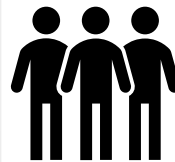


Effectiveness and Psychological Impact of Active Assailant Lockdown Drills in Maryland Schools

SY 2024-2025 Highlights



Voices Represented



- **Schools:** 62 (out of 1,422)
- **Districts:** 6 (out of 24)
- **Students:** 7,597
- **School Staff:** 1,054
- **Parents/Caregivers:** 696

The State of Maryland launched a statewide study to understand the effectiveness and psychological impact of active assailant lockdown drills.

Study Approach

- **Four surveys** developed for students, families, and school staff
- **Administered online** shortly after schools conducted a lockdown drill
- **Data collected** January-June 2025

73%

of students reported drills improved their preparedness

85%

of staff felt more prepared to respond in a real emergency

78%

of parents gained confidence in school safety procedures

Most respondents viewed drills as effective, though feedback highlighted areas for further improvement.

“

Students and staff can use more training...[We] need more clarification about [different techniques] and when to do each. – Middle School Teacher

Most respondents did not report negative psychological impacts, but differences across groups reveal some concerns.

“

I understand why the lockdown drills are performed, however, I do feel that it can cause some fear and anxiety in children. Unfortunately, this is the new normal for the world, and the school does need to be prepared.

– Parent of Elementary School Student

18% of all students reported feeling upset or scared during the lockdown drill. Those feelings were most often reported by **students of color, English language learners, students with disabilities, and girls**. 12% of school staff and 4% of parents noticed similar signs of distress in students.

20% of all staff reported concerns about the long-term emotional impacts of drills on themselves.

Classroom teachers/aides reported greater worry than administrators, support staff, and operations team members.

According to Parents:

5%

of children experienced physical reactions like stomachaches

4%

of children showed signs of anxiety and wanted to avoid school

Who is Involved in Planning Lockdown Drills

School Administrators	School Resource Officers	Local Law Enforcement
98%	39%	7%

School Mental Health Professionals	Classroom Teachers	Community Members
23%	48%	5%

Drills were typically short and orderly, but gaps remain in accommodations and inclusive planning.

44% of schools reported providing accommodations for **students with disabilities**.

20% of schools reported providing accommodations for **English language learners**.



Recommended Action Steps

Findings highlight strengths in Maryland's approach to active assailant lockdown drills, however, there are several opportunities for improvement.

- **Strengthen Multidisciplinary Planning:** Representation from school mental health professionals, special education staff, and community members should be improved to design drills that address the diverse needs of students.
- **Address Equity Gaps for Vulnerable Populations:** School systems should adopt equity-focused strategies that ensure drills are accessible, developmentally appropriate, and psychologically safe for all students.
- **Expand Scenario-Based & Role-Specific Training:** Training materials should include scenario-based modules that address complex real-world situations. Staff should receive training on how to respond calmly and support students' emotional needs before, during, and after drills.

These highlights were prepared by the Maryland Center for School Safety and National Center for School Mental Health. To view the full technical report, please go to the [Maryland Center for School Safety website](#).

We extend our appreciation to the students, families, school staff, and school administrators who generously contributed their perspectives to this