

MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY

School Safety Subcabinet Meeting

August 12, 2024

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Welcome of the Subcabinet

MARY GABLE: All right. It's 10:02. I'll call the meeting to order. Please confirm that we are now live streaming.

AARON CHIUSANO: We're live streaming and recording.

MARY GABLE: Mrs. Johnson, please confirm that we have a quorum.

JEANEEN JOHNSON: Good morning. We have a quorum.

Additions to the Agenda

MARY GABLE: Thank you. The last meeting of the Subcabinet was in May. The May meeting was reported, and that recording is available on the MCSS website. As such, there are no meeting minutes to be approved. We have today's agenda. Are there any additions to today's agenda? Is there a motion, since there are no additions, is there a motion to approve the agenda? A motion to approve the agenda?

LAURA TORRES: I move to approve the agenda.

MARY GABLE: Thank you. Do we have a second?

MARIA BALDRIDGE: I'll second.

PREPARE 2024 - Conference Highlights

MARY GABLE: Thank you. Any discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? Any abstentions? I assume that everyone's in favor, so, the motion passes. The agenda for today is approved. With that, the first item will be to prepare for the 2024 summer conference highlights. Kate, can you start?

KATE BRYAN: Sure. So, welcome. Thank you for being here. So, we had a fantastic summer conference PREPARE 2024. We held it in July at Turf Valley down in Ellicott City. A really fantastic event. Jesika's going to go through some of the details and specifics of the conference. We had the fantastic opportunity of having Dr. Wright as well as Colonel Butler give opening comments. So, that was just wonderful having them both there. We really appreciated their participation in the event. Jesika's going to walk through some of the highlights of the events, some of the outcomes. And we really hope that as we look at preparing for next year's conference, that we can look forward to having even more of you there present with us. So, I will turn it over to Jesika.

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JESIKA MCNEIL: Good morning, everybody. Just to piggyback off what Kate said, we had a really great turn of this year for our PREPARE 2024 conference. We had over 482 attendees for our event this year with over 20 different speakers and presentations. We did breakout sessions. We did keynote sessions. It was open to public and non-public private schools. Really great turnout and diverse group of people. As always, had law enforcement, behavioral health, and administrators. So, we do focus on those three tracks typically for our conference, administrators, student teachers, and try to be diverse in the topics that we offer. We also, this year, had offered continuing professional development credits through NASP for our school psychologists. So, there were up to 10 hours available for school psychologists that were interested in attending the conference. For our law enforcement side, we offered in-service, four hours of in-service credit. For our SSCs that attended, we have approximately 12, jurisdictions, SSCs that did take part in that. We had over 30 people take part in the NASP, CPD credits, and of course the conference is also available for professional development points for administrators and teachers as well. So, we were really excited about that. Going into, we will be going into next year, our conference will be held July 15th through 17th. It will be at Turf Valley again. And as you know, that's our quarter of a century mark in 2025. So, we will be coming out with our topic and theme for that conference. And this is just, you'll see here on this slide, is one of the quotes that we received in feedback from one of our attendees in regards to the conference that we thought would be nice to share with the group with just some feedback and kind of our thoughts about it. As always, we also had our art showcase, which we do on an annual basis, which is open to all Maryland students for grades three through 12. And here on this, you'll see our theme this year was safe spaces. We do give them a theme to do their artwork and we leave it up to their creative mind to, submit the pieces. And after the conference, you'll see the pieces that were submitted are showcased in the back. You want to take a look at them. But we do offer first, second, and third place prize for each grade group. So, elementary, middle, and high school. Here are showcased our winners for second and third place, as well as the new art entries. If you'd like to take a look at them as well. The exciting part about that is that we will actually be showcasing the art pieces in the window at MSDE beginning late August, early September, and then again at the House of Delegates office beginning in December.

KATE BRYAN: So, it really was a fantastic event this year. We expect next year we're already planning to start the planning for next year already. But we welcome suggestions from your departments and your agencies on content that you think would be beneficial for the public, the private, the non-public, our law enforcement partners, as well as our other state and local partners that participate.

MARY GABLE: Certainly the folks from MSDE who attended were just very complimentary. So, well done. Thank you.

KATE BRYAN: Seemed a fantastic job. We really did. They do every year, but this year in particular.

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FY 2026 Budget Review

MARY GABLE: I know there's a ton of things. Right. Very good. So, we will go to the next item, which is the review of budget overview. And that is Gifty.

GIFTY QUARSHIE: Yes, ma'am. Good morning. Good morning, members of the subcabinet. Thank you for the opportunity to present an overview of the MCSS budget. So, the overview will focus on the actual spend data for fiscal year 2024, which just ended this past June, as well as the fiscal year 2025 appropriation in our fiscal year 2026 proposed budget. But before I do that, I just wanted to highlight the various budget categories that will make up the MCSS FY '26 proposed budget. So, first is our operating budget, of course, which is funded 100% in state general funds. Next is our grants program and budget, which is made up of three primary grants that MCSS administer. Again, those grants are the SRO Adequate Coverage Grant, the Hate Crimes Grant, and the Safe Schools Fund Grant. So, we also have unfunded mandates in the form of two new grants. The first one is Senate Bill 540, which is the School Mapping Data Grant Program. The Maryland General Assembly passed this bill during the 2024 legislative session. This bill or the bill established a School Mapping Data Grant Program, which is to provide funding to local school systems for the purpose of developing a school mapping data program in an electronic or digital format to assist first responders in responding to emergencies at a school. Provided we receive funding for this program, we hope to roll it out sometime in fiscal year 2026. The legislature also established House Bill 1167, known as the Secure Schools Emergency Response Grant Program to provide funding to local school systems for the purpose of improving emergency notification systems and communications between certain entities within Maryland schools. The effective date for this new grant program is on or before September. MCSS has, in collaboration with the IAC, worked together to put out two surveys specific to this grant. And so, we have been receiving responses for the surveys. And our goal is that it will help us determine how much we should include in the fiscal year 2026 budget proposal. And so, if we do receive the funding, our goal is to roll this out in fiscal year 2026. Finally, MCSS also applied for the Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention Grant Program, which is a federal grant program. Because the approval period for this grant is after the state's budget submission deadline, it is very likely that we would have to submit a budget amendment after the fact to be able to use the funding for this program. Next slide, please. All right, so, with that, we can begin to look at the three-year budget overview, which again includes actual data from fiscal year '24, as well as the fiscal year 2025 appropriation and the fiscal year 2026 proposed budget. I would like to emphasize that MCSS continues to operate within its budgetary limits. Salaries and contractual obligations make up the largest areas of spending for our agency. Our primary contractual agreements are with the Maryland Department of Emergency Management, and the Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center, which is where we are. And they form a majority of our spending under contractual obligations. But that's also followed with smaller agreements that we have with the University of Maryland, Bowie State University and other vendors. Overall, and as is evident in our 2024 actual data, MCSS, again, continues to operate within its budgetary

