address those questions.

COL. ROLAND L. BUTLER, JR.: Article by article seems reasonable.

JEANEEN JOHNSON: Okay. Unless we have any objections, then please feel free to jump in if there are any questions. We'll start with article one. It is the adoption of the bylaws

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generally. Section 1 goes through definitions such as absence and defines members of the board, which are consistent with the education article as identified therein, as well as definitions of the center. It also discusses the purpose of these bylaws, which is what I initially said for the reasons for the bylaws. And then Section 1.3 goes over an aspect of these bylaws. Does any of the members have questions? Okay, we'll move on to article two, which is organization of the board. Again, the organization of the board is consistent with the education article that outlines the membership of the subcabinet that's included in Section 2.1 of the membership. Section 2.2 identifies the chair as the state superintendent, which again is consistent with what's required under the education article. The Section 2.3 is regarding a vice chair, and this is based on how we've been proceeding in the past. This isn't specifically identified in the education article, but we believe that this will be helpful in making sure that the operation of the subcabinet goes smoothly when the chair is unavailable. Also, Section 2.4 refers to designees, again, this is identified in the education article as to who may appear on behalf of the cabinet members. Are there any questions with this section? Okay, we can move on to Article 3. Article 3, respective meetings of the subcabinet. Section 3.1 discusses time and locations. The regular meetings of the board will be August, November, February and May, and that's listed in accordance with the fiscal year. The location of the meetings will be the Center's main office, which is here. The Section 3.1 also talks about public notice that must be given for meetings. And Section D of 3.1 discusses the necessity of additional meetings and what will be required when an additional meeting is required outside of Section A. This section also provides the chair with the authority to cancel a meeting should that be necessary. Section 3.2 goes over rules of order. The Section A would discuss what would be required for a quorum. A quorum would be the majority of the board members. It also would provide for public testimony at meetings that would be included with the approval of the chair. Section 3.3 discusses the meeting agenda. That meeting agenda would be set prior to the meetings and would be included with the public notice. It also discusses minutes on how the subcabinet has been proceeding has been that the meetings will be in person and the virtual meetings will be live streamed, recorded, and transcribed. And then those meeting minutes are posted to the website. That's in accordance with the general provisions article. Are there any questions regarding Article 3? Okay, let's move on to Article 4. This would be the rules of conduct. Section 4.1 talked about the ethics of the members of the subcabinet. Again, this just requires members to comply with Maryland ethics law and then also disqualification due to a conflict of interest. This section here would require a member of the subcabinet to recuse themselves and not participate in a matter if the member has a certain interest in a matter that is before the subcabinet. The also Section 4.2 talked about the level of effort in which members must participate in the board and meetings. Are there any questions regarding this article? Yes, ma'am.

MARIA RADOWSKI-STANCO: Question in terms of overall structure. Is there any significant change with this iteration of the bylaws?

JEANEEN JOHNSON: So, I don't remember what happened last year, but I don't know if

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this is in it or is this true?

KATE BRYAN: So this is the first bylaw that you guys all have. The subcabinet did not have one prior.

MARIA RADOWSKI-STANCO: Okay.

KATE BRYAN: And it is following consistently what we've done.

MARIA RADOWSKI-STANCO: Okay.

JEANEEN JOHNSON: Are there any other questions? Okay, we can move on to Article 5. Article 5, Section 5.1 is the roles and responsibilities of the board. Again, these roles and responsibilities are specifically outlined in the Education Article Section 7.1503. And it discusses all of the responsibilities that are outlined under that article. Section 5.2 discusses the roles and responsibilities of the director and the Center staff, and again, these duties and responsibilities are outlined in the education article under Section 7-1502G, and every duty and responsibility is outlined in the article.

KARL POTHIER: Just to be clear, nothing's been added, right? I mean, in other words, you pretty much just moved what was in the statute.

JEANEEN JOHNSON: That's correct, yes.

KARL POTHIER: Thank you.

JEANEEN JOHNSON: Sure. Section C, we've discussed that the director is going to be provided with the authority to do the quarterly report or required to do a quarterly report to the board of activities of the Center. The final section is that the director is going to provide and submit with the approval of the subcabinet the subcabinet's report to the governor and assembly, which again is identified in 5.1. But again, that section, that report is identified in the Education Article. Section 5.3 is regarding delegation of duties to the director. And that would be for hiring staff for the Center. And pursuant to the center's budget, also authorizing staff to perform certain duties, which would be under Article 7.1502 of the Education Article. of overseeing grants allocated to the center, as well as overseeing grants that are approved by the board. Section 5.4, discussing the location of the Center and the Center staff, that is also in compliance with the Education Article, Section 7, 1502C and F, which states where the center is going to be located at the Maryland Board Ancient and Analysis Center, as well as the satellite office at Boone. Section 5.5 talks about the approval of the Center budget. The board is responsible for approving the annual budget prior to submission to the State Department of Budget and Management. The board will delegate to the director the authority to expand the center funds or enter into contractual agreements, the

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budget amendment within the approved annual budget will be detailed in a report by the director to the subcabinet. And if the director determines there is a need for an unanticipated or emergency expenditure that exceeds the approved annual budget that cannot wait until the next regularly scheduled board meeting, the director will have the ability to contact the chair who may take certain action based on that emergency request. Section 5.6, discussing the personnel management as required under the Education Article of Section 7502D, which the board shall appoint the director and then the director shall provide staff to the subcabinet. Are there any questions regarding Article 5? All right, then the last article is Article 6, and that is just a non-discrimination and equity statement, which is that the subcabinet, the advisory board, and the center affirm that they will not discriminate in any matter. Are there any questions regarding Article 6? Are there any questions in terms of anything regarding the bylaws, our reasoning, the background, and what action we're going to be taking today? Thank you for your time.

