

Report from the Task Force on School Safety

Findings and Recommendations



The goals of improved academic achievement and an established safe school environment are interdependent. Safety is the strength of success; without it, education falls short of its mission and students fall short of their potential.

December 1, 2007



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Executive Summary

School safety has come to encompass nearly everything in education that is non-instructional—from natural disaster preparedness to school-based health centers, from anti-bullying task forces to school resource officers, from alcohol and drug prevention programs to character development initiatives. Often, these non-instructional elements are addressed independently of instructional elements—yet, leading research says that challenging curricula combined with engaging and relevant instruction is an essential ingredient for creating a safe environment, realizing academic achievement, and nurturing emotional prosperity. *The line between instructional essentials, non-instructional essentials, and the outcomes they yield has become blurred. And perhaps it should be.* But the approach to achieving and maximizing these essentials must be clear and deliberate.

Ensuring safety has become a public and private priority that over the past several years has stimulated the efforts of international, national, state, and local institutions, policies, and services to ensure it. When safety is applied to the context of schools—places where *children* between the ages of 5 and 16 **must** spend on average 35 hours per week¹ of instructional time—safety feels less like an expectation and more like a promise—and one that must be delivered.

Maryland delivers on that promise. For example, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has collected, examined, and reported suspension data to strategically inform policy and program development since the early 1970's, nearly 30 years before it was required under the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2003*; Maryland is also nationally recognized for its work in Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports; and emergency response planning processes and requirements were instituted well ahead of the current climate that demands it.

But still, Maryland wants to do more; it knows it can do better. During the 2006 legislative session, the General Assembly passed Senate Bill 146 Education-Task Force on School Safety, which created The Task Force on School Safety.²

This report outlines the Task Force recommendations for improving an intricate and often complicated essential: school safety. However, just as essential is a very simple and distinct understanding that must be shared and upheld by every member of our State and its schools' communities, because we all have something to contribute:

The goals of improved academic achievement and an established safe school environment are interdependent. Safety is the strength of success; without it, education falls short of its mission and students fall short of their potential.

The first priority of the Task Force was to establish a definition (or vision) of school safety that would guide their work and therefore, the development of their recommendations. Presented below, the definition considers the many facets of school safety and the many actions that must be taken to ensure it.

¹ Compulsory education is education which children are required by law to receive and governments to provide. The age requirement for compulsory education in Maryland is between 5 and 16.

² Attachment A: Unofficial copy of Senate Bill 146

A safe school is **prepared** to respond to threats of physical, emotional, or intellectual harm, whether conceived or inflicted by Mother Nature or the human hand; it is positioned to **protect** children and staff from such harm; but aims to **prevent** harm from even occurring at all. In a safe school, academic learning and emotional growth occur without intimidation, violence, or fear. Children are accepted and cared for unconditionally. They know what respect and kindness look and feel like because they are modeled by the adults who surround them. In a safe school, children and staff know that their school is **prepared** because they practice; they know that they are **protected** because they have been; and they participate in **prevention** because it is accessible and it is promoted.

Whether preparing for hurricanes, protecting from school ground tragedies, or preventing bullying in the classroom or cyber-space, everyone would agree that we could improve our efforts to **prepare, protect, and prevent**. While we can't wait to act, we certainly can't wait to get better, either.

The Recommendations

The Task Force was charged with examining nine items that pertain to school safety.³ As the Task Force engaged in its work and pursued each item individually, the interconnectedness of the items became unmistakably clear. Guided by their vision of a safe school, the emerging relationship between the nine examined items, and the determination to provide the State and its local school systems with meaningful direction, the Task Force developed high-impact recommendations with accompanying sub-recommendations that, in most cases, correspond to more than one of the nine examined items. The recommendations and their natural overlap aim to systemically and methodically strengthen the examined items and support the realization of the safe school vision in every school. A matrix illustrating the systemic strength of the recommendations and their relationship to the nine items is provided in the Comprehensive Summary of Recommendations on page 42.

Shared Understanding, Integrated Approach, Coordinated Roles

Smart schools are safe schools and safe schools are smart schools. School safety and academic achievement will never be attained if they are addressed independently. Every school, community, and those within it, must identify the behaviors, events, and circumstances that threaten academic achievement and jeopardize a safe learning environment. Subsequently, comprehensive approaches, such as positive behavioral and intervention supports, to prepare for, protect from, and prevent those behaviors, events, or circumstances must be developed and clearly communicated. Processes for monitoring the effectiveness of the approaches and the

³ The nine items examined by the task force include: 1) methods to address the growing incidence of student violence in public schools; 2) methods to provide a safe learning environment for students; 3) the use of video surveillance cameras, metal detectors, and other security devices to improve safety; 4) ensuring the safety of students *to and from* school during non-instructional hours; 5) ensuring school officials and public safety personnel respond effectively to crises; 6) the use of emergency management agency and law enforcement personnel to train and provide technical assistance to county school personnel; 8) the use of suspension and expulsion; 7) the impact of students who exhibit chronic, escalating patterns of misbehavior; and 9) the Unsafe School Choice Option.

resources allocated in support—whether human, time, material, or fiscal—must be implemented and outcomes routinely reviewed.

1. Create a statewide system to integrate and address the many facets of school safety and provide technical assistance at the State and local levels to incorporate school safety into school improvement and reform efforts.

- 1.1 Continue to build school safety expectations into school improvement discussions and initiatives.
- 1.2 Build in formal evaluation mechanisms for measuring the impact of interventions on academic and behavioral outcomes.
- 1.3 Collaborate with higher education to strengthen teacher preparation programs that update academic content skills and knowledge development with classroom management, cultural proficiency, and student relationship building strategies.
- 1.4 Improve collaboration at the State and local levels for planning and coordinating resource allocation to support emergency preparedness, academic performance, behavior management, and student well-being.
- 1.5 Commit State fiscal and human resources to build on existing successes and further develop the continuum of scientifically-based programs and services that promote student behavior.

Consistent, Comprehensive, and Coordinated Data Reporting and Collection

The approach to establishing a safe learning environment and realizing academic achievement for every student will always fall short if the data used to assemble the policies and programs to ensure it are inconsistent. Establishing a uniform process for reporting and collecting data will assist in detecting state, district, and school patterns and isolating root causes of identified challenges. These data will inform strategic and coordinated solutions for establishing a safe learning environment and realizing improved academic achievement for all students.

2. Identify the data that must be collected and then establish a process to ensure it is consistently reported and collected across the State in order to accurately diagnose challenges, assemble effective solutions, and measure degree of impact.

- 2.1 Develop a technical assistance capacity to support school systems in implementing their data collection and reporting system to ensure that their data are consistently reported across the State
- 2.2 Build in mechanisms and processes to monitor the effectiveness of school safety interventions (against instructional and non-instructional measures) for on-going improvement of existing interventions, development of new interventions, and replication of effective interventions.

2.3 Develop criteria that can be consistently and uniformly applied within districts and across the state for coding unsafe incidents, particularly serious or violent offenses

Partner to Prevent

The prevention of harmful behavior, actions, or situations is dependent on the establishment and high-performance of partnerships that extend beyond the immediate school community.

Each partnership may contribute to a different facet of school safety. For example, building an effective hurricane evacuation plan and related training to ensure its flawless execution may involve partnership with local government and a crisis management specialist. Collaboration between teachers, parents and school and community service agencies may be required to ensure that a child demonstrating tendencies toward physical, emotional, or behavioral harm to self or others receives comprehensive and complementary services that are delivered and reinforced consistently in the transition from school, to home, and in the community. A partnership with higher education may target improvements to teacher training programs to more explicitly integrate positive behavioral methods with proven instructional methods. Regardless, these partnerships must establish a concentrated scope, defined and definite roles, and specific, measurable, and time-sensitive outcomes.

3. Build a partnership with critical state and local stakeholders (including parents, teachers, community organizations, faith-based institutions, higher education, law enforcement, emergency responders, businesses, local government, healthcare and service providers) to establish plans for the implementation and oversight of adopted Task Force recommendations and the realignment of resources to address the needs of students, families, and schools in an efficient and effective manner.

3.1 Where such partnerships already exist, examine their current function and level of effectiveness against Task Force recommendations, and ensure the realignment of resources to address the needs of students, families, and schools in an efficient and effective manner.

3.2 Research and recommend assessment tools for early identification of behaviors and symptoms that often escalate into more serious disturbances.

3.3 Explore involvement in federal projects or work groups focused on the standardization of evidence-based practices across agencies.

3.4 Establish a uniform process or assessment for early identification of behaviors and symptoms that often escalate into more serious disturbances.

3.5 Build partnerships and comprehensive case management processes to coordinate and deliver wrap-around services to identified students and their families.

- 3.6 Collaborate with higher education to strengthen teacher preparation programs that update academic content skills and knowledge development with classroom management, cultural proficiency, and student relationship building strategies.
- 3.7 Engage school communities (i.e. parents, students, teachers, support staff, administrators, community members, local law enforcement, emergency responders, businesses) to conduct a thorough assessment of their school safety data, school building layout, scheduling practices, use of human resources for monitoring purposes, and the structural design of the school to determine the need for:
- *Surveillance or security technology, such as closed circuit television cameras in hallways, parking lots, entrances, etc.*
 - *Adjustments to scheduling practices that limit student interaction in hallways.*
 - *Innovations for maximizing the use of human resources to monitor activity and influence positive relationship building.*
 - *Identify improvements and ensure non-duplication of effort in emergency response procedures.*
- 3.8 Build a network of parents and community volunteers willing to serve in capacities that promote *to and from* school safety.
- 3.9 Establish creative methods for observing and reinforcing bus and pedestrian safety, in addition to consistent presence at arrival and departure times.
- 3.10 Maintain and maximize relationships with emergency responders, law enforcement, parents, and other emergency preparedness stakeholders to ensure seamless execution in event of emergency or crisis.
- *Consolidate resources across agencies to maximize support and secure necessary equipment or skills to ensure emergency plan implementation.*
 - *Conduct collaborative training and preparation exercises.*
 - *Identify improvements and ensure non-duplication of effort in emergency response procedures.*

Educate, Over-communicate, and Innovate

Education and regular communication are fundamental to preparing for, protecting from, or preventing large scale or small scale incidents from occurring or escalating. Further, without a clear sense of what the real challenges are to the establishment and maintenance of a safe learning environment it becomes easy to lose focus and assemble solutions to non-existent or misdiagnosed problems. With a consistent data collection and reporting process, and a routine process for communicating the results, stakeholders are positioned to unite around solutions that get results.

4. Use data to understand the real challenges to creating and maintaining a safe learning environment as opposed to the perceived challenges, and provide opportunities for teachers, parents, students, and administrators to develop or improve the skills, knowledge, and conditions that will address the challenges and contribute to a safe learning environment.

4.1 Establish a comprehensive, uniform, and consistent process for communicating school safety data, and, as appropriate, with academic achievement data.

4.2 Use quantitative and qualitative school safety data together with academic performance data to inform schedule development, staffing assignments, and student course assignments.

4.3 Provide resources to schools to implement communication systems that provide immediate contact to school offices, transportation offices, and local law enforcement agencies, for example, two-way radios, alarm systems, and public address systems that function throughout school grounds.

4.4 Provide a “to and from school safety” education program to parents and students twice per year— once within two weeks of the start of school— that provides information related to bus and pedestrian safety, strategies for ensuring personal safety, efforts that the district or school has undertaken to support safety, and information on the available options for reporting incidents or concerns.