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limits. Our budget over the years for fiscal year 24 was approximately \$3.2. Our fiscal year 2025 working appropriation is about \$3.4. And our fiscal year 2026 proposed budget is going to be guided by the fiscal year 2025 appropriation. Of course, taking into consideration the DBM general fund target that agencies get before the beginning of the budget process. Just any questions on that before I move to the program budget. All right, so, moving on to our Grants Program Budget Overview. The total grant spending for fiscal year 2024 was approximately \$21 million. The breakdown of the award amount for each grant is provided for your review. And please note that the actual amount awarded under the fiscal year 2024 SRO Adequate Coverage grant is approximately \$6.3 million. The additional \$10 million in the general fund portion of the appropriation is what funds to special funds, which is where we actually award the SRO grant from. And this is, of course, followed by our Hate Crimes grant and the Safe Schools Fund grant, which the sub cabinet reviews and approves. MCSS awarded approximately \$3 million in hate crimes grant funds and about \$518,000 in the Safe Schools Fund Grant Program fiscal year 2024. The fiscal year 2025 working appropriation is provided for your reference as well as the proposed budget request for fiscal year 2026. The only thing I wanted to highlight with our proposed budget is in the Hate Crimes Grant. So, we continue to see an increased application for this particular grant program. When it started in fiscal year 2019, I believe it was a million dollars. In fiscal year '20, it was \$2 million. And same amount in fiscal year '21. And over the last two years, we've administered over, well, we've received \$3 million in appropriations. But in our applications, we've received more than \$6 million. The fiscal year 2025 application just closed and we received almost \$7 million in applications from about 126 applicants. So, this continues to be a very popular grant, primarily for non-public schools who do not have a lot of grant opportunities avenues. Our goal is to request additional million dollars in fiscal year 2026, but also that's very much considering the overall state fiscal outlook. The Hate Crimes grant is funded with state general funds. So, there is no guarantee of course, but we believe that we have the data to support the additional requesting funds. And so, with that, that concludes all of the budgetary outlook for MCSS. If you have any questions, I'd be happy to answer them.

HB 416 Implementation Update

MARY GABLE: Any questions? Thank you. Thank you very much. The next item is House Bill 416, implementation update. Kate, are you ready?

KATE BRYAN: Yep. I am. So, we presented on this in May. We talked about House Bill 416. It had quite a few requirements for our agency, not just so, the first piece was to develop some guidance for school systems on conducting trauma-informed active assailant drills. So, that documentation is being worked on. We'll have that guidance out by the deadline, which is in October, October 1st of this year. And that'll be something that is updated every year. And we're going to do that with the work we're doing with the University of Maryland, which I'm going to pass over to Kim. She and Jerica will talk through some of that research element. The bill also requires us to develop a guide related to

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gun safety storage. So, we're going to be working with some of the content that's already been developed through the Department of Health on suicide prevention. We're going to tie that to this legislation, which requires us to develop a guide for parents on guns storage laws. So, we're going to join those efforts. And then there are what Kim and Jerica are going to go through, which are the research elements and requirements of the bill. So, I'll turn it over to Kim.

KIMBERLY BUCKHEIT: Thanks, Kate. Good morning, everybody. It's good to see you again. so, Jerica and I are going to kind of give you an update on where we are. And just for everyone's information, Jerica and our partners at the National Center for School Mental Health have been really wonderful jumping into this very quickly and getting rolling on a real quick timeline. So, a couple elements, the first of which is this collaboration. So, we have developed an MOU with the National Center, which is out of the University of Maryland. It's actually a five-year, I believe, MOU. So, we will be able to really collaborate with them on following research as well as conducting some research of our own in Maryland based on information we receive from our local constituents. So, on this slide, really wanted to just give you a sort of three-year look of how we see sort of the cycle happening. So, in this first year, Jerica's team is looking at what research is currently available, and I'll let her share in a moment on that. Also then year one, developing that initial guidelines related to active assailant drills, as Kate spoke to. And then survey development also. So, Jerica's team is also kind of helping us to put this survey together, which speaks to this first bill requirement. So, the survey and analysis of the results that come from that over the course of this year. So, Jerica, I'm going to actually throw to you to kind of give us a high level related to the research and then maybe survey development.