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: Okay, just checking to see if there's any other questions. Okay, well then we'll move towards adoption. I'm reading the room and so it looks like we're good to adopt. So can I get a motion to adopt?

KARL POTHIER: So moved.

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: I have a motion. Second?

COL. ROLAND L. BUTLER, JR.: Second.

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: Second. Any other discussion? Seeing none. All in favor, say aye.

MARIA RADOWSKI-STANCO: I want to abstain because I don't want to put a vote in with the Secretary of Health without having her eyes on this. I didn't understand that this was a new as opposed to a new establishment and this administration is much more involved in connections in order to work on that myself. So I either halt the vote if that is allowed, or at least give the health department an option to weigh in.

KATE BRYAN: Mr. Choudhury, did you hear?

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: Yes, I heard.

MARIA RADOWSKI-STANCO: That's my error.

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: Yeah, I usually like to go by the majority in the room. Personally, I would like to adopt, but I defer to my other colleagues and secretaries. Do you guys want to hold on this further and bring it back to another meeting or as the concessions

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in the room, we can make a motion to adopt and see if we have majority?

CECELIA WARREN: I would defer to allow time for the Secretary of Health to examine the document.

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: Kate, what are you seeing in the room? Because I can't fully see everyone. I have two voices, but we can hold. But I also want you to lay out when would be our next meeting and when we would need to adopt. And I imagine, counsel, please clarify, there wouldn't be much to change, right, unless we want to go above and beyond the law in terms of what it says, correct?

JEANEEN JOHNSON: So the bylaws are consistent with the board's legal requirements under the article. We also reviewed the bylaws of other independent agencies and they're also consistent with that. So I don't anticipate that we need to make any revisions or edits to the bylaws other than any suggestions that the members of the board would have.

KATE BRYAN: So Mr. Choudhury, this is Kate. There are two, well, there's three options. So there's been two requests in the room to defer to a later meeting so that the Secretary of Health can review the bylaws. So that the options for next steps will be, there is a November meeting on the books already where they can be deferred to that November meeting for a vote. The other option is we very likely may need to have a virtual grant application only meeting in October. That is a very good possibility, depending on the number, just so that the subcabinet is not overloaded in November with all the other November activities. So there is a possibility that we could bring it up in the October meeting as well, if that meeting ends up taking place.

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: Okay. Well, I did have a motion and a second technically on record. So those who did a motion and a second, would you like to retract your motion in a second? If you do, then yeah.

JEANEEN JOHNSON: I'm sorry. I was going to say the same thing that there was a motion made and there was actually a vote. So I think the vote would have to move forward as it's already been taken.

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: Okay.

JEANEEN JOHNSON: But obviously the board can change that if they would like.

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: Yeah. Well, why don't we just take the vote and then if it doesn't pass, then we'll defer since we have it in motion. Is that okay?

JEANEEN JOHNSON: I believe the vote was already taken.

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MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: Okay.

KATE BRYAN: Can they re-vote? Is that impossible?

JEANEEN JOHNSON: So what would have to happen, I know, I think what would have to happen is you'd have to have a new motion.

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: Okay.

JEANEEN JOHNSON: This vote has already taken. From what I understand, there were four in favor and one abstention.

KATE BRYAN: Right.

JEANEEN JOHNSON: I'm sorry so there were five in favor and one abstention.

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: Okay.

JEANEEN JOHNSON: So the motion carried. So you have a motion to undo the adoption of the bylaws.

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: Okay.

JEANEEN JOHNSON: Right, so, and that's...

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: If someone feels very strongly to undo the vote, then please speak right now. If not, then I'd like to move forward. And look, we can always, if there is something the Secretary of Health is really passionate about or anything, you have my commitment to bring the bylaws back for any amendments. But I'd like to have bylaws because it's pretty cookie cutter in terms of what's on this sheet. Like it's, you know, I, you know, I've said many of you sit on other boards as well. So I'd like to move forward. But if there's something we want to add or amend, we can always do that. But I'd like to honor the vote if that's possible. And I can't see your all head nods, but if I'm getting head nods, I'd like to move forward.

JEANEEN JOHNSON: And I'd like to add that there is a provision in the bylaws for amendments in Section 1... in Article 1, Section 1.3, there is a provision that says that the bylaws can be changed at any time. Obviously, you have to be by a majority vote of the members of the subcabinet, but there is a provision for amendment.

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: Okay. So since we've adopted, can we move forward?

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KATE BRYAN: Nodding heads in the rooms.