4.5 Provide targeted support and training to all staff assigned to classes with students demonstrating chronic or escalating patterns of misbehavior.

Strong Policies, Supported Practices, Trained Staff

Strong policies are difficult to enforce without equally strong practices, programs, and procedures implemented by a strong and trained staff. And if safety is a reinforcement of success, then efforts to ensure safety must be strengthened and aligned as appropriate.

5. Support the implementation and alignment of policies, procedures, and codes with fiscal and human resources, proven-effective programs and practices, and mechanisms for ensuring differentiation, efficient execution, and evaluation.

5.1 Utilize and update an existing clearinghouse of resources that is available to support the many facets of school safety to ensure that it includes information regarding available funding and how to for access these funds.

5.2 Revise Codes of Conduct and emergency planning guidelines to create better alignment with the public health model, which systematically addresses the needs of all students and includes interventions ranging from preparation to prevention.

- 5.3 Enhance State-level support for the development and sustainability of a service continuum of scientifically-proven practices for students, staff, and school communities:
- Develop a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)/Evidence-Based Practice Training and Technical Assistance entity *to provide all necessary training and technical assistance to local school systems differentiated based on their level of implementation.*
 - *Identify and deliver training on alternative scientifically-based solutions to schools for which universal interventions are not effective.*
 - *Establish a continuum of scientifically-proven practices on topics such as classroom management, cultural impact on teaching and learning, development and maintenance of alternative educational environments, counseling, and cognitive behavioral interventions.*
 - *Conduct evaluations to measure the impact of services on teacher and staff practices and student behavior and performance.*
- 5.4 Create alternative programming, that is proven effective, to address the needs of chronic behaviorally-disordered students and maintain their safety as well as that of other students and staff.
- 5.5 Train all staff on strategies to respond to inappropriate behavior, manage escalating situations, respond to emergency situations, and access emergency alert systems on a regular and on-going basis.
- 5.6 Include bus drivers in professional development offerings—including those that blend and promote academic achievement and school safety.
- *Provide opportunities for bus drivers and teachers to share observations and strategies for addressing misbehavior and encourage consistency in response and consequence.*
- 5.7 Improve and monitor traffic control measures in the immediate vicinity of schools to reduce potential for pedestrian/vehicle accidents.
- *Examine possibilities for sidewalk or pathway construction or improvements.*
 - *Investigate methods to encourage motorists to adhere to speed limits and traffic regulations, including speed and traffic control devices.*
 - *Install school bus pullouts.*
- 5.8 Explore amendments to the listening law that would permit audio recording to accompany video recording on school buses.
- 6. *Maintain a working group charged with integrating the work of the task force with the anticipated changes to the NCLB Unsafe School Choice Option guidelines.***
- 6.1 Refine the tiered system for identifying and supporting persistently dangerous schools and schools exhibiting the potential to become persistently dangerous.
- 6.2 Allocate funding to establish an independent entity to function as the Center for School Safety to provide expert technical assistance to schools participating in the tiered system.

Chapter 1: The Charge and the Approach of the School Safety Task Force

The Task Force on School Safety was created during the 2006 legislative session of the Maryland General Assembly by Senate Bill 146. The Task Force was charged with examining existing school safety practices across the State and making recommendations in a number of areas that address school safety to the Governor; the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee; and the House Ways and Means Committee on or before December 1, 2007.

The members of the Task Force, as required by the legislation, were appointed by the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Delegates, the President of the Senate, the State Superintendent of Schools, the Maryland Association of Boards of Education, the Secretary of State Police, and the Attorney General of Maryland. A list of Task Force members is provided on the inside cover of this report. Additional members of the community were invited to attend Task Force meetings as observers and to offer input but they did not participate in voting activities.⁴

Specifically, the Task Force was charged with studying eight items included within the law and an additional item with approval of the Task Force Chairpersons. These nine items were further categorized into three focus areas: Best Practices, Policies and Procedures, and the Unsafe Schools Option; subcommittees for each of these areas were assembled and engaged in follow-up work in between formal Task Force meetings. The items and the breakdown of the committees are provided on the following page.

⁴ Reference Attachment B for a list of Task Force contributors and observers.

The Nine Items and Subcommittee Assignments

- | | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------|--|
| 1 | } | Best Practices | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Methods to address the growing incidence of student violence in public schools;2. Methods to provide a safe learning environment for students;3. The use of video surveillance cameras, metal detectors, and other security devices to improve safety;4. Ensuring the safety of students <i>to and from</i> school during non-instructional hours; |
| 2 | } | Policies and Procedures | <ol style="list-style-type: none">5. Ensuring school officials and public safety personnel respond effectively to crises including:<ol style="list-style-type: none">i. Acts and threats of violence by students;ii. Accidental injury and loss;iii. Natural disasters; andiv. Exposure to hazardous or radiological substances;6. The use of emergency management agency and law enforcement personnel to train and provide technical assistance to county school personnel in areas including:<ol style="list-style-type: none">i. Crisis response team development;ii. Crisis management planning;iii. Site surveys and safety audits;iv. Emergency operations planning;v. Search and seizure; andvi. Model school safety plans;7. The use of suspension and expulsion;8. The impact of students who exhibit chronic, escalating patterns of misbehavior; and a ninth topic added with the approval of the Task Force co-Chairpersons: |
| 3 | } | | <ol style="list-style-type: none">9. The Unsafe School Choice Option |

The Task Force convened six times between November 2006 and September 2007.⁵ All meetings were announced in the publication of meeting notices published by the Department of Legislative Services and were open to the public.

Over the course of the six meetings, the Task Force heard presentations from various participants in order to understand the many issues and perspectives that impact and contribute to school safety. The presenters included three middle and high school principals; two leading researchers and experts on behavior, climate, and school violence from the University of Maryland and Johns Hopkins University; a representative from both Sheppard Pratt Health Systems and the Maryland State Department of Education Student Services and Alternative Programs Branch who shared information on the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program; and a representative from the Maryland Bus Drivers Association. The Task Force also heard from Emergency Management district personnel, representatives from Maryland Emergency Management Agency, and the President of Homeland Security Consultants, Inc., a private organization specializing in emergency planning and preparedness.

⁵ Reference Attachment C for a chronology of meeting dates, topics, and locations.

This report represents the work of the Task Force, including findings and recommendations. The members of the Task Force thank the Governor, the General Assembly, and the State Superintendent of Schools for the opportunity to study and make recommendations on an issue that is critical to the academic achievement and emotional prosperity of the children who attend our schools and live in our communities.

Chapter 2: Reaching Common Ground to Achieve Safe Ground

Recognizing the interdependence of academic achievement and school safety, the School Safety Task Force thoughtfully and intentionally set out to establish a definition for school safety that would guide its work and clarify its purpose. The importance of establishing this clarity was reinforced—the responses, perceptions, and passions that emerged from asking, “*What makes a school safe?*” were as vast and wide as the perspectives and experiences that members brought.

Considering the contributions from members and the existing research on school safety, a formal process for developing a definition was established and led by the Best Practices Subcommittee. Highlights of the process are outlined below:

1. Conduct a literature review of existing “safe school” definitions (January 2007)
2. Collect input and feedback from Task Force members on the results of the literature review (March 2007)
3. Prioritize the multiple facets and layers embedded in school safety literature review findings and member contributions (March 2007)
4. Compile content and develop a framework to illustrate safe school components (March 2007)
5. Develop a draft definition to be reviewed and approved by the Task Force (May 2007)
6. Definition approved (May 2007)

How the Literature Defines School Safety

The Best Practices Subcommittee selected three journal articles summarizing current school safety research for distribution to the Task Force. These articles provided a framework for naming, organizing, and categorizing the many layers and facets that comprise school safety.

- *Challenges and Suggestions for Safe Schools* (Bucher and Manning, 2003)
- *Creating Safe Schools* (Bucher and Manning, 2006)
- *Building a Comprehensive Discipline System and Strengthening School Climate* (Rubin, 2004)

Consistent with the preliminary contributions of the Task Force, the authors validate the varied and multi-faceted factors that impact school safety, which, both argue, must include physical safety, intellectual safety, and emotional safety (Bucher et. al, 2003):

A safe school is one in which the total school climate allows students, teachers, administrators, staff, and visitors to interact in a positive, non-threatening manner that reflects the educational mission of the school while fostering positive relationships and personal growth. The decisions of individual teachers about classroom management theories or their choices of management practices and strategies have significant effects on the school climate and the ways in which students resolve problems (p. 56).

Mabie (2003) identifies specific characteristics that are often present in a safe school:

- Freedom from violence, fear, and intimidation,
- Acceptance and caring is fostered, and
- Expectations for student behavior is clearly articulated, consistently enforced, and fairly applied (p. 157).

How the Task Force Approached its Definition of School Safety

The responses from each Task Force member to the question, “What does a safe school look like?” fell into three broad categories: School Climate, School Practices and Programming, and School Building and Environment. A sample of the responses, by *category*, is provided.

School Climate

- Absence of bullying and harassment
- Children are engaged in learning and feel safe to take academic risks
- Everyone is valued, cared for, and nurtured
- Students and staff understand the consequences and accept responsibility for their actions and those of their peers
- Diversity is embraced
- Parents, students, and staff recognize warning signs of threatening or harmful behavior

School Practices and Programming

- School and community relationships and roles are defined, sound, and productive
- School involvement is promoted through various extra-curricular offerings
- Staff are skilled and knowledgeable in managing difficult behaviors and escalating situations
- Leadership is visible and strong
- Human, financial, and material resources are available and accessible
- Accountability systems at all levels—administrator, teacher, student, parent—are implemented and enforced
- Discussions regarding safety among students, teachers, and staff occur often
- Parents are engaged
- *To and from* school travel is included in school safety
- Mechanisms and protocols for communicating with parents and the community are established and enforced
- Collaborative endeavors with outside agencies to serve children and their families are high performing
- Shared vocabulary for discussing the multitude of threats against school and student safety is widely used and promoted

School Building and Environment

- There are no metal detectors at the entrance to the building
- The physical structure of the building is safe
- The school building welcoming and visitors are greeted upon entering

Reaching Common Ground

The Best Practices Subcommittee synthesized the findings from the literature review and the deliberations of Task Force members. Two common themes and priorities emerged:

1. Physical, intellectual, and emotional safety contribute equally to creating a safe school; and
2. School safety is a shared responsibility among administrators, teachers, staff, students, parents, community members, law enforcement, community organizations, and school partners.