JERICA KNOX: All right. Yeah, absolutely. Hi, everyone. Good morning. I'm Jerica Knox, assistant professor at the University of Maryland and faculty member at the National Center for School Mental Health. Thank you so much for allowing me to provide some updates on the literature review. So, as Kim said, we are developing a comprehensive lit review on the state of lockdown drills with specific attention to active assailant scenarios. We're primarily using peer review journal articles, but also pulling in news articles and other artifacts to capture the broader discourse around these drills. The review includes information on the historical context and evolution of lockdown drills, as well as contemporary issues. So, some things that we're finding there are, of course, psychological safety of active assailant lockdown drills, discrepancies in terminology, and just the broader question of do the benefits of active assailant lockdown drills outweigh the costs. The current state portion of the literature review is divided into three sections. So, first, looking at best practices and current literature in planning and preparation of lockdown drills. So, developing a multidisciplinary team, choosing between a traditional lockdown approach versus options-based drills for active assailant scenarios, how to communicate with parents in the community, etc. That second bucket is training and education. So, thinking about what training content should include for students and staff and what's the best approach for moving from training to drill execution. And then the third bucket is drill execution. So, best

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practices in what drills should look like and how this compares to what we see in the actual literature. And then finally, we're taking this trauma-informed and culturally responsive approach to examining the literature. So, this will include not only thinking about considerations of students who may have experienced trauma, but also thinking about those subpopulations who may be impacted by drills, like students with disabilities. That's one. subpopulation that's come up a lot. So, generally, we're just reviewing the literature, what are best practices that have already been identified and what's currently going on according to the current literature. In terms of measure development and just reviewing existing measures, one thing that we're looking for generally is what constructs are researchers using in evaluation drills. So, for effectiveness, we may see confidence in student and staff's ability to engage in drill procedures. We may see preparedness or we may even see direct observations from researchers. So, it's kind of this battle of are we interested in finding out whether students feel that they are prepared or whether they are actually prepared. And then also psychological impact. So, we've seen things like perceived risk of victimization, avoidance of school. So, maybe looking at school attendance as well as perceptions of school safety following the drills. The other piece is of course looking at what measures are designed for parents versus school staff, versus students, and then looking at validity evidence as well to help inform what measures we would like to use.

KIMBERLY BUCKHEIT: Thanks, Jerica. So, just to follow up sort of on this cycle, so, the goal so, the research, the literature review we really see as being ongoing over the course of the whole five years. So, this initial look and in what ways it can inform this initial guidance document, but then continuing to analyze the data, the research that may emerge over the five years, as well as what our survey results are saying. So, how do we actually start to inform the research that's available nationally on this topic? And then the survey. So, the survey document, our goal is to really have that ready to be able to start distributing to locals in October. Again, totally understanding we're on a very tight timeline and we appreciate Jerica and her team so, that we can actually be gathering evidence from this current school year, the 25-26 school year to analyze to then inform us going into year two. And then that cycle would continue. So, each year as we gather data, right, we're using that data to inform sort of the next step of guidance that we develop. So, questions on any of that or thoughts, suggestions for Jared and her team or the MCSS team? And so, I will also add, we have been, so, we engaged with our MSDE partners monthly, but we have actually added some additional meetings related to this bill and this collaboration with MSDE. So, both the intent is as the guidance is developed, that then that's also being reviewed by our MSDE partners for feedback and edits before it's ready for distribution. So, we've been working pretty closely on this bill.

MARY GABLE: Just a question. Can you summarize what the change has been since this just started to what the thinking is now to where the thinking might go? Because I think we are seeing definitely...

KIMBERLY BUCKHEIT: So, in terms of the use of lockdown drills.

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MARY GABLE: Yes.

KIMBERLY BUCKHEIT: Yeah, and so, that's honestly like as we look at the conference at a quarter century, right, for those of us who have been in education for this quarter century. You know, initially, when I just recall right as a practitioner in the, you know, 1999 following Columbine, 2000, it was really just related to safety. We weren't necessarily worried about the psychological impact. It was about teaching kids, walks, lights out of sight and the staff, right? I think the evolution as different companies and different programs, right, have emerged that folks are using. The feeling that the only way kids take them seriously is if you use sensory simulations, right, pretend there's actually a shooter in the building, those type of dynamics. I think we saw that sort of happening probably, you know, in the early 2010 in that window of time. And so, now we're at this window, I think, as practitioners where we understand the value. But how do you balance the value with the impact on the psyche, right, a kid being afraid, but not afraid enough, right, that it's crippling. So, that's why, like Jerica and I sort of talked about, I think the attendance data might be an interesting one. Do we see there are kids who the training and the drill potentially create some sense of fear to go to school now, right, that then they're not coming to school for this window of time following an exercise versus that nice balance of healthy, right, healthy anxiety around being prepared. And I feel more prepared is the way it's done. So, how students and staff perceive the activity versus also how we as first responders and others feel that we know they're prepared if any event were to happen. So, I think that's...so, as Jerica's looking at the research, right, is going to be like, what does it say right now, but what have we learned, right? And that's why this quarter century is interesting. What have we learned since '99 over the span of those 25 years? We've definitely learned a lot.

Request to Adopt COMAR 14.40.06 - Data Collection and Reporting

MARY GABLE: Thanks. Any other questions for Kim? All right, then the next item is, if we can move forward, is COMAR 14.40.06, which is data collection and reporting. This is an item that will be a vote, and it's a request to adopt. So, we will walk through the regulation, which will require a vote for adoption.

RON PIERCE: Sure. So, I agree, and this is a very brief regulation, so, let's go quick. The purpose of this was to set timing and due dates for some of the mandated actions that LEAs have with us and what data we have to collect from them. The due dates have been the same dates we've used now for several years. This is just simply putting them in regulation. And the new piece, the newer piece to this is setting the timing cycle for the collection of emergency plans and also safety evaluation, which requires, I say for an act, but they were required regularly thereafter an initial submission to us. We struggled a bit with what regularly meant to some millionaires, it was a bit different from the others. We settled on two years. So, every two years, they're gonna be due to us for us to review. And then with the safety evaluation summarized to present to you, which is basically summarizing gaps that they find when they do these evaluations, both to their culture, environment, and to

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their physical safety. So, that's the purpose of it. Very short and sweet. We sent this out to public comment on June 28th this year. We received no comments back from public about regulations. So, we're asking to do it all.