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: Okay. All right. I can't see all the nodding heads, but I'll take your word for it. I don't want people to think that I didn't see their nodding heads. But you have my commitment. If we want to bring it back or there's something glaring or something you want to add, then we can bring that item back, you know, in our future meeting. All right. Let's go ahead and move to our next item.

School Safety Spotlight

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: So one of the things we had talked about is putting a spotlight on practices on the ground. You know, we want to have a more sustained spotlight on what does school safety look like on the ground. We talk a lot about the grants and we talk a lot about, you know, things that have happened in terms of the research and such by really looking at it on the ground, and what best practices are so we can uplift those and then and then potentially scale. So this is in in the spirit of putting a spotlight. This is almost like a new standing item that we'll have going forward. And so with that, Mr. Pierce please introduce yourself and our guests. I believe we have two school, two representatives from school systems to put a spotlight on best practices today.

Emergency Preparedness Tabletop Exercises

RONALD PIERCE: Good morning and good morning to the other subcabinet members. Thank you. We're just going to talk myself very briefly this morning because the stars here are Jeff Smith from Talbot County Public Schools and Dr. Stacey Henson is here from Washington County Public Schools. She is virtual with us. Talk a little bit about some of the emergency preparedness exercises that we have a program in place within our agency we pushed out a year ago prior to the previous school year. And then what local folks are doing on there. They could incorporate some of these, but they have their own programs as well. So just very quickly, we have a program. And I want to say first and foremost that Ms. Brittani Ayers was the primary developer and implementer of this program. put a lot of work into this, scoured high and low, we put together a series of tabletop exercises to help exercise school emergency plans. Every school, because we took a look at all of them a couple years ago, every school has an emergency plan. And they all contain functional annexes. Those are the basic actions that a school system takes in an emergency. Listed there are the standard response protocols that we're promoting among school systems throughout the state. And that was one of the after actions... things you saw in the after-action reviews and critical life-threatening incidents last year, and some of the recommendations. So those are the terms used by the standard response protocols but there's there are some others out there, but every plan has a functional annex. And they also have specific analyses for different types of threats very specific press, they can be specific to particular school or to a particular local education agency because it just depends on what kind of risks and threats exist. Some agencies may be more prone to floods. So there's

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specific annexes for that where others may not. Next.

What are Tabletop Exercises?

RONALD PIERCE: So a tabletop exercise, which, you know, we're with the 36 or so we put together for the Are We Ready program is their discussion-based activity. So they're separate. They're not the same as drills. We'll talk about that in the next slide a little more, but they're meant to be brief. They're meant to just basically involve the people who would be in your school safety team, which every school should have, who are the decision makers in an emergency. And sitting around a table discussing a particular scenario or a real-world situation, prompting the participants to walk through what their actions would be based on what their emergency plans are. So you're testing either the plan itself or particular annex or just this very specific action. Some tabletops are specific to just reunification. So just one aspect of an emergency, depending on how much time you have and how involved you want to get. And then basically it builds a muscle memory and help to identify and fix problems that you may find. Some may not be as familiar. And just going back a few years, our school safety evaluations that we did throughout every LEA, pointed out the number one safety concern among all of them was that the staff really weren't trained or weren't aware of what their school safety plans said. This is one way to do that. Next slide. So most importantly, they're not the same as drills. So COMAR dictates that certain drills, there's six of them, that get done every year. And those drills involve the entire school. So, okay, that's all the students, that's the staff, that's everyone. They're very important to be done. And the COMAR site is listed up there. Those annexes listed are a bit old. And I'd like to see us at some point pull in the new standard response protocols into that language so we're all speaking the same language, like Kate said. It's really important we all know what we're doing, including the first responders and get them familiar with this as well. So tabletop exercises should be conducted in a safe space. It's an open dialogue. It's not the same as a drill. This is simply a discussion about what we do and how we make it better. And the point is to learn from some mistakes or there's certain things we don't know. You don't know what you don't know. You find that out during that exercise. Next slide.

Are We Ready?

RONALD PIERCE: So this is a little summation of what the Are We Ready exercise program is about. There's currently 36 tabletop exercises on our website. They're great scenarios. They come from real-world situations. Some of them are actual events. All the names have changed to protect the innocent. But they're realistic, and they're meant to represent what could happen. There's going to be some future enhancements. We're hoping to add some video segments or some actual video scenarios that you can stop at certain points to ask questions. And we'll put pause points in there to say what do we do here? This just happened. You're in the middle of the situation, something else just occurred, do you change what you're doing? Do you do something different? We're also going to put some future, there's going to be more injects and stuff, make them a little more complicated. The

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more familiar you become, the easier those are to do. And we do offer some workshops, coaching. I know Brittani's done a great job with speaking locally to assistant principals last year, maybe in the future we're going to do a few other conferences as well, talk about this program and talk about how school systems can be involved in this. And so with that, Jeff Smith.

