

Maryland Safe to Learn Act of 2018

Structure

- Creation of a School Safety Subcabinet including: Superintendent of Education (chair); Attorney General, MDH Secretary, Superintendent of State Police; and IAC exec director
 - Staffed by Center for School Safety
- The Subcabinet serves as the governing board of the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS)
- An Advisory Board is created to serve in an advisory capacity to the Subcabinet and the Center including stakeholders representing school boards, superintendents, PTAs, parents, law enforcement, classroom teachers, student councils, etc.
- The Maryland Center for School Safety is an independent unit within MSDE
 - MCSS budget/funding is moved from State Police and GOCCP funding into MSDE and a Safe Schools Fund
 - Mandate \$2 million in operating funds annually
- Designate MCSS offices
 - Main office at MD Coordination and Analysis Center (MCAC)
 - Satellite office at Bowie State or another location in Prince George's County

Assessment Teams

- Require MSDE in collaboration with MCSS to develop a model policy for assessment teams by September 1, 2018
- Model Policy shall include:
 - Mechanisms to identify individuals whose behavior may pose a threat to the safety of a school;
 - Mechanisms for the assessment of student behavior and intervention with a student based on behavior that pose a threat to the safety of a school;
 - Mechanisms for the assessment of behavior by individuals who are not students at the school but who may pose a threat to the safety of the school
 - Best Practices for promoting communication and response within a school community including:
 - How to train faculty and staff to identify and properly respond to threats or behaviors of concern;
 - How to teach students to identify and comfortably report behaviors of concern exhibited by their peers including the sharing of thoughts or plans to engage in violence at school; and
 - How to increase outreach and awareness of parents and guardians regarding the emotional and social health and well-being of students
 - Policies for formal and anonymous reporting by members of the school community or others of behavior or actions of concern to the safety of the school
 - Policies for establishment of assessment teams in each school system that coordinate among school officials, law enforcement, mental health and other appropriate entities to

- monitor and respond to information and reporting of information that may pose a threat of violence to a school
 - Policies for assessment teams to conduct operational threat assessments of schools
 - Policies for training of threat assessment teams
- School systems are required to adopt policies for the establishment of threat assessment teams consistent with the model policy by the 2019–2020 school year that provide for:
 - assessment and intervention for individuals who may pose a threat to the safety of a school;
 - timely response and coordination, including referral to appropriate law enforcement and school system leadership; and
 - referral of individual for mental health evaluation, services and treatment when appropriate

School Safety Coordinator and School Resource Officers (SROs)

- Each school system must designate a School Safety Coordinator for the system who is certified by MCSS and who is the system’s primary liaison with MCSS
- SROs must be certified by the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission and MCSS must develop the training specialized curriculum that is approved by the Commission for certifying SROs
- Require MCSS to collect data on SROs in each school system, including the number of full– and part–time SROs in each elementary, middle and high school. The data should also include any other school system or county law enforcement officers who are fulfilling the role of an SRO.
- MCSS should analyze the data and develop a policy to assist school systems in determining the appropriate number and assignment of SROs, including collaboration with local law enforcement agencies. The policy must be developed by December 1, 2018
- Each school system must submit a report by the 2018–19 school year demonstrating that every high school has a SRO or that adequate law enforcement coverage will be provided
- Local school systems must develop a plan to implement the MCSS policy on SROs by no later than July 1, 2019, and submit the policy to MCSS for review and comment.

Active Shooter Preparedness

- Require school systems to incorporate into required drills the components of the Active Shooter Preparedness Program developed by the Department of Homeland Security or guidelines adopted by the Maryland Active Assailant Workgroup created by executive order.
- The drill should include elements consistent with the DHS Program or workgroup guidelines including age appropriate procedures for:
 - Securing classrooms;
 - Barricading classrooms and school entries;
 - Taking refuge in the classroom; and
 - When appropriate, escape from the classroom or school

School Safety Evaluations and Emergency Plans

- Require all school systems to conduct safety evaluations by the end of the 2018–2019 school year and regularly thereafter for each public school regarding physical safety concerns, including but not limited to building security issues, and to identify and evaluate patterns of safety concerns
- MCSS will consult with school systems on the safety evaluations, and facility assessments will be coordinated with the IAC's ongoing facilities condition assessment (required under HB 1783)
- Require school systems to update their School Emergency Plans following completion of the safety evaluations to incorporate the results and recommendations. The plans are not subject to the Public Information Act.

Mental Health

- Require each school system to appoint a mental health services coordinator to coordinate existing services and referrals for services, ensuring access in response to a referral for services, and to maximize external funding for mental health and other services.
- Provide grants to school districts to develop plans to deliver school-based behavioral health to students who have been referred to services as the result of exhibiting behaviors of concern
- Behaviors of concern include expressions of hopelessness, known drug use, suicidal gestures or statements, depression, known gang activity, behaviors or threats that indicate the student poses a threat of violence or physical harm to themselves or others
- The plans to deliver school-based services must include how any external funding will be maximized including the billing of health insurance plans, if applicable, for any covered mental health services provided by a licensed provider

Safe School Fund

- Expand existing fund for school safety into a Safe Schools Fund that can utilize the funding provided in the budget for operational school safety grants
- Grants to school systems may include grants for:
 - Conducting training for students and school personnel on de-escalation of situations and identifying and reporting behaviors of concern
 - Outreach to the broader school community to improve school safety
 - Reimbursing for SRO training
 - Conducting training of local Assessment Teams
 - Setting up formal and anonymous reporting mechanisms
 - Conducting school safety evaluations

- Develop plans to deliver school-based behavioral health and wraparound services for students who have been referred to services as a result of exhibiting behaviors of concern

SB 1265 Implementation Dates

Assessment Teams

September 1, 2018 – Model Policy for Assessment Teams Adopted by Subcabinet

September 1, 2019 – School Systems to adopt local policy consistent with model policy

SRO Certification and Curriculum

September 1, 2018 – The Subcabinet to adopt a specialized SRO curriculum for approval by MD Police Training and Standards Commission

September 1, 2019 – SROs to be additionally certified under the new curriculum

SRO Analysis and Guidelines

December 15, 2018 – Center to collect data on SROs and develop guidelines to assist local school systems in determining the appropriate number and supplemental law enforcement coverage

July 1, 2019 – Local school systems to develop a plan to implement the SRO guidelines and to submit plan to Center for review and comment

Active Shooter Preparedness Program

2018–2019 School Year – As a part of existing emergency drills, the components of the Homeland Security Active Shooter Preparedness Program must be included

Safety Evaluations

June 15, 2019 – mandated safety evaluations to assess physical facility conditions and safety concerns related to school operations and functions of each public school must be completed

December 1, 2019 – MSDE must update the Local School System Emergency Planning Guidelines based on the findings in the safety evaluations

July 1, 2020 – School systems must update their school emergency plans to include the updated MSDE guidelines and how they will address behavioral threats and emergency events including changes based on weaknesses identified in the reporting and data collected

Mental Health Services

September 1, 2018 – School systems must appoint a mental health services coordinator to: coordinate existing services; ensure students who are referred to services obtain the necessary services; maximize external funding; and develop plans to deliver behavioral health and wrap-around services to at-risk youth and those who exhibit behaviors of concern