MARY GABLE: So, is there a motion to adopt COMAR 14.40.06 data collection?

CAROL A. BEATTY: So moved.

MARY GABLE: Is there a second?

LAURA TORRES: I second.

MARY GABLE: Thank you. Any discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? Any abstentions? Motion passes. Are we good?

GIFTY QUARSHIE: I did not hear everyone's vote. Could we retake the vote?

MARY GABLE: All in favor.

GROUP: Did we lose the people? We lost everybody. Do we have a quorum?

RON PIERCE: Colonel Butler and Arabia

MARY GABLE: They were there? They're still there? They're not...

RON PIERCE: They're there. They're just not- their cameras are on.

GROUP: Oh, okay. Oh, okay. All right. Thank you. We're good? We're good, yeah. All right. Thank you. All right. Thank you. Thank you for keeping us straight.

Nonpublic Schools Tabletop Exercise Briefing

MARY GABLE: They told me you'd keep me out of trouble. Next item is Non-public school tabletop exercises. Kate or Kim that's you again.

KATE BRYAN: So, I'll kick off here. So, we've been going about two years now, doing a coordinated work with several of our state agency partners related to emergency preparedness activities. In May of this last year at your main meeting, we talked about the statewide tabletop exercise that we did with the 24 public school systems, which was a huge success. One of the requests we received both in our Advisory Board meetings, as well as from some of our non-public special education partners, was if we could do something like

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this for them. Because although they have incredible teams and resources to be able to provide support to students within their facilities, they don't all have the resources or the expertise to be able to do emergency preparedness-related activities like exercises. So, I'll turn it over to Kim, and she's going to talk a little bit about what I'm doing in August.

KIMBERLY BUCKHEIT: So, we, again, we actually started by bringing together a number of our partners. So, working, again, really closely with our MSDE partners in the non-public office, as well as folks from the Department of Disabilities. Cecilia's been great. And we pulled in a couple of our non-publics to say, if we were going to do this event, when? Right? And what would make sense in terms of making it meaningful for our non-public schools? So, we came up with, even though the August date is just before back to school, not totally ideal, we didn't feel comfortable postponing that much longer into the school year. So, we really have made sure that the tabletop event scenario that we're going to use is very practical, very meaningful, and will allow them to actually really just focus on emergency preparedness, emergency planning. And so, the event is planned for the afternoon of August 22nd. We also shortened the windows. We're planning to do it within a two-hour period of time where we had used three hours with our publics. And so, it was, again, by choice as our public was, but we've had 55 schools signed up. We have a large number who are planning to attend. So, it'll happen the same way as our public. We will facilitate here. So, MCSS will be in this space projecting the scenario to the non-public. The non-public school will be in their location with whoever on their team they're pulling together and participate that way. So, we'll introduce the scenario, give them time to talk and plan, come back and talk. And then we have, I think, two different energy injects kind of for them to think about. So, we're really prompting them to test their emergency plan, and it'll be a weather event. It's not an emergency. I won't give specifics on that, but something that is very practical. But we'll also require them to test their communication. So, how they're communicating with their parents, with folks internally, and then also how they're, what they would do in the event of if there's some physical damage on the property, right? How do you kind of categorize and contact with your insurance and all those different people that you have to communicate kind of following some event that requires that kind of scenario. So, I think we've had a good response. We had our initial... so, what we do with the facilitators is we do just a quick call with them to say this is what the scenario is going to look like. Here's questions to be prepared to ask your teams. So, they're not kind of going into it cold. They're going into it understanding what they're doing. and that went well. Folks attended. We didn't have any big questions. So, we're looking forward I think the plan is for us to do one a year for our non-pubs, and then also to have our non-publics, as we do the public event, the public statewide one in October and February, to really encourage them to invite their non-publics to be participating with them will be definitely a push when we start to roll that communication around the October one out to publics.

KATE BRYAN: And we did some surveys of the non-publics in late May, early June. So, we were able to gather sort of where they felt their gaps were in emergency preparedness. So, we're able to build some of that into this first exercise. This is more to get their feet wet,

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test them, you know, worked well with public schools, this is an opportunity to see if this same format can work with the non-publics, which we believe it can, because it was very successful in planning. So, our hope is to be able to sort of run two publics every year and one non-public.

KIMBERLY BUCKHEIT: The one thing in the initial kind of survey data from the non-pubs, as everyone could imagine, the variance is very dependent upon the size of the institution. Right, so, our Shepherd Pratts, our Kennedy Krieggers, our institutions that have more resources available to them feel more prepared, or at least in terms of have some solid plans, have people that are supporting that work. Our smaller non-publics that are kind of singular kind of folks with, you know, a 50 or 60 student population is, they are more sort of resource deprived. So, our intent is, because it's such a large audience, we will do breakout. So, the breakouts will happen in breakout rooms this time instead of all together. And we're planning to divide them by size. So, the conversation for our smaller schools will look very different in the brief out and then follow up kind of resource opportunities for us with them versus the larger sort of institution-based folks.

CAROL A. BEATTY: We don't do the school for the deaf and the school for the blind.

KIMBERLY BUCKHEIT: So, they fall in both.

KATE BRYAN: Yeah. So, they fall in both. So, we invited them to this. We, in the future, could invite them to the others. We provide them resources through really all of our programs and the others program people involved with funding, but they do fall on the non-public side. Thank you.

KIMBERLY BUCKHEIT: Yeah. So, we would definitely include them in both activities too. And we will make sure we make an asserted effort to have the seed school joining us in the public event in October also.

MARY GABLE: That would be really important also to talk about the non-pubs. They did have an incident of flooding in a dorm. And so, then they didn't have a place for the children to sleep and had to then go into sending the kids home because they didn't have. And then how long is it going to take to repair the thing? And so, it would be really important to proceed. Yeah, that continuity planning. It's really important. And then notification, that all came up, you know, notification, even. So, yeah, and I think school for the deaf, school for the blind are considered public agency. But I think it's good that you're including them in both categories. And that way, they can go to vote for whichever one fits more comfortably would be good.