A framework for understanding the many facets of school safety and the stakeholders involved in ensuring it, maintaining it, and sustaining it was developed, along with accompanying definitions.⁶

Bucher and Manning (2005) put it this way:

Encompassing more than just physical safety, school safety also implies intellectual and emotional safety (Kohn 2004, Merrow 2004). With intellectual safety, students know that they can say “I don’t understand” and no one will laugh at them. They also realize that they can think, doubt, and question what they are learning, and even make mistakes in a secure environment (Merrow 2004). Teachers take the time for inquiry learning and utilize a number of instructional strategies to involve all students. Classroom rules and procedures provide a safety net where individuals are free to express their concerns and ideas. Emotional safety is also important. According to a number of studies (Sandhu and Aspy 2000; Aspy et al. 2004), violent events such as those in Littleton, Colorado and Conyers, Georgia were preceded by incidents when the eventually violent students were teased, bullied, or ostracized by others or when they were isolated from other students. (p.57)

While extreme cases of school violence have created urgency around school safety, Task Force members were especially focused on how to establish and sustain a culture in schools that made it safe for children to learn and grow everyday. Therefore, the Task Force went a step further to identify the instructional and non-instructional elements of public education that must be considered when building a safe school for all students and staff:

⁶ Reference Attachment D for a visual of the framework; Reference Attachment E for the definitions

- Curriculum Development
- Staff and Professional Development
- Family Involvement and Support
- Community Involvement and Support
- Continuum of Best Practices
- Process for Assessing, Developing, Implementing, Monitoring, Improving, and Evaluating Interventions and Strategies
- People and Connections
- Emergency and Crisis Planning and Response

Achieving Safe Ground

The role of each component was discussed and detailed before adopting the following **definition of school safety**:

A safe school is **prepared** to respond to threats of physical, emotional, or intellectual harm, whether conceived or inflicted by Mother Nature or human hand; it is positioned to **protect** children and staff from such harm; but aims to **prevent** harm from even occurring at all. In a safe school, academic learning and emotional growth occur without intimidation, violence, or fear. Children are accepted and cared for unconditionally. They know what respect and kindness looks and feels like because it is modeled by the adults who surround them. In a safe school, children and staff know that their school is **prepared** because they practice; they know that they are **protected** because they have been; and they participate in **prevention** because it is accessible and it is promoted.

Details of the actions that prepare, protect, and prevent are provided:

Prepare (Plan, Practice, and Promote)

1. Schools are prepared to respond immediately and effectively to potential and realized large-scale crisis events—e.g. natural disasters, terrorist threats and acts.
2. Schools are prepared to respond immediately and effectively to potential and realized smaller-scale incidents where physical, emotional, or intellectual safety is compromised—e.g. bullying, fighting, weapon carrying, trespassing.
3. Mechanisms and processes to monitor the effectiveness of school safety interventions (against instructional and non-instructional measures) are built-in for on-going improvement of existing interventions, development of new interventions, and replication of effective interventions.

Protect (Implement, Expect, Enforce)

1. Schools will protect children and staff against intruders with the intent to harm or inflict fear.
2. Schools will protect against student or staff physical, emotional, or intellectual retaliation or acts of violence toward other students or staff.
3. Children will feel safe everyday and learn in environments where their personal, physical, and emotional well-being is not jeopardized by the acts or anger of others.
4. Children exhibiting self-destructive tendencies or violence and aggression towards others will be identified and provided carefully matched support (through school and community partnerships and program offerings).

Prevent (Innovate, Communicate, Involve)

1. Establish mechanisms and structures for safe reporting of threats of violence or harm (e.g. anonymous tip lines).
2. Educate parents and the community on what unsafe behavior looks like, how it can escalate, and what to do when they see it.
3. Identify a process for early identification of behaviors and symptoms that often escalate into more serious disturbances and provide targeted support to children and families.
4. Build partnerships with community agencies and families to provide wrap-around services to children demonstrating tendencies toward physical, emotional, or behavioral harm to self or others and their families.
5. Deliver challenging and engaging curriculum with innovative and differentiated instructional strategies.
6. Replicate research-supported instructional and positive behavioral practices that promote academic achievement and emotional prosperity.

Chapter 3: Findings

This section of the report will highlight the Task Force’s findings and recommendations in each of the eight items of the law and the additional Unsafe School Choice option. The first four items received in-depth study from the Best Practices Subcommittee; items five through eight received in-depth study from the Policies and Procedures Subcommittee; and the ninth item, Unsafe School Choice Option received in-depth study from a subcommittee of the same name.

3.1: Methods to Address Growing Incidence of Student Violence in Public Schools

This particular item of the law implies that incidents of student violence are growing. The Best Practices Subcommittee began its work by investigating whether or not this implication was supported by national and State data sources, such as the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the Center for Prevention of School Violence, and Maryland suspension and expulsion, and bullying and harassment reports. Where possible, data trends were compared across years to assess whether incidents of student violence in public schools were, in fact, growing.

The following findings and recommendations are based on that intentional study and the deliberations among Task Force members that resulted.

Findings:

Terrifying acts of violence have stunned school communities and disrupted long-held notions of school safety. The horror that unfolded in Columbine, Colorado; Paducah, Kentucky; Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania; the college campus at Virginia Tech; and Cleveland, Ohio came alive in living rooms across the nation—video footage, personal accounts, witness testimony, event reconstructions, and all-access commentary—heightening a “this-could’ve-happened-here” awareness. Perceptions quickly appeared as reality: school violence is increasing.

But is it? There is no question that vigilance must be heightened, preparation must be perfect, and prevention must be a priority in any situation where safety is threatened or violated. But are the incidents of school violence really growing?

For a historical context, Goldstein and Conoley (2004) present that the 1960’s can be called a “pre-escalation” period in school violence across the United States while the 1970’s and 1980’s saw a dramatic increase in assaults, thefts, homicides, and other student victimizations. Yet, in the 1990’s an overall decrease in school violence occurred with a one-third decrease in crimes against students—including theft, rape, robbery, assault— from 149 crimes per 1,000 students in 1992 to 101 incidents per 1,000 students in 1998 (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). The same survey reported that in 2000, 90 percent of all United States schools reported “no serious crime” and 43 percent reported no crime at all.

A National Perspective

Consider the following national statistics from researchers, the Bureau of Juvenile Statistics, and the Center for Prevention of School Violence highlighting improvements in school safety:

- For most of the 53 million school children in the United States, the school day unfolds with no threats to their safety and security – no fights, no weapons, no bullying, and no theft (Goldstein & Conoley, 2004).
- Rates of serious violent crime – rape, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault – fell from six victimizations per 1,000 students in 2003 to four per 1,000 students in 2004 (rates have consistently dropped since 1992).
- In 2006, violent crime rate dropped by 54 percent – decreasing from 48 victimizations per 1,000 12 to 18 year-old students in 1992 to 22 victimizations per 1,000 students.
- In 2006, theft rate dropped from 95 per 1,000 students in 1992 to 33 per 1,000 students.
- In one year, victimization rates at school for thefts, violent crimes, or serious crimes among students ages 12-18 decreased from 73 per 1,000 (2003) to 55 per 1,000 (2004).
- In 2005, fighting at school among high school students remained at its 2003 rate of 13 percent, which was a drop from its 16 percent rate in 1993.
- In 2005, the percentage of 9-12 grade students who reported carrying a weapon to school in the preceding year remained unchanged from its 2003 level of 6 percent, which was a 50 percent decline over the 1993 rate of 12 percent.
- And finally, between 1995 and 2005, the percentage of students who reported avoiding one or more places in school declined from 9 percent to 4 percent.

There are a number of areas, however, with minimal or no improvements noted:

- Preliminary reports between July 2004 and July 2005 indicate that 21 homicides occurred at school—an increase of two over the previous year.
- Related, the most recent data available (2003-2004) indicate that homicides for school age children were approximately 50 times more likely to occur **away from school grounds**.

- In 2005, 28 percent of students 12 to 18 years old reported being bullied at school during the six months prior to the survey.
- During 2005, 24 percent of students reported that there were gangs at their schools, a 3 percent increase from 2003.

While the data indicate a decrease in the rate of school violence, the physical, emotional, and intellectual impact cannot be underestimated. Goldstein et al.(2004) argue that the causes of school violence are complex—and so are the solutions.

A Maryland Perspective

Maryland has been collecting suspension and expulsion data long before it was required under the *No Child Left Behind Act*. Additionally, in 2005, the Maryland General Assembly passed the *Safe Schools Reporting Act*, which required local school systems to report incidents of harassment or intimidation against students to the Maryland State Department of Education.

In reviewing the suspension, expulsion, and health-related exclusion data⁷ between 2003-2004 and 2004-2005:

- There was a .9 percent decrease in the percentage of students suspended between 2003-2004 and 2004-05 (from 9.3 percent to 8.4 percent).
- The most reported reasons for suspensions over the two years are consistent, with 30.14 percent in 2003-2004 and 30.24 percent in 2004-2005 due to physical attacks, verbal or physical threats, and fighting between students or students and staff.
- There was a slight increase in the percentage of students suspended for weapons (1.91 percent in 2003-2004 to 2.25 percent in 2004-2005).
- The 10-year trend shows an almost two percent increase in the percentage of students suspended (from 6.6 percent in 1994-95 to 8.4 percent in 2004-05).

Before presenting the first year of the *Safe School Reporting Act* data⁸ (2005-2006) , it is important to note that the Task Force found, in some cases, significant variation among harassment and intimidation (bullying) incidents across the State. In addition to the fact there may be more incidents in one school system over another, the Task Force considered additional factors as well:

- Emphasis that a local school system may place on reporting such incidents;

⁷ Obtained from www.mdreportcard.org

⁸ *Harassment and Intimidation (Bullying) in Maryland Public Schools: A Report to the Maryland General Assembly On Incidents Reported Under the Safe Schools Reporting Act of 2005*. Maryland State Department of Education. March 31, 2005.

- Level or quality of training that students, staff, and parents receive on what constitutes harassment or intimidation and what to do about it,
- The investigative techniques employed by the school system, and
- The formality and accessibility of a process for reporting incidents.

The report, which focuses on incidents of harassment or intimidation reported by school systems rather than incidents of violence, reveals that:

- In 2005-2006, 2,165 incidents of harassment and intimidation were reported across the State.
- Twelve-year-olds were the most frequent victims of harassment and intimidation incidents.
- Thirteen-year-olds were most likely to perpetrate the incidents of harassment and intimidation.
- The number of victims of harassment and intimidation begin to decrease after age 12.
- The alleged motives for the incidents, as reported by investigators, ranged from “just to be mean” (33.9 percent) and to “impress others” (15.2 percent) to “physical appearance” (7.8 percent). “Unknown” was selected in more than one in five incidents (21.2 percent).
- Most of the incidents took place on school property (84 percent) followed by school buses (10.4 percent).

While these snapshot analyses do not support the implication that school violence is growing, they do not suggest that incidents of violence and harm are decreasing *enough* either. Given the complexity of school safety issues, its interdependence with school improvement efforts, and reliance on community involvement, we must be certain that the right data are collected and triangulated—from suspension and expulsion data to academic performance data to bullying and harassment data and all data in between—in order to identify the root causes of safety issues and assemble appropriate interventions.

We also cannot turn a blind eye to the persistent concerns that are observed, maybe expressed, but perhaps not reported regarding student behavior, disciplinary approaches, and school climate. Task Force members expressed concern that there might be negative implications for administrators and schools that openly and accurately report all incidents. They are seeking some assurances that accurate data collection and reporting will not be regarded in a punitive manner. While school violence may not be increasing, there is urgency for all-engaging, collaborative, creative, and comprehensive measures to prevent it from occurring.

A number of those measures are included section 3.2 of this report, *Methods to Provide a Safe Learning Environment for Students*. The Task Force recommends that the phrase “growing incidents” be removed from item one of the law and that item one be subsumed within item two, *Methods to Provide a Safe Learning Environment for Students*.