JEFF SMITH: Good morning, everybody. Dr. Choudhury, it's nice to meet you virtually. For those that haven't met me, my name is Jeff Smith. I am the Safety and Security Coordinator for Talbot County Public Schools. Prior to being with Talbot County Schools, I was a police officer in Ocean City for 30 years. I retired from there January 1 of 2020, and I went to a privately-owned police training company. At the time I left there, it was the largest privately-owned police training company in America. Part of my responsibilities there was I was instructor as well as I helped recruit, onboard, train new instructors, and design curriculum for the company. And one of the benefits that I have as being a rookie at the Talbot County Public School System is I have the extreme luxury of having what I call clean eyes. When I walked into Talbot County Public Schools, I had a fresh view of what was going on there at the Talbot County Public School System as far as safety. Now, when you live the life of a law enforcement officer for 30 years, you really do when you walk into your living room, walk into your kid's bedroom, you look at your kid's car, safety is always on your mind and you're always aware of how fragile and how quickly things can go in a direction you don't like them going. So we by nature are planners. So I have the luxury of looking at what we have in place and I also have the extreme luxury having a fantastic boss, Dr. Sharon Pepukayi is a really cool person, incredible person, and she's great to work with. And we have started to put together a plan to move forward to really develop a really comprehensive school safety program for Talbot County, especially with the standard response protocol. I'm glad that we're going to standardize around the state because I think that is a very emergency-friendly system. In a crisis, it's hard to remember where you parked your car, let alone remember all the things that you have to do, which takes us to the Are We Ready program. And he said 36 pre-designed tabletop exercises.

Adult Attention Span

JEFF SMITH: And as a police training instructor, starting in '96, the final 15 years of being a police training instructor, I really started to look at how we construct, how we build police training. And one of the things I looked at was the adult attention span and how much retention we have when it comes to training. And one of the things I learned, it's very clear in law enforcement, is if you do silo or block training, for instance, police officer goes to the police academy and goes to firearms training for 60 hours and then doesn't do any firearms training until they graduate, they're literally only a 10% better gunfighter than someone who's never picked up a gun because it's such a perishable skill. So one of the things I want to apply is smaller segments of more frequent-based training for us because more frequent training builds neural pathways, which is the muscle memory that we refer to here in the beginning of this presentation. And by building those neural pathways, we can hopefully

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somewhere down the road have our staff, our people... and I'm in a small school system. I have just over 5,000 students, 700 employees that I have to provide safety for. So hopefully in the future down the road, when an emergency hits, it'll be something that we've already thought about because we don't have the luxury of creating emergency response under extreme stress. Like I said, it's hard enough to remember where you parked your car when you're under extreme stress, let alone being able to execute a 17-point plan that's highly detailed. So one of the things I want to focus on is how adult learners retain information. And one of the ways that they do that is through constant building of those neural pathways. Just like when we're kids and we learn to ride a bike, we're building a neural path. Don't ride a bike for 20 years. That neural pathway is still intact. You hop back on your bike. You still remember the basics of it. You might not be as good at it as you once were, but the basics are there. And we remember that. So with these tabletop exercises, that's exactly what these do. And they actually cater to the adult attention span. They're built, whether they did it intentionally or not, I have to think it's by design, right around MPCTC's qualifications for building a lesson plan. And then you have to have learning objectives. You have to have testing methods. You have to have teaching styles and teaching supplies. In this instance, it's a pre-planned tabletop exercise that MCSS has built. So for me, I have the luxury of having 36 of those at my fingertips that I can use. One of the things that I want to do that I, as a student, I was always a very avid student of my game, both as a student and as an instructor. I understand that the students get left out of the bottom a lot. Training is very top down when we design attorney, especially in a large organization like state of Maryland when we design training, it comes from the top down a lot of times it gets diluted and sometimes polluted. When it gets to say at to an elementary school, we have 97 students, we might have 97 students there and 22 staff members. The head custodian there might not get as much of this as the principal at Easton High School who's got 1,200 students. So one of the things that I want to do with these tabletop exercises, as well as introducing these at the staff level for the principals, the APs, the IAs, the teachers and counselors, is I want to do what I'm going to call smaller targeted groups. I'm going to pick also, in addition to doing these globally within the schools, I'm going to pick smaller target groups say like a custodian, a chief maintenance officer, a security officer, and a brand new IA and weekly I'm going to send these out to these small groups. In addition to doing these monthly at the staff level target some small groups with these scenarios, so that they get... they don't get disenfranchised because we're such a huge organization state of Maryland is a massive organization. And with that top-down, you have to have some type of hierarchy of structure when you build training for that many people. but we don't want those small groups to get left out. We want to hit them on a consistent, regular basis so that we're building those neural pathways through the Are We Ready program, building those neural pathways so that when stress strikes, they don't have to remember where their car is parked. They know where the car's parked. They'll go there subconsciously, speaking figuratively, of course, so that when someone, you know, sticks a fork in an outlet in a classroom, shorts out of the classroom and gets a small electrical shock, and there's a weird smell in the classroom, and this head custodian happens to be in there with a teacher and a brand new IA, they're aware of what they have to do. So that's going to be one of my goals as well as doing globally

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within the school system at the staff level for principals, APs, counselors, school managers. We have building managers in Talbot County that they manage the daily logistics and functions of the schools. I want to hit the bottom lines too. I don't want the lower level students to get left out.

Did It Stick?