LAURA TORRES: So, can I just ask as far as the participation, what is the incentive for non-publics to participate and what if they don't?

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KIMBERLY BUCKHEIT: Yeah, I mean, there's no penalty at all if they don't, right? I think the incentive has been and what we've really tried to work with them is for them to use this as part of their sort of back to school with staff, emergency planning, safety, right? So, in this window of time, you're bringing staff back, you're reviewing all of your policies, procedures, right? Sort of maybe build that into this window of time there. The incentive is really just the opportunity to devote time to emergency planning. And I think that's what we saw on the public side too, right? People to carve out this time in their calendar where we're all kind of having that we're focused on this, right? The other things are set aside for this moment in time. So, that has been a value. And then for us to sort of conduct the exercise. So, Kate is the expert on the importance of exercises and you test your plans best, right, when you practice and go through these. So, to do it in a sort of spontaneous manner for them allows a little bit of that opportunity to experience the unexpected, right? And to respond within a sort of tabletop discussion-based scenario. We're driving that for them, right? Without them having to necessarily come up with the scenario and that fabricated element.

KATE BRYAN: And I think that's a key piece, right? We are taking ownership of the administrative burden of activities, exercises, right? We put together all the material. We help them with scenario development. We develop questions they can ask. We develop the slides, all of the after, a sample after action report that they can use. So, all of those sort of necessary elements to be able to conduct an effective tabletop exercise. We take on that. So, that's a huge, that's been a huge positive, but from both the public and non-public.

KIMBERLY BUCKHEIT: So, the time on their side is literally just to invite people, right? It's just to get the right people in the room at that time.

MARY GABLE: I think that's a huge selling point and that there is a superintendent's non-public work group. That group did not meet last year, but there's no question they are going to meet this year. So, I think it would be a good idea for you to get in front of that. I'll let folks know. I don't know, maybe they'll meet. They used to meet twice a year, but don't hold me to that. But there are conversations as recently as last week that we need to get that superintendents, non-public workers. So, you have all the non-public, not all of them there, but groups represented. That would be fantastic. You know, just, you could, you know, get the tenants on the agenda. So, you know, just get the word out. It's good to let them know.

KATE BRYAN: Yes, we're really looking forward to August 22nd. Hopefully another fantastic event, which we can't do without our technical support team relies; relies heavily on them.

Safe Schools Fund Grant Application Review

MARY GABLE: Any further questions? All right, the next item is also approvals of Safe

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Schools Fund grant application.

GIFTY QUARSHIE: Thank you. So, we have five applications for you today for review and approval. The FY '25 Safe Schools Fund grant application opened in July, and it is still open until September 30th. We try to give the LEAs a lot of time. We understand it's not a lot of money, but with schools going back in and a lot of the same folks submitting applications for various agencies, we try to give them just enough time to get their applications in. So, out of the 24, we have received five so far. But before I guess we review it, I wanted to ask if you wanted to do like a one review for all five of them, or you would like that we go through each individual application.

LAURA TORRES: This is my first meeting. So, if you could just provide a little bit of background around the dollars and what they can do for it.

GIFTY QUARSHIE: Absolutely. So, for fiscal year '25, the total appropriation for the Safe Schools Fund grant is \$600,000. Because of the limited amount, each LEA is allocated \$25,000. Now there are 10 categories under the Safe to Learn Act. I believe it is Section 7-1508, maybe. And list all of the 10 different categories that LEAs can submit their applications for and what the eligible projects are. And so, all of the five that you will be reviewing are eligible projects under the Safe to Learn Act. And the applications you have are from Allegany County Public Schools, Anne Arundel County Public Schools, Baltimore County Public Schools, Carroll County Public Schools and Queen Anne's County Public Schools. The packet that was emailed to you, the first page provides the general overview of what is contained in the actual application. The application requirements, of course, are the spend plan, which is a templated document that MCSS provides. It's available on our website, as well as just, you know, narrative supporting requests. so, the packet for each LEA has the overview, which is prepared internally at MCSS, but also the budget spend plan, which is submitted as part of the application process, the actual narrative from the LEA. And in some cases, you might see the quote for maybe specific equipment that's being requested or a contractual document from the LEAs, if they have any contracts with any vendors. And I am guessing it might be better to go through each individual application just to give you the opportunity to review and approve each one. All right. So, with that, I will start with Allegany County Public Schools. As you will note on the overview document, this is a request that was submitted- so, the sub-cabinet in fiscal year '21, '22, '23, and '24, and they were reviewed and approved each of those years. The Allegany County Public Schools is requesting to use their Safe Schools Fund grant funding for FY 2025 to provide support for their, they call them school safety officers, these school safety officers assist with school-based incidents inside and outside of its buildings. They also provide support for other school-based events, such as sporting events and home visits for absenteeism or truancy. And each of their school safety officer for fiscal year '25, well, for school year 2024 and 2025, The hourly rate is projected at \$42.65. And so, they are proposing to use their entire \$25,000 allocation for this project.

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LAURA TORRES: So, are these police officers employed by the police department?

KATE BRYAN: They are not.

GIFTY QUARSHIE: These are not police officers. These are school employees employed by the school system.

LAURA TORRES: I see. Yes. And so, I just want to ask, so, if you divide that, that's about 586 hours of service. So, do they provide a breakdown about what they anticipate?

GIFTY QUARSHIE: So, the breakdown is the hourly payment. So, the LEAs have job descriptions specific to this position. And in addition to all of the functions that they perform, because this is a reimbursable grant, what we usually get in the end are the payroll reports that actually support the hourly rate. I believe last year it was approximately \$41, but this year they are projecting that it will be \$42.65. So, when they do submit the reimbursement request, we are looking for, of course, the hourly rate, as well as the actual payment for these positions once, you know, all of their payrolls have been processed for the school year.