3.2: Methods to Provide a Safe Learning Environment for Students

Nationally acclaimed and sought-after experts in school safety, violence, behavioral interventions, and safe learning environments are located right here in Maryland. Several of these experts agreed to discuss their research, their experiences, and share their knowledge with Task Force members at the May 8, 2007 meeting. They included:

- Dr. Denise Gottfredson⁹, University of Maryland College Park, Department of Criminology, professor and researcher in the areas of school violence, prevention and intervention, and delinquency
- Dr. Philip Leaf, Johns Hopkins University, Bloomberg School of Public Health Professor, researcher and partner in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Initiative (PBIS) in Maryland

The Task Force members were also interested to learn more about Maryland's statewide implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), which is a prevention and intervention approach to creating behavioral and disciplinary systems needed for academic achievement and social growth. This initiative is a partnership between Maryland State Department of Education, Sheppard Pratt Health Systems, and Johns Hopkins University. Recognized and supported by Maryland's legislature, PBIS is identified as an important tool in Section § 7-304.1 Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland. In addition to Dr. Leaf, the following individuals also presented at the May meeting on PBIS:

- Susan Barrett, Sheppard Pratt Health System, State and National PBIS Facilitator and partner in Maryland's PBIS Initiative
- Milton McKenna, Maryland State Department of Education, PBIS Specialist and partner in Maryland's PBIS Initiative

In advance of the meeting, Dr. Gottfredson provided Task Force members with two papers that she and her colleagues recently completed and that she would be referencing in her presentation. Both papers are currently in press and will serve as chapters in upcoming publications: *School Violence*, Gottfredson and Gottfredson (in press), and *School-based Crime Prevention*, Gottfredson, Wilson and Najaka (in press). These works offer a thorough review of the literature and research on proven methods to create safe learning environments and were heavily consulted by the Task Force, in particular, the Best Practices Subcommittee.

Based on the information presented at the May meeting and independent research that was conducted on proven methods to create safe learning environments, the findings of the Task Force are summarized below:

⁹ Dr. Gottfredson, upon our request for her attendance, assigned a Doctoral student, Melissa Rorie, to the Task Force. Melissa conducted research for the Task Force and prepared for subcommittee meetings, which were significant contributions to this work.

Findings:

The findings are organized into three distinct layers: *Broad but Current* (Literature, Research, and Guest Presenter Information); *Focused and Specific* (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, and Environmental and Individual Interventions); and *Anticipatory and Emerging*.

While there are three different categories to illustrate the many findings that emerged, there is one in particular that should be used as the lens through which all others are viewed: **The goals of improved academic achievement and an established safe school environment are interdependent. Safety is the strength of success; without it, education falls short of its mission and students fall short of their potential.**

Broad but Current Findings

The following list is a compilation of strategies that research, literature, and guest presenters highlighted as necessary to create a safe learning and teaching environment in schools:

- Build partnerships with parents, students, community members, and law enforcement, religious and community-based organizations; and recognize how each contributes to the prevention of school violence and harm; and identify how to leverage those contributions most effectively.
- Identify school-wide conditions, such as overcrowding, poor supervision, and lack of academic rigor that often contribute to school violence or aggression.
- Articulate and model high expectations for academic and social performance.
- Deliver challenging curricula through differentiated and engaging instruction.
- Integrate social emotional learning concepts into the academic curriculum.
- Take advantage of environmental and architectural design, and technology innovations in school safety but do not overly or unnecessarily rely upon them.
- Identify early warning signs of violence, and provide appropriate and immediate interventions to students with the involvement of their family.
- Develop, disseminate, and practice plans for preventing and responding to harm or violence with and among school community stakeholders.
- Include zero-tolerance policies as part of the solution, but not the entire solution. There is little evidence that these policies make schools safer.

- Implement evidence-based conflict resolution programs early that teach alternatives to violence, foster resiliency, and teach self-control.
- Engage students in the learning process with their families and the community during and outside of the school building and the school day.

Focused and Specific Findings

The following findings are specific to the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) approach:

- PBIS offers a structure through which related school improvement, safe school efforts, and violence prevention initiatives and mandates, such as No Child Left Behind, can be integrated.

Statistically significant national documentation¹⁰ suggests that schools implementing school-wide PBIS were perceived as safer environments by the students and teachers in them. Consider these data related to Maryland's implementation of PBIS:

- Maryland is a national model for the successful implementation of PBIS.
- Since 1999, 652 schools have received initial training in the implementation of school-wide PBIS; approximately 520 of those schools are implementing the model.
- Maryland's PBIS initiative website, www.pbismaryland.com, has received over 3 million hits in the six-months since its January 2006 launch.
- Preliminary findings of an evaluation on the implementation and effectiveness of PBIS in 46 Maryland elementary schools reveal that trained schools implemented the program with high fidelity, and that office discipline referrals and suspensions decreased.

The following findings are specific to the work of Dr. Gottfredson and her colleagues¹¹ which include a compilation of research on Environmental and Individual Interventions and summarize current research regarding school violence intervention and prevention practices. The work is organized into the status and examples of interventions or programs targeted at the school or classroom levels that aim to impact environment and

¹⁰ *SWPBS in Elementary Schools: A Randomized, Controlled Trial Assessing School-wide Positive Behavior Support in Elementary Schools*, Robert H. Horner, University of Oregon; George Sugai, University of Connecticut; Keith Smolkowski, University of Oregon; Lucille Eber, Illinois State Board of Education; Jean Nakasato, Hawaii State Board of Education; Anne W. Todd, Jody Esperanza, University of Oregon, in review.

¹¹ *School Violence*, Gottfredson and Gottfredson, (in press), and *School-based Crime Prevention*, Gottfredson, et. al, (in press),

culture and those at the individual level that aim to enhance or adjust knowledge, skills, behavior, or attitudes.

School-wide or Environmental Interventions

The type of intervention is provided in bold, followed by examples and the status of knowledge regarding their effectiveness:

Security or surveillance procedures (e.g. metal detectors, closed-circuit monitoring, limiting access of intruders): Little persuasive research is available; metal detectors appear to reduce weapon carrying in school.

Discipline management processes and procedures: Well-implemented interventions have been shown to reduce problem behavior, but there is little evidence regarding its impact on violence prevention.

School resource officer (SRO) programs, organizational or instructional organization (e.g. class scheduling, grade configurations, heterogeneous grouping, differentiated instruction), ***and architectural arrangements***: insufficient evidence exists regarding its effectiveness.

Additionally, Dr. Gottfredson cites the following programs that have demonstrated evidence of decreased criminal, anti-social, aggressive, and bullying behaviors:

- *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program*
- *LIFT* (Linking the Interests of Families and Teachers)
- *Project PATHE* (Positive Action through Holistic Education)

Individual Interventions

The type of intervention is provided in bold, followed by examples and the status of knowledge regarding their effectiveness:

Self-control or social competency instruction using cognitive behavioral or behavioral instructional methodology: Shown to be effective for elementary-school children to high-school youths demonstrating violent, aggressive, and other behavioral disturbances.

Recreation, community service, enrichment, and leisure activities (without behavioral or cognitive-behavioral instructional components): No evidence of effectiveness.

Additionally, Dr. Gottfredson cites the following programs that have demonstrated evidence of decreased criminal, anti-social, aggressive, and bullying behaviors:

- *Anger Coping*
- *Anger Control Training*
- *Positive Action through Holistic Education (PATHE)*
- *Interpersonal Cognitive Problem Solving*(give brief explanation)

Anticipatory and Emerging Findings

There are a number of “clearinghouses” that exist to provide information on sanctioned and supported best practices in the area of school safety. More often, the programs are supported by the agencies, federal and private, that have funded their development and implementation. There is little evidence of cross-agency collaboration and consensus in the establishment of these clearinghouses and the programs that they promote. However, new research, cited by Dr. Delbert S. Elliot, Director, Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado, argues that **rather than focus on reaching consensus about which programs are effective, the focus instead should be on implementation fidelity and methods for bringing implementation to scale.**¹²

In keeping with that new direction, the U.S. Department of Education consulted Horner and Sugai, co-directors of the Office of Special Education Programs Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavior Support, on the development of policy that would promote large scale implementation of evidence based educational practices. Horner and Sugai responded with the following¹³

Improving school outcomes is associated with the selection and adoption of innovations that are proven to be effective, efficient, and relevant in achieving those outcomes. However, real success is associated with the accurate implementation of an innovation over time and across larger organization units. If classroom and school-wide innovations are to be scaled for sustained implementation at the district, regional, and state levels, priority must be directed toward the establishment of leadership structures that emphasize capacity building for sustained and scalable innovation implementation. In addition, efficiency adjustments must be based on the phase of innovation implementation (emergence, demonstration, elaboration, and system adoption). Real innovation adoption is evident when it becomes part of policy, organizational routines, and enhanced student and school outcomes. (p. 6)

To support this emerging finding with research, an analysis conducted by Wilson and Lipsey¹⁴ on the effects of school-based intervention programs on aggressive behavior concluded that effects were larger for *better implemented programs* and for programs involving students at higher risk for aggressive behavior.

¹² “The Evolution of Prevention Research.” Dr. Delbert S. Elliot, August 2007. United States Department of Education OSDfS Conference. Washington, DC.

¹³ Policy Brief, Scaling Up Evidence-based Practices by Horner & Sugai. July 14, 2007.

¹⁴ Wilson SJ, Lipsey MJ. (in press) The effects of school-based intervention programs on aggressive behavior: a meta-analysis.

Section 3.3: Use of Video Surveillance Cameras, Metal Detectors, and Other Security Devices to Improve Safety

The research that exists on the effectiveness of surveillance technology to improve school safety is limited. However, the Task Force considered a comprehensive review of the research that is available, state law and implementation practices across the United States, local school system practices, and emergency management personnel and school building administrator panelist contributions.

Findings:

While many early efforts to provide a safe and secure learning environment involved the use of surveillance technology, including metal detectors, fences, and surveillance cameras, most districts and schools employ a more comprehensive approach that emphasizes awareness, prevention, and intervention, rather than just deterrence or detection.

The use of surveillance technology is still limited. Consider the following statistics:

- In 1998, only 15 percent of schools overall used metal detectors in any capacity—39 percent of urban schools used metal detectors; 10 percent of suburban schools used them; and only 6 percent of rural schools used them (National School Board Association qtd. in Volokh & Snell, 1998).¹⁵
- Thirty percent of schools use security guards and 18 percent use surveillance cameras (NCES, 2005).
- Overwhelmingly, states have not enacted laws regarding the use of surveillance technology in schools; those that do have policies that recommend each school conduct a comprehensive survey of its needs and institute their use accordingly.¹⁶

Three local school systems in Maryland provided a snapshot of how surveillance technology, specifically closed-circuit television cameras, is used in their schools:

- Prince George’s County began using security cameras in 1995, and they are now used at all grade levels, K-12.
- Baltimore County has cameras in every high school.
- All new school designs in Queen Anne’s County must have interior/exterior surveillance technology included in the education specifications.

The evidence and perceptions related to the effectiveness of surveillance technology are mixed:

- Evidence indicates that surveillance technology increases the comfort level of many; however, evidence also suggests an increase in fear among many.¹⁷

¹⁵ M. Tellock, personal communication, July 12, 2007.

¹⁶ Ibid.

- Routine enforcement and continuous upkeep of surveillance technology (e.g. metal detectors, closed-circuit television cameras) is required in order to protect the advantages of this technology, which requires a significant investment of fiscal and human resources.
- Closed circuit television cameras may reduce the incidence of violent crime in open public places because it provides a capable guardian to observe people and contact police when necessary (Gottfredson and Bauer, 2006).
- Maryland principals serving on a panel discussion noted that cameras improve management of unsafe behaviors through passive monitoring, and assist in the identification of perpetrators of harm or violence.