JEFF SMITH: So this, one of the things I want is I want this to stick. I want it to stick. I want so that when two years from now, when I've been there for two and a half years, we have a kid punch a trophy cabinet because he's upset about something that happened to him at home last night and he gets an arterial bleed on the inside of his arm. We know where our stop the bleeding kits are. We know how the proper application of a tourniquet, but it goes high up on the limb. So that little things like that, because those of us that are former law enforcement or first responders, we know we do not get to pick the time when an emergency happens. The emergency always has a vote. And we may train and plan for these in a controlled environment or sterile environment like this room. We're outside on a sunny day, but when it happens, it's always 20 degrees outside, and as Forrest Gump would say, the big old fat rain is flying sideways, and it's never the optimum environment when the emergency hits. So we have to be prepared for that, too. And in the school, it's not always going to be the principals, the APs, and the building managers that are standing around when the kid who got assaulted at home last night punches the trophy cabin and cuts his arm. So it might be a brand new IA, a security person standing there. So we have to make sure that they're included in this, so that we're doing this training globally, so that we're doing it enough that we have retention so that it's sticking with our adult learners. And it fits within that adult attention span. We all suffer from that. I mean, the adult attention span, you know, we all, we all know what it is because we all have to deal with it on a daily basis. After we stare at our screen for so long, you've got to get up and walk around. We don't want, you know, the principals and APs of Talbot County Public Schools going, oh, God, here comes this Jeff Smith guy again with another tabletop exercise. I don't want that. I want there to be buy-in. I want them to have the confidence in their staff so that next year, when my next year comes around and I'm starting to build emergency preparedness plans, I can start going to my head custodians, my chief maintenance guys, say, hey, what do you think here? How's this going to work when the emergency hits? And when we do that, we build those relationships and we get them to have buy-ins to this program, the Are We Ready program, by including them, whether at a global level within the school building or whether in these smaller, more targeted, more focused groups by doing tabletop exercises with them as well. And that focuses on the way that adult learns. When an adult learns, they feel included. They want to engage. Then they're part of the system. Then they're part of the solution instead of another tabletop exercise. We don't want that. So much so that when Dino invited me to speak here, I was like, is this a presentation or a crucifixion? What am I walking into when I walk into this room? So we want everybody to have fun. Just like, you know, our goal is to provide an environment for these kids where they want to be engaged, think online, have the educational opportunities they desire. You know, I don't educate them. I don't do stuff for

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the kids, but the responsibility for providing a safe environment for them falls squarely on my shoulders. So I want everybody that's in these buildings to be prepared when something like this happens and to understand. Say, when we pick a site for a standard reunification, that we understand it might not be good to take the kids from the middle school and take them to the high school gym because now we've got double the amount of students on the high school campus and everybody's going, all these parents are going to want to pick the kids up. So we've got chief maintenance guys, we've got custodians. We've got IAs. We've got security people all thinking the same way so that when I need input, because I need input, because my tiny pea brain just can't handle it sometimes, that I know that I have a good pool of people to pull from. So that's one of the ways that I plan to implement them there. And the Are We Ready program is fantastic because there's a police officer coming up using the instant command system, and having done a lot of tabletop exercises in the past, I understand it gets the conversation going and the conversation is absolutely the most important part of it all. We can measure through tests and learning objectives and all the rubrics we want to measure by. All that's doing is regurgitating information. If we have the buy-in and everyone enjoys what they're doing and understands that it's important, to the function of educating these kids, then that information can be obtained a lot better. Anybody have any questions? Everybody think I'm crazy?

COL. ROLAND L. BUTLER, JR.: I'm going the crazy part. Jeff just gave us a mega peek behind the scenes. Everybody thinks that when it happens, law enforcement is running to the administrators. No, I'm going to go for the custodian, the person that knows the building inside and out. If I don't have a map of the building, not only does he know that building inside and out, he knows which doors have problems opening and closing. He has the keys. He also has tools. Your law enforcement officer is going to have a limited amount of tools to breach doors in his vehicle. That custodian is critical and it's critical to keep those people involved right down to unification points. He's touching on things that we figured out in failure. Luckily, these failures were in controlled exercises, one at St. John's College. Something as confusing as a reunification point. If you let the school kind of decide, hey, we're here, we're reunifying students right here. Yeah, you're right under the building. So we have to talk in common terms. And I think that's the gateway right there. Experienced law enforcement officer talking, putting the pieces together. I think we need to support that and build upon that because it's going to make it a lot easier to save lives. All right, next up, we have Dr. Stacey Henson from Washington County Public School to talk about their program.

What if...? An Indirect Approach to Professional Development/Learning Around School Safety

DR. STACY HENSON: Good morning. So I'm going to present to you today an idea. I'm certainly not an expert, but that's probably why this idea was birthed for me. So what we're doing here in our school is really an indirect approach to the professional development. So I'm going to reiterate a lot of the things that many of you have already shared. So you can go