LAURA TORRES: So, are these officers are part of the school system budget and already, and this is just an over of the school guide is what they're saying, right? So, like they're already paid to operate within the schools on a different budget.

GIFTY QUARSHIE: Right. So, the \$25,000 is supplemental to their actual budget.

KATE BRYAN: Yes. Do we have to have a motion to approve for each one?

GIFTY QUARSHIE: Yes, please. I'm sorry. So, yes, the motion is for you to review and approve the application from Allegany County Public Schools.

MARY GABLE: So, do I have a motion to approve on these?

CAROL A. BEATTY: Yes.

MARY GABLE: Is there a second?

KATE BRYAN: Butler has his hand up. I don't know if that's a second?

MARY GABLE: Any discussion? So, we will need a definite vote and hand indication. So, all in favor, please raise your hand. Any opposed? Any abstentions? I think we're good. Yes. Ready for the next one. Yes.

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GIFTY QUARSHIE: So, I proposed it. Well, I am requesting the sub-cabinet to review and approve the application from Anne Arundel County Public Schools. They are requesting to use their Safe Schools grant fund for fiscal year '25 to purchase new cameras specifically for Glen Burnie High School. And they are requesting \$24,572 of their \$25,000 application.

LAURA TORRES: So, again, just so, I can understand, these types of things are not included normally in a school budget.

GIFTY QUARSHIE: So, they may not but the availability of this grant provides for supplemental funding for projects that this school may not be able to fund entirely from their budget. Yes.

LAURA TORRES: Got it.

MARY GABLE: So, it's one of those items. You said there's a list of items. So, it's one of the items.

GIFTY QUARSHIE: Yes. Yes. Physical security is one of those items.

MARY GABLE: I have a motion to accept the one proposal from them.

MARIA BALDRIDGE: I move to accept.

MARY GABLE: Is there a second? We have a second on the screen.

MARY GABLE: Thank you. Any discussion? All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Good to go. Thank you.

GIFTY QUARSHIE: So, moving on to Baltimore County Public Schools. So, they are requesting to use their funding in three different ways. The first one is they want to use \$16,125 for a learning seminar for their student safety assistance, SSAs, and for them to attend a three-hour seminar that will focus on conflict resolution, de-escalation, and effective communication. And it will be offered to about 215 of their SSAs. The funds from the Safe Schools Fund Grant will be used to pay stipends to the SSAs for their attendance. As it's noted on the overview document, these SSAs are contractual employees. They're paid about \$25 an hour for work and professional learning. BCPS is also asking to use some of their funding, approximately \$3,546 for, I'm sorry, to purchase 60 radios, I'm sorry, to purchase 60 earpieces for their SROs at a cost of \$59.11 per piece. For this particular request, I did go back to BCPS because we also have the SRO grant program and this funding could be used for that. But I was informed that one of the things, one of the eligible projects this year on the SRO grant is for the funding to be used for school security employee salaries. And so, BCPS has already submitted an application to use about half of

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their SRO grant fund allocations for their SSEs. So, they don't have a lot of allowance in the SRO grant program, which is why they are using the Safe Schools Fund grant for this particular supply. The last request is for eight SROs to attend the Drugs, Abuse, and Resistance Education Training. They're requesting \$2,400 and these funds will be used to pay for the cost of registration. So, the total request for BCP from BCPS is \$22,072.

LAURA TORRES: Gifty, is the asterisk next to the \$3546 because it could have been any other grant?

GIFTY QUARSHIE: But no, so, the asterisk is the fact that we did round out the number at the very bottom, if not, yeah, it's an approximate number. Sorry.

LAURA TORRES: Just a question. The stipends for attendance at the training, even though they're contractual, they're probably contracted for a certain number of hours. Are these hours outside of those hours?

GIFTY QUARSHIE: So, it is not clear in the actual application packet, but from what I understand, training is usually outside of their normal pay arrangement with the school system. And so, whenever training is required, they pay them additional stipend for them to be able to attend. And so, BCPS was asking to use their, or a portion of their \$25,000 to have them attend the training and effectively pay them to attend outside of their work. Yes.

MARY GABLE: Do I have a motion for Baltimore County? Carol, and then we have a second. All in favor of discussion? All in favor?

COLONEL BUTLER JR.: Aye.

MARY GABLE: Aye. Never mind. Any opposed? I'm seeing... good to go. Yes. Thanks, carry on.

GIFTY QUARSHIE: Yes, ma'am. So, Carroll County has also submitted this request in the past. And it is their contract with the Carroll County Youth Services Bureau. They provide psychiatric evaluations, psychiatric follow-up visits, diagnostic assessments, and therapeutic monitoring services in conjunction with psychiatric services. And so, the overview document provides a breakdown of the number of events that they project for school year 2024 and 2025. Again, this has been approved in the past. Lastly, I believe the last time this was submitted, we received a question on whether these services are being provided to students who already have insurance or have Medicaid. And it was clarified the last time that these are for students who do not have any insurance or Medicaid.

LAURA TORRES: So, just to clarify, when it says psychiatric, are they talking about a mental health provider or a psychiatrist?

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GIFTY QUARSHIE: So, the vendor that they have, they have different practices of providers. And so, if you read the narrative, it is essentially focused around students who might be having any specific issues related to mental health. It's also for students who just might have issues that come up in the day that may require services from this particular vendor. But the vendor does provide more than just on-site care entry. I help the, of course, have the therapeutic monitoring services that is provided as well as diagnosis assessment. So, it's not just focused on psychiatric events.

LAURA TORRES: Yeah. And I guess I'm not necessarily...I'm more wordsmithing the provider. Is the provider like a social worker or a counselor or a psychiatrist?

MARY GABLE: They mentioned psychiatric nurse practitioner.