The following three main points emerged in both the national research and the review of experiences and perspectives of local safety experts and school practitioners regarding the use of surveillance technology:

1. Surveillance technology, specifically closed-circuit television cameras, should only be used as a complement to a much more comprehensive approach to school safety—and one that focuses on awareness, intervention, and prevention, as opposed to only deterrence and detection.
2. Thorough and intensive training on the use of surveillance technology, and an extensive environmental and incidence study to ensure its strategic placement must occur in order to maximize its effectiveness and investment.
3. Measures to evaluate the effectiveness of the comprehensive school safety approach, of which surveillance technology may be a component, must be established and regularly monitored.

Assembling a Comprehensive Approach to School Safety

A school’s approach to safety should not only be comprehensive in strategy—but comprehensive in involvement. School safety is a wide-ranging community responsibility. Particularly where the use of surveillance technology is concerned the establishment of partnerships with students, parents, community members, and local law enforcement agencies is critical to ensure its successful implementation and contribution to a robust school safety plan.

Consistent throughout the review of most state legislation and policies is the recognition that schools and their communities are best positioned to assess their own candidacy for surveillance technology. While electronic surveillance may be appropriate for some schools (such as those with a persistent history of violence) other schools may be better suited to address safety concerns through reallocation of existing resources. In both instances, the focus should overwhelmingly be placed on strategies that promote the interdependence of academic achievement and school safety: establishing a rigorous academic program with high expectations for behavior; articulated and enforced consequences when expectations are not met; innovative and differentiated instructional

¹⁷ Schneider, Tod. “Newer Technologies for School Security.” ERIC Digest, 2001. Available online: <http://eric.uoregon.edu/publications/digests/digest145.html>

delivery and early interventions when tendencies toward harmful or violent behaviors emerge.

With little evidence to definitively support or refute the use of surveillance technology, Paine (2006) notes that “We must balance building security with efforts that foster student resiliency, connectedness and social competency (p. 27).” There appears to be universal agreement that prevention prevails and that schools cannot ‘barricade’ against all possible harm which is counterproductive to the establishment and maintenance of a safe learning environment (Paine, 2006).

Environmental and Non-instructional Practices

Similar to the case with surveillance technology, most of these practices have not been rigorously tested in school settings, though have proven effective through experimentation in other settings (Gottfredson and Bauer, 2006):

- Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED): Combines architectural, technological, and personnel changes to increase the ability to monitor and prevent delinquent behavior. Often, this involves identifying conditions that may contribute to harmful or violent behavior (e.g., overcrowding or poor supervision) and reallocating or making adjustments to resources, accompanied by training, as necessary, to address them. Often, a police or resource officer trained in CPTED may be used to examine the school’s physical environment and recommend modifications to prevent or reduce violence (Bucher and Manning, 2003).
- Securing Access to School Buildings: Experts agree that only one entrance to the school building should be unlocked and monitored at all times until the building closes. Ideally, this entrance does not grant immediate access to the building, but rather requires passage through of a reception window, glass wall, or electronic access system (New York State Education Department). Emergency services must be granted quick access to and from the building (New York State Education Department; Sprague and Walker, 2005); and signs referring students, staff, and visitors to the monitored, unlocked entrance should be clearly visible (Sprague and Walker, 2005).
- Security Communications: A communication device (e.g. a two-way radio) provides easy and immediate facilitation of communication among faculty, administrators, and school bus drivers. Every room within a school building should provide immediate notification and contact capabilities in the event of an isolated or school-wide emergency. A public address system should have the capacity to reach every individual school member regardless of their location (e.g. cafeteria, playground, swimming pool, playing fields). Burglar alarms should be activated to guard against intruders during non-school hours; duress alarms may be placed under a desk or on a person to signal local law enforcement or a 911

call center of an emergency. Activation of lockdown systems should be remotely accessible and in multiple school locations.

- Identification/badge system: The implementation of an identification system is another mechanism that schools employ to monitor safety. Different colors are often used to indicate different classifications of school members (e.g. students, administrators, teachers, and visitors). Visitor passes should change appearance (e.g., different colors) every day to prevent duplication (New York State Education Department; Bucher and Manning, 2003).
- School Resource Officers: Both urban and suburban schools routinely employ public safety and school resource officers (Sprague and Walker, 2005). There has not been much research on the use of such personnel, although one analysis showed that the use of uniformed police officers to patrol the school does increase the number of capable guardians but does not increase feelings of safety for children (Bucher and Manning, 2003).

Of course, the implications of any school safety component must be thoughtfully considered before being implemented. For example, closed-circuit television cameras and metal detectors require a significant investment of fiscal and human resources—to purchase, implement, and maintain. Without a carefully-established plan for how such an initiative will be resourced and sustained, its effectiveness is compromised. Another important issue to consider with surveillance technology in schools is legality and civil rights violations, particularly when the minor status of students is considered. Various civil rights infringement cases have been brought to the attention of the courts and rulings may quickly change the ability of schools to monitor behavior through surveillance technology.¹⁸

Task Force members agreed that security devices of any kind should never supplant the human element, which is fundamental to creating a safe learning environment.

¹⁸ M. Tellock, personal communication, July 12, 2007.

Section 3.4: Ensuring the Safety of Children Traveling To and From School

The Task Force focused on three primary aspects of *to and from school safety*, student interactions, bus transportation safety, and pedestrian safety. In addition to the review of existing research, a member of the Best Practices Subcommittee, employed as a bus driver in Baltimore County, distributed and led a discussion on the Baltimore County Public Schools Office of Transportation Guide for School Administrators. Additionally, the Maryland School Bus Contractor's Association and Maryland Motorcoach Association requested, and were granted, an opportunity to speak to the Task Force regarding bus safety and specifically, the issue of audio-recording on buses.

Within each of these aspects, a number of scenarios and circumstances exist that require prevention, preparation, and intervention. The following examples illustrate just a few of the considerations that must be made within each:

Bus Transportation Safety

- Maintenance and upkeep of school buses
- Driver training, certification requirements, and assurances
- Bus stop selection
- Distance eligibility requirements (i.e. the distance a student must live from school in order to be eligible for transportation)
- Adherence to student capacity regulations

Pedestrian Safety

- Designated walking route safety assurances (e.g. sidewalks, lighting, cross walks, crossing guards)
- School start and end times (daylight considerations)
- Self-defense training and awareness

Student Interactions

- *To and from school* student altercations or intimidation and harassment occurrences (e.g. on the school bus or off of school property)
- School bus noise and activity levels

The Best Practices Subcommittee assumed responsibility for this item and used the following approaches to inform its findings:

- Distribution and review of several articles
- Review of Washington State Task Force on Student Transportation Safety report
- Review of Baltimore County Public Schools Transportation Guide for School Administrators¹⁹

¹⁹ A Baltimore County bus driver served on the subcommittee and provided members with this document and led an ensuing discussion

- Presentation from the Maryland School Bus Contractor’s Association and Maryland Motorcoach Association regarding the use of audio recording on buses²⁰

Findings:

Prevention and intervention strategies to ensure safety during the school day should be consistently applied and transferred as appropriate to situations outside of the school day. In other words, the approach to ensuring safety—whether to, from, or during school—should be comprehensive and complementary rather than individual or isolated.

While there are multiple facets regarding *to and from* school safety, the literature identified school bus safety and pedestrian safety specifically as areas that required careful attention and integration in a comprehensive school safety plan. Putnam, Handler and O’Leary-Zonarich (2003) argue that altercations or harassment may not remain confined to a single incident but extend into the school day or outside of the school day, and that prevention and intervention strategies must do the same.

Common throughout the sources that were consulted for this topic was a focus on the observation of student behavior in settings beyond the classroom; minimizing conditions that are conducive to misbehavior; and inclusion of all staff—for example, support staff, teachers, bus drivers, food service staff—in professional development opportunities targeted on positive behavior interventions, supports, and management.

Bus Transportation Safety

The literature stressed the importance of observing and managing student behavior in settings before, during, and after the school day as conflict within the classroom is residual from conflict outside of the classroom and vice versa. Misbehavior on the school bus is of particular concern, due to driver distraction and passenger endangerment.

Researchers Greene, Bailey, and Barber (1981) highlighted a reinforcement intervention in which a sound recording device with a light panel is used to convey acceptable noise levels combined with an incentive program. Additional practices that research supports include:

- Clear articulation of acceptable bus riding behavior
- Specific driver training on monitoring student bus activity and using positive reinforcement techniques in their interactions with students
- Establishing incentive programs for positive bus behavior, for example:
 - Raffle tickets for good behavior to use in a weekly school lottery
 - “Bus of the Week” acknowledgement

²⁰ The Maryland School Bus Contractor’s Association and Maryland Motorcoach Association requested and were granted the opportunity to speak on this issue.

- Collecting data on bus transportation incidents and reviewing on a regular basis to identify patterns and more accurately assemble interventions (i.e. bus driver training needs, during school and outside of school behavior patterns)

Representatives from the Maryland Bus Contractors Association and Maryland Motorcoach Association highlighted examples of the types of misbehavior that is present on school buses, including bad language; bullying; sexual harassment; disrespectful behavior and actions toward the bus driver, other passengers, and other motorists; and vandalism. These representatives strongly advocated for the use of audio recording to accompany cameras on school buses, citing their importance to understanding the sequence of events that contributed to an altercation or interaction, and to protect students and bus drivers from false accusations. The issue of audio recording on school buses generated a lot of discussion among Task Force members and raised questions about its constitutionality and, specifically, its adherence to Maryland wire tap laws.

Task Force members, transportation workers, and officials shared some of the approaches that are used on buses to manage misbehavior and prepare, protect, or prevent incidents from occurring or escalating. For example, all buses in Prince George’s County are equipped with GPS systems allowing for immediate tracking of bus locations in the event of an emergency. In Queen Anne’s County:

- All buses are equipped with two-way radios that provide direct contact to schools and emergency dispatch;
- Cameras are present on all buses, though without audio recording;
- Administrative secretaries’ schedules are arranged to ensure availability when school buses are on the road;
- Bus drivers receive training on cultural awareness, strategies for communicating with students, and sexual harassment; and
- Established process for bus drivers to report incidents.

The representatives also reinforced the issue of bus stop safety and monitoring, specifically with respect to their accessibility to criminals, gang members, and sexual predators, and the incidents of harassment, intimidation, and altercations incited at bus stops. The use of parents or volunteers at the stops would present a deterrent to these types of crimes or violations. They also urged schools to make administrator presence at bus arrival and departure times a priority.

The Washington State Task Force on Student Transportation Safety made the

A school administrator serving on the Task Force shared a strategy she used in response to data that revealed an increase in student altercations at particular bus stops that appeared to carry over into the school day. She and another administrator spent mornings driving from bus stop to bus stop, clearly visible to students who were unsure of when the administrators would appear. This creative use of morning time appeared to decrease the number of incidents for the school significantly and demonstrates the creative use of resources to support and reinforce student safety.

following recommendations in their 1990 report to support safety in several aspects of student transportation:

- Mandate *to and from* school safety education programs at least twice each year and within two weeks of the beginning of each school term that addresses both walking and bus safety to and from school and at bus stops.
- Increase public education and enforcement of existing traffic laws, including:
 - Change law to make it easier to prosecute motorists who violate the school bus stop law;
 - Explore potential for putting surveillance cameras on buses to more easily identify motorists who violate school bus stop law; and
 - Make public service announcements aimed at adult drivers.

Pedestrian Safety

According to Loukaitou-Sideris (2006), child pedestrian injury remains the second-leading cause of unintentional injury-related death among children ages 5 – 14. Researchers argue that traffic controls must be customized to the conditions and nuances of particular neighborhoods—and that what works in one particular area, may not work in another. For example, crosswalks on busy roads have been linked to higher numbers of pedestrian injuries in large part due to the false sense of security they offer.