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ahead and proceed with the next slide, and go ahead and do the next one. So about three years ago, I became a school-based administrator. This is my 32nd year in education. I miss being back with kids. I was at district level leadership. So as I was planning for the school year to start, I knew I had a safety committee. I had a safety plan. I had a safety binder, all the associated drills. I also knew that we were seeing an uptick in mental health. I knew our students were coming with more trauma. I created the plan just like every other school system does, pushed the plan out for my staff to review, sign off the checklist that says we've reviewed our safety plan. And then as I was driving home at night, I thought, you know, I don't even know whose responsibility it is to call our neighboring schools. We're a magnet school. We're also Title I, but we sit on a campus between a high school, a middle school, an alternative school, a tech high. We're really close to I-70. There's a lot of things that could happen here. So communication with our neighboring buildings is super important. And I'm the principal, and I have no idea who we're supposed to call. I know it's in the plan, but I don't know. And so I started to think, how can I be purposeful in getting this information to our staff members without making it feel like another professional development? Because if you sit in the seat that I sit in, a lot of our teachers are not quite like, they're just not, their time is really important to them. So do they want to sit through an hour of professional development on safety? I'm not sure. In my head and in the seat that I sit in, safety trumps the academic pieces for me. 32 years ago when I started, I probably would have said, you know, I'm in this job because I want to teach children. And today I say I'm in this job because I want to teach children, but first I want to keep them safe and make sure they're in an environment where they feel safe, where our teachers feel safe and they can learn. So that was really the question that came to my thoughts, like how can I be purposeful in this? So you can go ahead and click to the next slide and then go ahead and click again.

Beginning of Year Professional Development

DR. STACY HENSON: So last year, and ironically, it's today, this year, we have a school-wide professional development day. And this was the agenda last year. And when I opened it up, I started to think about this because I was at central level leadership. So I understand the passion and the need for this learning too. It's very important. Our teachers need to build their pedagogy. But at the same time, you don't see safety in there anywhere. And as the principal, that was my number one priority. So again, I went back to how can I get this to my staff members? They're already inundated with all this professional development on our professional development day. I'm not going to keep them after school. It's a long day, but I really need them to keep everything in the forefront of their minds. They need to know what's in our safety plan. They need to know their options of reacting or being proactive in any situation. So what can I do? So I started our school-based PD day with the video that's on the next slide, and I want you to take a look.

KARA LAWSON: I was talking with Shea a couple of days ago, and one of the things we talked about was how we all wait in life for things to get easier. I think in your own life, if

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you've waited for something to get easier, oh, I just got to get through this and then it'll be easy. I've just got to get through preseason and then it'll be okay. I've just got to get through my junior year of high school and then the classes are going to get easier. I've just got to get to my spring and my senior year of college and it's going to be easier. It's what we do. We wait for stuff to get easier. It will never get easier. What happens is you handle hard better. That's what happens. Most people think that it's going to get easier. Life is gonna get easier. Basketball is gonna get easier. School is gonna get easier. It never gets easier. What happens is you become someone that handles hard stuff better. So that's a mental shift that has to occur in each of your brains. It has to. Because if you go around waiting for stuff to get easier in life, it's never gonna happen. And then what happens? Oh, it's so hard. Oh, I can't do it. Oh, this, I don't know, when is it gonna be easy for me? Oh, it's easy for other people. It's not. It's hard. And the second we see you handling stuff, handling hard better, what are we gonna do? We're gonna make it hard. We're gonna make it harder. Because we're preparing you for when you leave here, not just basketball in life. And if you think life when you leave college is gonna be all of a sudden get easy, because you graduated and you got a Duke degree, it's not gonna get easier. It's gonna get harder. So make yourself a person that handles hard well. Not someone that's waiting for the easy. Because if you have a meaningful pursuit in life, it will never be easy. If you're trying to win a championship, if you're trying to have a family, ask your parents. Do you think it was ever easy for them to raise kids? Karen, is it easy? It's not. Any meaningful pursuit in life, if you wanna be successful at it, it goes to the people that handle hard well. Those are the people that get the stuff they want. People that wait around for easy, you've probably seen them at the bus stop. They're waiting for easy, the easy bus to come around. Easy bus never comes around. Got to handle hard. Okay. So don't get discouraged through this time. If it's hard, don't get discouraged. It's supposed to be. And don't wait for it to be, oh, I just got to get through the summer. And then it'll all of a sudden get easy in the fall. No, it won't. It won't get easy in the fall. So make yourself someone that handles hard well. And then whatever comes at you, you're going to be great. You're going to be great. Okay.

DR. STACY HENSON: So you can probably understand my purpose in using that video clip because, you know, what we often hear from our staff is, you know, our parents are tougher, our students are tougher. And the message I wanted to send to them is that's okay. We have to get better at handling those hard things. So how can we do that together as a staff? How can we ensure that even on those hard days, we're working together as a team and we're doing things for the safety and security of our students and staff? So if you click to the next slide, this is a really simplistic, idea and view, but it was a way to get these practices and tabletop, and I'll get into that a little bit later, exercises a little bit more right in the forefront of their minds every week.