LAURA TORRES: Okay.

MARY GABLE: On Pg. 103. I believe it says 15 psychiatric evaluations, follow-up visits, psychiatric evaluation services.

LAURA TORRES: I'm just wondering why they're choosing a nurse practitioner and not like a social worker or a licensed counselor. And the reason I'm asking that is just because I'm sure the amount that is charged is higher with a nurse practitioner. It may just be that they have...I wouldn't necessarily think they would need to see a nurse practitioner unless there are some type of medication recommendations involved. And for that, there would need to be, you know, I'm not...

CAROL A. BEATTY: I don't think I got that.

GIFTY QUARSHIE: That was in the attachments.

LAURA TORRES: Oh, I only saw the first page. I didn't scroll through all of them. Sorry.

LAURA TORRES: Okay. I guess the main point for me is, you know, what is happening with these youth if they don't have insurance? What efforts are being made to ensure that they get them since there's a limited amount of services? Maybe they don't need all, like, long term services, but those are just some follow-up questions that I think apply with that.

GIFTY QUARSHIE: And so, I'm sorry, what's the question specifically so, we can take it back?

LAURA TORRES: So, my question is, why is the provider a nurse practitioner versus a counselor or social worker. And what are... yeah, I guess I'm stuck on why they need psychiatric evaluations and why they just don't need therapeutic interventions. And again,

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that's, the granular piece of that is going to come down to the billing amount, the amount of the nurse practitioner. And then I guess my question is, what happens after the four months if that student still requires services? Are there any efforts being made to ensure that they are connected to some type of insurance? And then my last question is, who are the students that don't have insurance? Because only people who are undocumented. Everyone else should have insurance. Every kid in the state is eligible for insurance. So, I don't know why we would have students without health insurance. So, yeah, my questions are like, what are we doing to make sure that, and again, not saying they shouldn't get services while they're getting connected to insurance, but like there's a huge issue there, not just behavioral health wise, but these kids then don't have access to medical care, which is really important. You know, we think about some of the requirements for school, like vaccinations and, you know, things like that, and these kids aren't necessarily eligible. And to my knowledge, Carroll County does not have a huge resource for medical services for uninsured folks. I don't think they have any fed with qualified clinics. So, I would I'm not going to prove this, just so, you know, until some of those questions are answered.

GIFTY QUARSHIE: Absolutely. So, we will be happy to take those back. I believe we have a virtual option for the next subcabinet meeting just for grants in October. So, we will come back with the response to these questions.

CAROL A. BEATTY: I guess I would add, I had made a note, and I know that we have approved this in the past. But I made a note about insurance because I feel like is the question they don't have insurance or that their insurance isn't adequately covering?

LAURA TORRES: Yeah, or there's a lack of providers for their insurance. That could be. All of that very well could be. Yeah, those are good questions. They have medical assistance. There may not be a lot of medical assistance and providers in Carroll County. That could be it.

MARY GABLE: You might say that, but there's a shortage of people in Carroll County.

LAURA TORRES: Sure, sure. I guess my concern again is if these are kids who need long-term services. So, I'm not saying let's not get them started until we can make sure that they're bridged to an appropriate provider. But some of the behavioral health issues that are seen in the school with young people, four months is not an adequate dose of treatment. So, I would just want to make sure that they don't get a dose and then there isn't any follow-up should they need it.

MARIA BALDRIDGE: I think those are concerns. I mean, I actually did see the description that was provided with the application and also just having come from representing children for many, many years prior to coming to the Attorney General's office. There's a lot of children who are uninsured or not insured, mostly because of lapses. You're right. Lots of

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kids are undocumented and that's the reason. But whether it's parental neglect, or parental confusion, or lots of kids have it lapse, even coming from our state agencies. There will be children coming out of the foster care system or coming out of the juvenile services system that have a huge lapse. And I think what was important, too, is at the end of page two, it does indicate that they're going to be connecting them to services while they're setting them up. And it looks like they're limiting sort of their requests for the actual psychiatric evaluation services took 15, which seems like a small number. Yeah. I mean, I don't know how many people are in Carroll County these days, but it's probably bigger than I think.

MARY GABLE: More than you would think.

MARIA BALDRIDGE: Yeah, yeah, I know. But I was just noticing that too, just that it does indicate that it's kind of like, you know, get them set up, get them evaluated, see if they do need medication. If not, then they're going to be like seen by the interns and other practitioners.

LAURA TORRES: Okay.

MARIA BALDRIDGE: So, I do think, I know you were probably, obviously, like you hadn't seen it. But they did really provide a lot of information about why they want that. And I agree with you. Like, yeah, where are these problems? Fix those while we're giving services. Because that's the problem. The gap in services is why these kids are not getting the help when they need it. And then you can't continue when they get insurance because then, like you said, Medicaid doesn't cover it. And then you've got that problem. So, I think they're kind of putting that into their plan.

LAURA TORRES: Then I might retract.

GIFTY QUARSHIE: And to one of the points that you raised too, you said what happens after the four months or after these many visits that are outlined here, they also included in the narrative that efforts will be made to transition a youth's ongoing services to their insurance coverage, providing the youth is insured. CCYSB, which is the vendor, accepts the policy, and a PANA provider is available. So, they have contingencies in place for after the school year or after what the school is able to provide.

MARIA BALDRIDGE: And I do like that they have at the end, too, that they are making referrals to the more systemic therapy services, like the multisystemic services. And they list a bunch about parent-child interaction, child parent psychotherapy, I mean, all kinds of other, hopefully services that would be covered by the insurance they help kids get. But I do think that plan is actually pretty sound.

LAURA TORRES: Yeah, the uninsured cases really concern me.

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MARY GABLE: So, I guess the question is, do we want to put it up for a motion. Do we have a motion or do we just want to pull it for now? Kate, do you have a particular desire for it to get more information and come back to the group? Or do you want we can ask for a motion second and take a vote?