Safety experts advocate the use of traffic-calming devices to slow traffic speeds in neighborhoods, alter driver behavior, and improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. Examples of such traffic-calming devices include:

- Vertical and horizontal deflections;
- Road narrowing;
- Medians;
- Traffic circles;
- Special pavements;
- Speed bumps; and
- Posted traffic signs to warn drivers to slow down and yield to pedestrians and cyclists.

Additional strategies that are advocated by safety experts include the use of trained volunteers stationed at busy or risky locations, or to walk with children on their route *to and from* school and established safe walking routes.

An often overlooked aspect of pedestrian safety is the number of students and parents afraid for their child to walk to and from school due to environmental or neighborhood safety concerns. Loukaitou-Sideris (2006) explored the link between perceived risk of safety and walking to school, and found that decisions about how safe it is to walk are often based on prior experiences, including what the media, friends, neighbors, and acquaintances report the perceived feelings of safety in particular neighborhoods. This research often found that only a small number of students walk or bike to school, as parents often feel that travel between neighborhoods is unsafe and therefore drive their children, creating an increase in vehicle traffic in and around schools.

The Washington State Task Force on Student Transportation Safety made the following recommendations in their 1990 report to support pedestrian safety:

- Consider improvements to sidewalks and pathways, roadway enlargement, traffic control device installations, and designation of developer impact fees to build or improve sidewalks, pathways, and bus stops.

Minimizing Conditions that are Conducive to Misbehavior

The literature also encouraged school officials to consider the following characteristics that may contribute to misbehavior and *to and from school* safety breeches:

- Large numbers of students in a particular *to and from school* setting (e.g. buses, bus stops, staging areas for entrance or dismissal);
- Inadequate adult supervision in *to and from school* settings;
- Limited or lacking relationships between adults and students; and
- Unclear expectations for student-to-student interactions.

Section 3.5: Ensuring school officials and public safety personnel respond effectively to crises, including: a. acts and threats of violence by students; b. accidental injury and loss; c. natural disasters; d. exposure to hazardous or radiological substances

The Task Force convened a panel comprised of school system emergency planners, a private consultant, law enforcement and fire department personnel, health staff, and Maryland Emergency Management Association (MEMA) representatives to discuss the issue of emergency preparedness. Additionally, the Policies and Procedures Subcommittee examined school system practices according to the four sub-items outlined in the above item. Emergency or crisis preparedness and response have received a great deal of national and local attention over the past several years and Maryland has established regulations to ensure its integration into daily school operations. The findings outlined below begin with a reference to the corresponding Maryland regulation, followed by highlights of school system practices.

Findings:

Acts and Threats of Violence by Students

The Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13A.08.01.11 requires each local school system to adopt a Code of Conduct that outlines standards for the use of disciplinary measures (e.g. suspension or expulsion) and procedures for responding to threats and acts of violence by a student.

The Policies and Procedures Subcommittee examined a number of local school system's Codes of Conduct, specifically: Baltimore County, Anne Arundel County, Carroll County, Frederick County, Montgomery County, St. Mary's County, and Wicomico County.

- Each Code of Conduct that was reviewed contained satisfactory means for addressing actual threats and acts of violence:
 - For example, in Cecil County, threats or acts of student violence are categorized and accompanied by several options when choosing a consequence for such offenses. The St. Mary's County Public Schools Code of Student Conduct also categorizes threats and acts of student violence, and provides specific sanctions to address such violations which school administrators must follow.
- Most Codes of Conduct did not contain specific methods or instruments to assess the degree of a threat and the potential for its realization.
- Most Codes of Conduct included guidance to school administrators for appropriate involvement of law enforcement personnel. The level of guidance varies by school system and by the seriousness of the offense.

- For example, guidance ranges from provision of administrative discretion for certain offenses to the mandatory notification of law enforcement for others.

Accidental Injury and Loss, Natural Disasters, Exposure to Hazardous or Radiological Substances

COMAR 13A.02.20.03 -.04 requires each local school system to develop an emergency plan for each public school and central office in its jurisdiction in consultation with other health and safety officials in the local community. Such emergency plans must address the contingencies of natural disasters, accidental injuries and exposure to hazardous or radiological substances. Included in the regulation is the requirement that each LSS develop and implement an annual schedule of drills for each school within the system. Each local superintendent of schools is then charged with annually certifying to the State Superintendent of Schools that the requirements of the emergency planning regulation are being met.

Maryland-specific findings (resulting from panel discussions and local school system documentation review):

- All 24 public school systems in Maryland, and the schools under their jurisdiction, have developed emergency plans in consultation with other health and safety officials (e.g. law enforcement, fire departments, emergency management personnel, health departments). A copy of each local school system's central administrative emergency plan is kept on file at the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) along with each superintendent's annual certification. MSDE provides the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) with a copy of each emergency plan it receives.
- On March 14, 2007, a panel of three public school principals from different regions of the state confirmed that training and practice drills are standard for a variety of crises and emergencies throughout the school year.
- The principal panel also indicated that emergency guides are provided to staff that provide a quick reference for adult and student response to a variety of situations.
- Panel members stated that more systemic training was needed to respond to chemical emergencies, and that more preparation was needed to respond to a Pandemic Flu.

The June 2007 United States Government Accountability Office's (GAO) Report to Congressional Requesters on Emergency Management²¹ included findings from an evaluation that was conducted on emergency preparedness at state and local levels. The methodology that was used to inform the findings of the evaluation included the

²¹ United States Government Accountability Office's (GAO) Report to Congressional Requesters on Emergency Management. June 2007, pages 46-47.

administration of two surveys to all 50 states and the District of Columbia; interviews with federal officials; stratified random sampling of public school districts; and review of relevant state and local documents.

Highlights of the significant findings of this national report include:

1. Additional access to federal resources would enhance the ability of school districts to plan and prepare for emergencies;
2. School districts do not have the tools, equipment, or expertise to support the emergency plans they have in place, resulting in limitations to fully prepare for emergencies;
3. In many districts, emergency plans or their implementation procedures may not align with federally recommended practices;
4. School districts do not always train/drill with first responders and community partners, limiting their ability to effectively respond to and mitigate the impact of emergencies; and
5. In some areas, urban districts appear to follow recommended practices to prepare for emergencies more so than rural districts.

Section 3.6.: Use of emergency management agency and law enforcement personnel to train and provide technical assistance to county school personnel in areas including: a. crisis response and team development; b. crisis management planning; c. safe school planning; d. site surveys and safety audits; e. emergency operations planning; f. search and seizure; g. model school safety plans

The examination of this item followed the same approach as the examination of the previous charge, *Ensuring school officials and public safety personnel respond effectively to crises*. The findings outlined below begin with a reference to the corresponding Maryland regulation, followed by highlights of school system practices.

Findings:

COMAR 13A.02.20.03 -.04 requires each local school system to develop an emergency plan for each public school and central office in its jurisdiction in consultation with other health and safety officials in the local community.

During the March 14, 2007 administrators' panel discussion, comprised of building principals, the following findings emerged:

- One principal reported complete cooperation from state and local law enforcement, the health department, and fire marshal in providing training for school staff, and in conducting building inspections and safety audits. Internet safety and search, and seizure procedures are included in new training offerings.
- Other principals indicated that their emergency plans and procedures were current, and that staff had received adequate training to respond to most emergency situations.
- Additional training is needed in the area of chemical or hazmat situations.

During the July 11, 2007 emergency preparedness panel, the following findings emerged:

- Emergency planners and experts confirmed direct contact with school principals and direct involvement with the committees convened to develop, review, and update emergency/crisis response plans in their respective jurisdictions (e.g. Baltimore County, Harford County, Queen Anne's County).
- The provision of counseling and assistance to employees following an emergency situation was identified as an area for improvement and further investigation.
- Emergency management agency and law enforcement personnel indicated direct involvement with schools to:
 - develop the templates used to construct response plans;
 - involve other county/public agencies for input and expertise;
 - offer trainings and exercises coordinated with districts and schools;

- plan fire drills and lockdowns; and
- assist with the implementation and evaluation of those drills.

The panel members also indicated that additional assistance and training are provided to local school systems in the following areas:

- Coordinated professional development among local school systems and other agency partners
- Tabletop exercise coordination
- Mental health professional and agency partnership development

For example, Baltimore County has established a routine training and planning schedule with public safety personnel and community agencies. In addition, the system hosts an annual Safe Schools Conference for public school system staff and agency partners.

Finally, the June 2007 United States Government Accountability Office's Report to Congressional Requesters on Emergency Management indicated that some school districts do not always train or drill with first responders and community partners, compromising the efficiency and effectiveness of emergency response efforts. The report also found that some school districts do not have the tools, equipment, and expertise to support the execution of developed emergency plans.

Section 3.7: Use of suspension and expulsion

COMAR 13A.08.01.11 permits the use of suspension and expulsion in public schools as disciplinary measures when the behavior of a student is disruptive and detrimental to the operation of the school. Students may be suspended by a principal for cause for not more than 10 days. Suspensions of more than 10 days (extended suspensions) or expulsions may be requested by a principal of the school system superintendent or the superintendent's designee.

The Task Force consulted suspension and expulsion data and administrator testimony to inform its findings.

Findings:

- The conditions applied to expulsion vary across local school systems.
- The *Suspensions, Expulsions, and Health-Related Exclusions, Maryland Public Schools, 2005-2006 Report* indicates that the percentage of students suspended from Maryland's public schools has remained fairly consistent between the 1995-1996 school year through the 2005-2006 school year. Within that 10-year period, the percentage of students suspended from school ranged from a high of 9.3 percent (2003-2004) to a low of 7.1 percent (1995-1996).
- The total number of suspensions in Maryland public schools increased by 2.0 percent between the 2004-2005 school year (124,610) and the 2005-2006 school year (127,097).
 - The category experiencing the most significant increase in suspensions was Portable Communications Devices Violations, which increased by 65.1 percent between 2004-2005 (1,032) and 2005-2006 (1,704).

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) required each state to develop criteria for identifying Persistently Dangerous Schools. In Maryland, a Persistently Dangerous School is defined as a school in which each year for three consecutive years the total number of student suspensions of more than 10 days or expulsions for serious offenses equals 2.5 percent or more of the total number of students enrolled in a school. The nine serious offenses are: 1.) Firearms, 2.) Other Guns, 3.) Physical Attack-Student, 4.) Physical Attack-Teacher, 5.) Other Weapons, 6.) Sexual Assault, 7.) Drugs, 8.) Arson/Fire, and 9.) Explosives.

- Other increases were realized in the Persistently Dangerous categories, including Other Guns: 285 to 349 (22.5 percent); Firearms: 45 to 48 (6.7 percent); Physical Attack-Student: 9,448 to 10,000 (5.8 percent); Physical Attack-Teacher/Staff: 2,408 to 2,486 (3.2 percent); and Explosives: 270 to 272 (0.7 percent).