DR. STACY HENSON: So each week I send out a weekly staff newsletter. It's called a SMORE. If you want to click on that link to the SMORE, it'll show you one from last September. And what I've done in this SMORE newspaper, you can just scroll down a little bit, is I've embedded a Google form about school safety. And each week I put a question in

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the SMORE. It's a quick question. It takes them one to two minutes to read, answer the question, and that's it. So you can go back to our slide presentation and I'll tell you a little bit more about it. So I'll go ahead while they're bringing up the presentation and share with you. So in that SMORE each week they get a question. I update it weekly and then share that with our team. So go ahead and, if you want, you can even hold your phones up to the QR code if it works for you. I'm not sure if you're if there's pictures in front of it because I can't see your view, but you can just... you can kind of scan it and do a quick one. What you would see is the question that's on the left of the slide. What is a hold called? So fortunately, we went through the reunification training this summer. Administrators did with the I Love You Guys organization. So our icons are changing a little bit. So these are the type of questions I'll probably use at the beginning of the school year. So staff answer the question, and then the Google form is designed so that they get an immediate answer. So it either says, yes, that's correct, or no, it's not correct, but this is, you know, a more appropriate response to that situation. So every week they're asking a question, they're getting an immediate response, and then I'm getting the data immediately as soon as they answer the question. So go ahead and proceed to the next slide. This is just a sample sheet of some of the ones from last year. So what I did was put the topic on this form. So you can see some of the topics that we did at the beginning of the year. And then I'm able to gather a percentage of staff that answered that question correctly. So right away, I can see where are our strengths and where do we need some more work? Because then that is what's informing my professional development around safety. So although that we're having these weekly questions and I'm kind of using that a little bit as professional development. I know that the safety team is going to then take this data and we're going to do a little bit more with it. The one that says doubt question is just specific to our safety plan. So some of the others are situations that could occur at any school and some are just for our safety plan so that I know they're back in that document and taking a look and they completely understand it. And its that working memory that a lot of you talked about. I want to make sure that right away we know who's doing this, who's doing that so that if I'm incident command, I'm really not doing anything except watching my team work seamlessly through any process. Some of the ideas that came to us were actually from other situations that occurred within our county. So I would just talk to principals and say, what did you do in this situation? What's the correct thing to do in this situation? I'd send emails to my school resource officer and say, hey, I have this situation, but I need ideas for the A, B and C choices, because I'm not even sure what I would do to begin with. So go ahead and proceed to the next one. What we do with the data then, like I said, is professional development all around it. That question just happened to be, can you release a student to a parent that's not on the emergency form? And so you could see that only 40% of our staff knew whether or not that was even an option and what kind of documentation they needed to make that happen. The next slide just shows you how to create the form. And I only have this one on here so that when I was presenting at the conference, folks could take that with them. And it just shows you how to use a Google form, but then how you use a Google form to immediately respond back to folks with an appropriate answer. On the next slide, it'll show you some challenges that I ran into, and this is where the tabletop exercises are going to become very beneficial for me. And the link just

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takes you to the tabletop, so you don't have to click on that. One of our school district-wide leaders shared the tabletop with me right away as soon as he received those because what was happening with me as I was running out of ideas, I'm trying to do these weekly. I would, you know, I was into the safety plan as much as I could be. I was trying to think of scenarios. And honestly, it just takes a ton of time. And I'm already creating a document that goes out to staff every week with all of our updates. that they need to know, and then I'm trying to create these safety things. So this will take a heavy load off of me because I can then take at least some of those scenarios, come up with answers to kind of inform our conversations around that. And the other challenge is kind of there's not always a correct answer. So I can't always come up with an A, B, or C. You know, I know that the incorrect answer is freeze. You know, I could put that on every one, but what is, you know, what's a maybe appropriate answer, but be all three, it depends on the situation. So that kind of is a little bit of a challenge for us, but it also generates conversation, which is exactly what I wanted to happen. One of the things that bothered me early on was I pulled one of the forms one day and I saw that only 12 people had responded to it. We have about 50 people on staff. And I thought, gosh, I'm putting this, I'm putting it right in their lap in a newsletter that they read every week. And 12 people responded. So I walked out to my secretary and I was kind of bellyaching about it and said, you know, I spend so much time creating these things. I really want people to understand the safety is important. And 12 people are answering it. And she said, well, I didn't answer it because I didn't want to be wrong. And that's a typical personality of a teacher too. So then I talked to another teacher in the hallway about it and she said, well, we answered it together. There were about four of us because we were talking about it. And I thought, you know, the thing that was upsetting me was actually a thing I was trying to strive for. I want these people talking about these conversations. So it kind of worked out for my benefit. I thought they weren't answering it, but instead they're kind of getting together and they said we were talking about it out at recess and we thought that it's a but then we went back to so I thought well that's really wasn't even my purpose but it kind of was so I'm thrilled that they're doing that um this year I'm going to stress it a little bit more just in case some are the alternatives and they're just not answering them because they don't want to take the time but it takes honestly a minute or two to read the question. So I want you to take a look at just a portion of the next video because it's very impactful and this is the one that I'm going to use this year during professional development.

MICHAEL JR.: Great time. Check it. So you're a musical director? Yes, sir. All right. So let me get a couple of bars of like Amazing Grace. Can you do the first part of that? Go ahead. Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. Wow. That bro could sing. You know what I'm saying? All right, all right. Now, once you give me the version, is if, uh... Your uncle just got out of jail. You got shot in the back when you was a kid. I'm just saying, let me see the hood version really quick. If you know which version I'm talking about, just see if that exists. Let me see what you got. Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost. But now, right now I'm found. Was blind, but now I see. Let's go! Okay, here's what I want you to catch. The first time I asked him to sing, he knew what he was doing. The second time, he knew why he was doing it. When

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you know your why, your what becomes more impactful because you're walking towards or in your purpose.