KATE BRYAN: So, I think if there's still outstanding questions, then we should hold it and we can bring it back in October. But if we feel like some of those questions have been answered and we're prepared to approve it, then we can do that and also still follow up with them to clarify, especially related to insurance.

LAURA TORRES: Yeah, and I'm fine.

MARY GABLE: Okay. Then is there a motion to approve Carroll County? One and a second. I'm sorry. Any further discussion? We did agree to go back and get some additional answers. So, all in favor of the Carroll County proposal? All in favor, raise your hand. Opposed? You want it again?

KATE BRYAN: The Colonel is trying to... Colonel, are you trying to speak?

COLONEL BUTLER JR.: Yes, I am. A little hiccup on my end. I am in favor.

MARY GABLE: Thank you.

JEANEEN JOHNSON: I just want to be clear or make sure the record is clear as to what we're doing. We're passing it with the contingency that they're going to get the answers, or are you just passing it with no requirements?

MARY GABLE: Well, I think the recommendation was we will follow up on the questions and get more information. However, you correct me if I'm wrong, there is a motion to approve what is submitted.

JEANEEN JOHNSON: Right. So, it's been approved. So, if they come back with answers that perhaps you don't, that may give you more answers, it's approved.

MARY GABLE: Correct.

JEANEEN JOHNSON: Okay. Just want to be clear that the board understands that.

MARY GABLE: Is everyone good with that? And so, you got the numbers on both?

GIFTY QUARSHIE: Yes, we do.

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MARY GABLE: All right. Absolutely.

LAURA TORRES: Can I just ask one more thing? And it's about this, but just in general, do they provide data? Do all of these grantees provide data at all? We saw this many students, or we assisted at these many events for one of the previous ones, like, is that a requirement?

MARY GABLE: What do they have to provide?

LAURA TORRES: Yeah, I mean, I hear you that you get invoiced, which I get that. But aside from that, is there any other accountability that's required? And there may not be if this is just grants or something.

GIFTY QUARSHIE: Right. So, yes, there are requirements that we have that may not be everything that the school, of course, requires for their side. But for us, we want to verify that the services were indeed provided, which means that for Carroll County, they would submit to us an invoice from the vendor that breaks down the different services that were provided and how many. And so, if you look at the breakdown of their application, they included a table in their narrative. and the total projected cost for the number of events that they propose to have in the school year. so, when we receive their invoices, for example, for the psychiatric evaluation, we want to see if there is at least up to 15. Now, if there's less than 15, they don't get penalized for that because this is, again, a reimbursable grant. So, you're only being reimbursed for what you've actually done. And so, we know to expect at least 15, up to about 8,600. And so, data for us is verifying that services were indeed provided. Now the school might require additional data for maybe planning purposes or to make determination of how much of these services they need. But as far as the grant management side of things, we just want to make sure that what is being provided actually matches what was requested by the subcabinet.

KATE BRYAN: And that's true for all the applications, right? So, if it's appointment, if it's services, we have documentation of that all.

LAURA TORRES: Okay, thank you.

GIFTY QUARSHIE: So, the last one for this session is from Queen Anne's County Public Schools. They are asking to purchase 57 radios, portable radios, to prepare and respond to school emergency threats. The cost per radio is \$435. And of course, if you look at the budget sheet, it is included under their equipment request. For a lot of the school systems, they go through periods of replacing old radios, and that's the case, particularly here. And the Safe Sleep Fund grant, of course, allows under the 10 different categories for the money to be used for these equipment purchases. And so, Queen Anne's County is requesting to use \$24,795 out of their \$25,000 allocation.

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MARY GABLE: Any questions? Motion to approve Queen Anne's request.

CAROL A. BEATTY: I second.

MARY GABLE: Any discussion? All in favor, say aye.

GROUP: Aye.

2024-2025 Subcabinet Meeting Schedule

MARY GABLE: Any opposed? Any abstentions? Thank you. Thank you for all of your research that you've done for this. And you clearly know what's in the application. Well done. All right. The sub-cabinet meetings for '24 to '25. Kate?

KATE BRYAN: Yes, so, in the May meeting, you all approved changes to the schedule for the rest of '24 and '25, specifically October and November, because those dates, the original dates fell on holidays. So, we've modified those. The October meeting, as Gifty mentioned, will be specific to grants. So, we will bring to you, and the only thing on that agenda, and it will be virtual, is grants. So, any of the applications we receive between now and the end of September and then the November meeting is moved to the following week. I think it's actually Tuesday. So, I will verify the date because I believe it's a Tuesday and we'll get those to you to make sure that you have them in preparation for the rest of the year. And then the rest of '24 and all of '25 are the same.

MARY GABLE: So, Monday is November 18th. So, you think it's November 19th? Is that what you're saying?

KATE BRYAN: No, is it the 18th?

MARY GABLE: Monday is November 18th.

KATE BRYAN: That's right. Yes. And the holiday was the week before. The 11th. Oh, that's better. So, we have gone between the Tuesday and the Monday and we settled on Monday.

MARY GABLE: You're good.

KATE BRYAN: Not that good.

MARY GABLE: Right. Any other items?

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KATE BRYAN: No, I think they were approved in May.

Meeting Close

MARY GABLE: You're good? Then thank you very much. Is there a motion to adjourn?

LAURA TORRES: I move to adjourn.

MARY GABLE: Thank you. A second?

MARIA BALDRIDGE: I'll second.

MARY GABLE: Thank you. Any discussion? All in favor?

COLONEL BUTLER JR.: Aye.

MARY GABLE: Opposed? Abstention? Motion passes, adjourned. Thank you, Kate. Thank you.

KATE BRYAN: And if you do get a chance, the student artwork is behind you on the table. It comes in quite beautiful. At least two. Is it just two of them, Jan? Is it just two over there? There are MCSS staff children. Yes. Two.