- However, in the remaining Persistently Dangerous categories, decreases in suspensions were noted in the following categories:
 - Other Weapons: 2,515 to 2,487(−1.1 percent); Sexual Assault: 5,831 to 5,588 (−4.2 percent); Drugs: 2,215 to 2,042 (−3.9 percent); and Arson/Fire: 342 to 276 (−19.3 percent).
- The number of expulsions decreased by 20.7 percent between the 2004-2005 school year and the 2005-2006 school year (from 2,458 to 1,950).
 - Decreases in expulsions were noted in all of the Persistently Dangerous Categories: Physical Attack-Teacher/Staff: 303 to 276 (−8.9 percent); Physical Attack-Student: 204 to 180 (− 11.8 percent); Drugs: 314 to 276 (−12.1 percent); Other Weapons: 723 to 562 (−22.3 percent); Sexual Assault: 12 to 9 (−25.0 percent); Firearms: 20 to 12 (− 40.0 percent); Arson/Fire: 73 to 42 (− 42.5 percent); Explosives: 25 to 10 (−60.0 percent).
- Unless specifically prescribed as an immediate sanction in a local school system’s Code of Conduct or disciplinary policy, suspension at the school level is typically used as a last resort disciplinary measure. Depending upon the severity of an infraction or a noted pattern of chronic misbehavior by a student, other behavioral interventions are instituted before suspension from school.
- Expulsion is applied by a superintendent or designee as a last resort for the most serious infractions, unless specified as an immediate sanction. For example, the Federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 required states receiving federal funds to enact a law requiring local educational agencies to expel any student who was determined to have brought a weapon to school for a period of not less than one year. States were further required to record and report such information on an annual basis to the Secretary of Education. Subsequently, a regulation to this effect was developed in Maryland. COMAR 13A.08.01.12-1, *Bringing or Possessing a Firearm on School Property*, requires a LSS superintendent or designee to expel a student for a minimum of one year if that student has brought or possessed a firearm on school property or at a school-sponsored activity. A superintendent may specify in writing, on a case-by-case basis, a shorter period of expulsion or assignment to an alternative setting.
- Principals participating as panelists at the March 14, 2007 Task Force meeting indicated the importance of having suspension and expulsion options as a means for addressing more severe behavioral infractions.
- Local school system disciplinary policies and Codes of Conduct, which include suspension and expulsion, appear effective in addressing the majority of behavioral infractions for the majority of students. For the small percentage of chronically disruptive students, it is necessary, at times, for them to be removed from the school, if not for their own interest, then for the positive learning environment and safety of other students.

- Panel members highlighted the need for enhanced or additional school and community or county partnerships and resources to deliver wrap around interventions and services to chronically misbehaving students and their families.
- Panelists indicated the growing number of students exhibiting mental health conditions and needs at an earlier age as a result of a lack of capacity and capability among mental health providers to serve them. Policy-makers at all levels must recognize this emerging need and the providing of a safe learning environment as one means for addressing it.

Principals shared a growing need for the development and implementation of alternative programming for chronically misbehaving students, other than suspension or expulsion. Examples provided include: in-school suspension programs, alternative classrooms within individual schools, stand-alone alternative settings/schools to which severe behavioral problem students can be assigned away from their home schools. In the final report (December, 2007) of the *Task Force to Study Raising the Compulsory Public School Attendance Age to 18*, Recommendation 3 addresses and supports the need for the adoption of a state-wide definition of alternative education. That same recommendation includes suggestions for types of alternative education locations as well as the elements of quality practices and programming (p. 11-12).

Section 3.8: Impact of students who exhibit chronic, escalating patterns of misbehavior

Literature, student, teacher, and school staff testimony, and data all indicate that chronic and escalating patterns of misbehavior have a significant impact on classroom and school learning environments. The Policies and Procedures Subcommittee conducted a review of this topic and their findings are provided below.

Findings:

Public Agenda Report

In a study conducted by Public Agenda, *Teaching Interrupted: Do Discipline Policies in Today's Public Schools Foster the Common Good* (May 2004), a national sample of public middle and high school teachers (750) and parents (600) of public middle and high school students in grades five through 12 were surveyed regarding student discipline, behavior, and their effect on schools. Six focus groups comprised of middle and high school parents and teachers in four cities across four different states (Florida, Missouri, New Jersey, and Virginia) were also held.

Key findings in the report found that:

- Parents and teachers believe that too many students are losing critical opportunities for learning – and too many teachers are leaving the profession because of the behavior of a few persistent troublemakers” (ibid, p. 1).
- While discipline problems affect schools across the country, problems appear to be especially severe in urban schools and in schools with a high concentration of students from low-income families (ibid, p.8).
- Teachers and parents cited student discipline and behavior as a major concern and advocate the need for discipline; however, few expressed a desire to turn them into intimidating environments (ibid, p.7).
- Newer teachers are frequently assigned to teach harder-to-manage classes yet they lack practical experience and training to deal with behavior issues (ibid, p.11).
- Teachers and parents believe that the school experience of most students suffers because of the unruly, disruptive behavior of just a small handful of students (ibid, p.13).
- Schools respond swiftly and appropriately to major behavioral issues such as guns, drugs, and other weapons – i.e. the major offenses. They appear to deal less effectively with low intensity violations – i.e. routine misbehaviors (ibid, p. 16).

- Students' misbehavior may well be the result of parents' failure to teach their children discipline and the general breakdown of acceptable behaviors and respect for others in today's society. Majorities of teachers and parents do believe that most students will behave appropriately as long as behavioral expectations are clear and school rules are fairly enforced (p.24).

Maryland Suspension and Expulsion Data

In Maryland, data from the *Suspensions, Expulsions, and Health Related Exclusions, Maryland Public Schools, 2005-2006 Report* revealed increases and decreases for suspensions in six offense categories.

- Between 2004-2005 and 2005-2006, suspension increases were noted in:
 - Inciting/Participating in Disturbance: 11,003 to 12,099 (10 percent);
 - Refusal to Obey School Policies or Regulations: 16,806 to 18,170 (8.1 percent);
 - Insubordination: 12,910 to 13,044 (.4 percent).
- However, decreases were noted in:
 - Classroom Disruption: 9,349 to 9,311 (-0.4 percent); Verbal or Physical Threat to Student: 2,265 to 2,219 (-2.0 percent); Verbal or Physical Threat to Teacher/Staff: 2,943 to 2,620 (-11.0 percent).
- Between 2004-2005 and 2005-2006, expulsion increases were noted in five categories (Verbal or Physical Threat to Student, Inciting/Participating in Disturbance, Verbal or Physical Threat to Teacher/Staff, Insubordination, and Refusal to Obey School Policies) while expulsions for Classroom Disruption remained the same.
- While this report indicates an overall decline between 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 in the six categories of offenses relating to patterns of misbehavior, it does not indicate elimination. Therefore, misbehavior continues to have an impact on teaching and learning.

Educational Testing Services Report

In the Educational Testing Services report, *Order in the Classroom: Violence, Discipline and Student Achievement* (1998) prior research on the topics of classroom/school order and student academic performance was reviewed and supported the belief that misbehavior is not only problematic for the offender, but impacts the classroom and school learning environment, including staff and students (p.5). Among other findings in the study:

- Student disciplinary policies were found to be related to lower levels of student misbehavior, while controlling students' movements during the school day seemed to reduce non-serious offenses.

- More serious offenses, such as drugs or violence, appeared to be deterred by implementing severe disciplinary sanctions for their occurrences (p. 5).

The research reviewed in the report supported the maintenance of school and classroom as critical and argued that school order is closely tied to achievement, suggesting that disciplinary policy is not a distracter from academic goals; rather, a prerequisite for a sound academic policy (p. 7).

Section 3.9: Unsafe School Choice Policy

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act currently requires each state to develop objective criteria used to identify unsafe and “Persistently Dangerous” schools. NCLB re-authorization may provide new guidelines which will be integrated with the work of this Task Force. Similar to the transfer provision for students attending schools not making adequate academic progress, the Unsafe School Choice Option details how students victimized by violent crimes in school settings, as well as students enrolled in schools labeled persistently dangerous, can transfer to safer schools.

In accordance with the requirement to develop criteria for identifying unsafe schools, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) convened representatives from local school systems, parent groups, community organizations, and state agencies. The committee established the following definition:

A persistently dangerous school is defined as a school in which each year for three consecutive years, the total number of student suspensions for more than 10 days or expulsions for serious offenses²² equals 2½ percent or more of the total number of students enrolled in a school.

Under these criteria, Maryland currently (2006-2007) has designated four “persistently dangerous” schools.

A school will also be placed on a “probationary status” list when it meets the criteria for two consecutive years.

Under these criteria, Maryland currently (2006-2007) has designated two probationary schools.

Schools identified as “persistently dangerous” and those placed on probationary status must develop and submit a corrective action plan in collaboration with teachers, staff, parents, and other interested community members. Grounded in the data that resulted in the identification, the plan establishes specific goals and objectives for reversing the dangerous trend. The plan also includes strategies and approaches for identifying students requiring intensive support, communicating with families and community members, and strengthening school structures and policies, including changes or adjustments to key administrator or staff assignments.

The Unsafe School Choice Subcommittee was charged with evaluating and making recommendations regarding the effectiveness and thoroughness of the definition. The subcommittee approached its work by:

- Reviewing Maryland’s persistently dangerous schools and their data;
- Examining potential loopholes in Maryland’s definition; and

²² Serious offenses include: arson, drugs, explosives, firearms, other guns, other weapons, physical attack on a student, physical attack on a school system employee or other adult and sexual assault.

- Researching the criteria applied in other states.

Findings:

Persistently Dangerous Schools In Maryland

Schools were placed on probationary status for the two school years preceding their first designation as persistently dangerous. There have been a total of five schools formally designated as persistently dangerous in the two years since data have been collected²³.

Potential Loopholes in Maryland's Definition

The overwhelming discrepancy that emerged from the review is the latitude that exists for interpreting whether or not an incident constitutes one of the nine serious offenses.

For example, an administrator may decide that a referral coded as an assault was inaccurately coded. The assault then becomes a "fight" and the suspension or expulsion is not reported in the Persistently Dangerous calculations because a fight is not considered a serious offense. Inconsistent implementation of the policy occurs nationwide. An audit of California's compliance with the Unsafe School Choice Option by the Office of the Inspector General in the Department of Education (2005) determined the State's definition complied, but uncovered problems with the implementation at the local level:

- For instance, in one California district, an expulsion for a student with a knife was not counted because the reporting form allowed only one type of violation to be recorded and so the incident was "miscoded". Two additional incidents reported at the school level were recoded to lesser offenses by administrators at the district level. An audit in Georgia revealed similar inconsistencies (Dodd, 2005).
- At the school level, school administrators may choose to prescribe an 8-day suspension rather than a 10 day in order to avoid reaching the 10-day threshold.

The Code of Maryland Regulations sets forth policies and procedures for designating schools as persistently dangerous, including a process of the transfer of students to safer schools²⁴. The policy requires that schools exhibiting high rates of school violence for either probationary status or as persistently dangerous are identified annually. However, vague language, limited resources, and subjective reporting of violations weaken the policy's intention to identify unsafe schools and target assistance as required.

Review of Other States

Large variations exist among state policies. The Education Commission of the States (ECS) posted an electronic database summarizing each state's legislation, including each state's persistently dangerous schools criteria, timeline, and related policies (www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/52/98/5298.pdf).

²³ One was a high school; three were combination middle/high schools; and one was an elementary school

²⁴ §§13A.08.01.19, 13A. 08.01.20

Zradicka (2004) identified three major departures between the states in their persistently dangerous school criteria: (1) the time period in which to analyze, (2) how states determine the threshold number of acceptable incidents, and (3) the type of offenses or incidents that “count”. Zradicka points out that the combination a state chooses to use, whether loosely or more narrowly defined, may directly impact the number of schools annually identified as persistently dangerous within a state. Rather than seeking more responsive methods to identify schools in which violence is a pervading factor, States often chose to use data already available, even if it missed the intention of the policy.