DR. STACY HENSON: So my favorite part of that video is that very last quote when he says, you know, if you know your why, your what becomes more impactful. So I think as educators, our why is absolutely our little babies that we serve every day. And sometimes these little things, these little what's we do like this, what if Wednesday scenario could be super impactful because we know what our why is. So although I think as a staff, we felt like this is just little things we do towards safety, it's actually a really big thing because it impacts our students. So if you go ahead and flip to the next slide, I'm gonna just share with you some of our next steps.

Next Steps

DR. STACY HENSON: So next steps obviously is, as an administrator, academics are certainly a priority, but we also need to make safety a top priority as well. Other next steps are helping each other. At the conference, I actually connected with two other counties that we're gonna kind of share some of these what-if scenarios so that we don't have to create them weekly. I put on here monthly safety committee meetings with half of the staff. After our school improvement team planning this summer, we decided that our whole staff will be part of the safety committee. We feel like if we're going to share that this is a priority of ours, then every staff member needs to be a part of the conversation and have a voice in it. So this year, our safety committee will actually be our entire staff. We're going to talk through these things together. If you look at the next slide, this was actually not even done purposeful at all. But this summer, when we had a summer camp, we had about 40 students here. We were dismissing. I was walking out front. Most of them were car riders. I think we only had one bus that day. We had to do a shelter in place during dismissal. So if you can picture it they're all we're all walking outside students are behind me my secretary comes out and says everyone needs to be back in the building. All the parents were there witnessing all of it, you know. They're waiting in their cars for their little ones and I'm turning around and bringing them back in the building. So then my administrative assistant she made the announcement over the intercom that we were in shelter. Now it's actually would be a secure call based on our new standard response protocol. So we had some students when they heard shelter in place, went straight to, well, there must be a storm and then there's a tornado. And I had a little crying because her dog was outside and there's a tornado. And honestly, it was completely different than that, but it really was a safety issue for our school and a concern. Students did a great job, but typically after any kind of situation like that, we debrief with staff. But I thought, you know, there's only 40 students here. Second grade, probably second grade through fifth grade that week. So the next day I pulled them all together in the cafeteria. We sat down and I said, we're going to debrief the situation yesterday. I didn't give them any of the details. They didn't need to know that. And it certainly probably wouldn't have been in the best professional decision to do that. But, you know, I said what went well for us, what did we do well, what could we have done

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differently let's talk about it and honestly their perspective of that situation was so different from mine and I thought. It was an aha moment for me, because we oftentimes miss the perspective of the student when we make these decisions, or when we have these conversations. So it was eye-opening for me to hear what they were thinking and what they thought went well and what they thought we didn't do well. And the staff that were in the building during the time were sharing as well. And it was nice for the kids to hear us be a little bit vulnerable in our own thinking that, you know, I did this, but I probably should have done that. So we talked through it. As a result of that, I had five fifth graders come to me at the end and say, can we be part of a safety committee too? Because I had told them that we had a school safety committee. We walked through these things. So I brought these little ones in the building this summer. These five students, they're all fifth grade. They had some of the most incredible conversation. It was really cool to hear them. They created a couple of videos that we're gonna use for our standard response protocols. They are actually also gonna create some of these what if forms, but they're gonna create them so that students can answer them. So they're gonna make them simple enough that our pre-K to five students could, or at least have them read to them or read them to them and kind of come up with, this is what I would do. They've asked me to purchase little vests for them because they feel like they're really important. They're part of the safety committee. The first week of school, they already have a job there. They're going to assist our pre-K and kindergarten rooms during the fire drill practice so that our little ones don't feel scared and they have some older students with them when we do the drills. So that's kind of our next steps. That's where we're going with this. Certainly, it's nothing genius that we've created here. And we have a lot of learning to do. But I think it came out of me not feeling like an expert. And I knew that if I need to constantly learn, so do the people around me. And if it's at the expense of making sure our students are safe, we'll do anything that we can. So thank you.

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: All right, do we all have any questions for our guests today? I think we're good. We thank you guys for coming so much out of your busy schedules to share best practices and what you're doing both at the system level and school level. So thank you so much. Okay, we'll move on to our next item.

2023-2024 Meeting Schedule

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: So it's just an overview of our upcoming dates. You see it on the slides there. Depending again, as Kate referenced, depending on the number of grant applications that may be received in the next few months, the subcabinet may have a virtual meeting in October to review and approve those applications. As always, the most up-to-date information is available on the MCSS website. Any questions about meeting dates? Okay. Next, I'm gonna shift us over to closed session. So I'm gonna read a statement that will allow the subcabinet to go into closed session. The subcabinet will not be returning to open session following the closed session. So right after closed session will be done. So pursuant to Article 3-305B1 of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, the subcabinet will adjourn to a closed session to discuss the following.

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Personnel matters that affect one or more employees of the Maryland Center for School Safety. Can I have a motion to adjourn to closed session?

KARL POTHIER: So moved.

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: Second, please.

ARABIA DAVIS: Second.

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: Seconded. All in favor, say aye.

GROUP: Aye.

MOHAMMED CHOUDHURY: Motion passes and we'll shift over to closed session.