Comprehensive Summary of Task Force Recommendations

			Corresponding Task Force Items <i>(According to their organization in Chapter 3, Findings)</i>								
	Recommendations	Responsible	3.1 Growing Incidence	3.2 Methods for Safe Learning Environment	3.3 Use of Technology	3.4 To and From School	3.5 Effective Crisis Response	3.6 Emergency and Law Enforcement	3.7 Suspension and Expulsion	3.8 Impact of Chronic Behavioral Problems	3.9 Unsafe School Option
1.	Create a statewide system to integrate and address the many facets of school safety and provide technical assistance at the state and local levels to incorporate school safety into school improvement and reform efforts.	All stakeholders	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
1.1	Continue to build school safety expectations into school improvement discussions and initiatives.	MSDE, LSS, HE		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
1.2	Build in formal evaluation mechanisms for measuring the impact of interventions on academic and behavioral outcomes.	MSDE, LSS		•	•		•	•	•	•	•
1.3	Collaborate with higher education to strengthen teacher preparation programs that update academic content skills and knowledge development with classroom management, cultural proficiency, and student relationship	MSDE, LSS, HE		•						•	•

Key for Interpreting “Responsible Column”

All Stakeholders: Government agencies, higher education, and entire school communities

GA: General Assembly **HE:** Higher Education

LSS: Local School Systems

MSDE: Maryland State Department of Education

	building strategies.										
1.4	Improve collaboration at the State and local levels for planning and coordinating resource allocation to support emergency preparedness, academic performance, behavior management, and student well-being.	MSDE, LSS, GA		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
1.5	Commit state fiscal and human resources to build on existing successes, and further develop the continuum of scientifically-based programs and services that promote student behavior.	GA		•						•	•
2.	Identify the data that must be collected and then establish a process to ensure it is consistently reported and collected across the State in order to accurately diagnose challenges, assemble effective solutions, and measure degree of impact.	MSDE	•	•	•				•	•	•

2.1	Develop technical assistance capacity to support school systems in implementing their data collection and reporting system to ensure that their data are consistently reported across the State.	MSDE	•	•					•	•	•
2.2	Build in mechanisms and processes to evaluate the effectiveness of school safety interventions (against instructional and non-instructional measures) for ongoing improvement of existing interventions, development of new interventions, and replication of effective interventions.	MSDE, LSS	•	•	•		•		•	•	
2.3	Develop criteria that can be consistently and uniformly applied within districts and across the state for coding unsafe incidents, particularly serious or violent offenses.	MSDE		•					•	•	•
3.	Build a partnership with critical state and local stakeholders (including parents, teachers, community organizations, higher	All Stakeholders		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	

	education, law enforcement, emergency responders, businesses, local government, healthcare and service providers) to establish plans for the implementation and oversight of adopted Task Force recommendations and the realignment of resources to address the needs of students, families and schools in an efficient and effective manner.										
3.1	Where such partnerships already exist, examine their current function and level of effectiveness against Task Force recommendations and ensure the realignment of resources to address the needs of students, families and schools in an efficient and effective manner.	All stakeholders		•	•	•		•	•	•	

3.2	Research and recommend the use of common assessment tools to identify specific problems and needs of individual students, schools buildings, and neighborhoods in order to intervene early.	MSDE, LSS		•			•	•	•	•	
3.3	Explore involvement in federal projects or work groups focused on the standardization of evidence-based practices across agencies.	MSDE		•					•	•	
3.4	Research and recommend assessment tools for early identification of behaviors and symptoms that often escalate into more serious disturbances.	MSDE, LSS		•			•		•	•	
3.5	Build partnerships and comprehensive case management processes to coordinate and deliver wrap-around services to identified students and their families.	MSDE, LSS		•			•		•	•	
3.6	Engage school communities (parents, students, teachers, support staff, administrators, community members, local law enforcement, emergency responders,	LSS	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	

	<p>business) to conduct a thorough assessment of their school safety data, school building layout, scheduling practices, usage of human resources for monitoring purposes, and the structural design of the school to determine the need for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Surveillance or security technology, such as closed-circuit television cameras in hallways, parking lots, entrances, etc.</i> • <i>Adjustments to scheduling practices that limit student interaction in hallways</i> • <i>Innovations for maximizing the use of human resources to monitor activity and influence positive relationship building.</i> • <i>Identify improvements and ensure non-duplication of effort in emergency response procedures.</i> 											
3.7	Build a network of parents and community volunteers willing to serve in	LSS				•						

	capacities that promote to and from school safety.										
3.8	Establish creative methods for observing and reinforcing bus and pedestrian safety, in addition to consistent presence at arrival and departure times.	LSS				•					
3.9	Maintain and maximize relationships with emergency responders, law enforcement, parents, and other emergency preparedness stakeholders to ensure seamless execution in event of emergency or crisis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Consolidate resources across agencies to maximize support and secure necessary equipment or skills to ensure emergency plan implementation.</i> • <i>Conduct collaborative training and preparation exercises.</i> • <i>Identify improvements and ensure non-duplication of effort in emergency response procedures.</i> 	LSS		•		•	•	•			

4.	Use data to understand the real challenges to creating and maintaining a safe learning environment, as opposed to the perceived challenges, and provide opportunities for teachers, parents, students, and administrators to develop or improve the skills, knowledge, and conditions that will address the challenges and contribute to a safe learning environment.	All Stakeholders	•	•	•	•				•	
4.1	Establish a comprehensive, and uniform, and consistent process for communicating school safety data and, as appropriate, with academic achievement data.	MSDE, LSS	•	•	•				•	•	
4.2	Use quantitative and qualitative school safety data together with academic performance data to inform schedule development, staffing assignments, and student course assignments.	LSS	•	•	•					•	
4.3	Provide resources to schools to implement communication systems	GA			•		•	•			

	that provide immediate contact to school offices, transportation offices, and local law enforcement agencies, for example, two-way radios, alarm systems, and public address systems that function throughout school grounds.										
4.4	Provide a “to and from school safety” education program to parents and students twice per year— once within two weeks of the start of school— that provides data related to bus and pedestrian safety, strategies for ensuring personal safety, efforts that the district or school has undertaken to support safety, and information on the available options for reporting incidents or concerns.	LSS				•	•				
4.5	Provide targeted support and training to all staff assigned to classes with students demonstrating chronic or escalating patterns of misbehavior.	LSS		•			•			•	
5.	Support the implementation and alignment of policies, procedures, and codes with fiscal and human	MSDE, LSS, GA		•	•		•	•	•	•	•

	resources, proven-effective programs and practices, and mechanisms for ensuring differentiation, efficient execution, and evaluation.										
5.1	Utilize and update existing clearinghouse of resources that are available to support the many facets of school safety to ensure that it includes information regarding the purpose, process for accessing and available funding.	GA		•			•	•	•		•
5.2	Revise the code of conduct and emergency planning guidelines to create better alignment with the public health model, which systematically addresses the needs of all students and includes interventions ranging from preparation to prevention.	MSDE					•	•	•		
5.3	Enhance State-level support for the development and sustainability of a service continuum of scientifically proven programs and practices for students, staff, and school	GA, MSDE		•			•		•	•	

communities:									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a PBIS/Evidence-Based Practice Training and Technical Assistance entity to provide all necessary training and technical assistance to local school systems, differentiated based on their level of implementation. 	MSDE		•				•	•	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and deliver training on alternative scientifically-based solutions to schools for which universal interventions are not effective. 	MSDE		•				•	•	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a continuum of scientifically proven practices on topics such as classroom management, cultural impact on teaching and learning, and development and maintenance of alternative educational environments. 	MSDE		•				•	•	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct evaluations to measure the impact of services on teacher and staff practices and student behavior and performance. 	MSDE, LSS		•					•	•	
5.4	Create alternative programming, that is proven effective, to address the needs of chronically behaviorally-disordered students and maintain their safety as well as that of other students and staff.	LSS, MSDE	•	•				•	•	•	•
5.5	Train all staff on strategies to respond to inappropriate behavior, manage escalating situations, respond to emergency situations, and access emergency alert systems on a regular and on-going basis.	LSS			•		•	•		•	
5.6	<p>Include bus drivers in professional development offerings—including those that blend and promote academic achievement and school safety.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for bus drivers and teachers to share observations and strategies for addressing 	LSS				•				•	

	misbehavior, and encourage consistency in response and consequence.										
5.7	<p>Improve and monitor traffic control measures in the immediate vicinity of schools to reduce potential for pedestrian/vehicle accidents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine possibilities for sidewalk or pathway construction or improvements • Investigate methods to encourage motorists to adhere to speed limits and traffic regulations, including speed and traffic control devices. • Install school bus pullouts 	LSS				•					
5.8	Explore amendment to the listening law that would permit audio recording to accompany video recording on school buses.	GA				•					
6.	Maintain a working group to integrate the work of the Task Force with the new NCLB	MSDE									•

	guidelines related to UNSAFE SCHOOL CHOICE.										
6.1	Refine the tiered system for identifying and supporting persistently dangerous schools, and those exhibiting the potential to become persistently dangerous.	MSDE							•	•	•
6.2	Allocate funding to establish an independent entity to function as the Center for School Safety to provide expert technical assistance to schools participating in the tiered system.	GA							•	•	•

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By: **Senators Dyson, Astle, Britt, Colburn, Conway, DeGrange, Hollinger, Kelley, Klausmeier, Lawlah, Pinsky, and ~~Ruben~~ Ruben, Giannetti, Green, and Schrader**

Introduced and read first time: January 19, 2006

Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: February 7, 2006

CHAPTER 426

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Education - Task Force on School Safety**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing a Task Force on School Safety; providing for the
4 membership and staffing of the Task Force; authorizing the Task Force to
5 establish certain subcommittees; providing that the members of the Task Force
6 may not receive compensation but are entitled to a certain reimbursement;
7 requiring the Task Force to evaluate and make recommendations regarding
8 certain issues on or before a certain date; providing for the termination of this
9 Act; and generally relating to school safety in the public schools of the State.

10 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
11 MARYLAND, That:

12 (a) There is a Task Force on School Safety.

13 (b) The Task Force consists of the following members:

14 (1) ~~two members~~ one member of the Senate of Maryland, appointed by
15 the President of the Senate;

16 (2) ~~two members~~ one member of the House of Delegates, appointed by
17 the Speaker of the House;

18 (3) the State Superintendent of Schools, or a designee;

19 (4) two representatives of the Maryland Association of Boards of
20 Education, appointed by the Association;

1 (5) four public school teachers from different geographic areas of the
2 State, one of whom represents the Maryland State Teachers Association, appointed by
3 the State Superintendent of Schools;

4 (6) two parents of public school students, appointed by the Governor;

5 (7) two public school students, appointed by the Governor;

6 (8) one representative from a nonpublic school, appointed by the
7 Governor;

8 (9) a school psychiatrist or sociologist, appointed by the State
9 Superintendent of Schools;

10 (10) one representative who is knowledgeable in serving students with
11 disabilities, appointed by the Governor;

12 (11) one representative of school bus drivers, appointed by the Governor;

13 ~~(10)~~ (12) the Secretary of State Police, or a designee; and

14 ~~(11)~~ (13) the Attorney General of Maryland, or a designee.

15 (c) The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House jointly shall
16 appoint a chair from the members appointed to the Task Force.

17 (d) The Task Force may establish subcommittees as deemed necessary to
18 fulfill its duties.

19 (e) The State Department of Education shall provide staff for the Task Force.

20 (f) A member of the Task Force:

21 (1) may not receive compensation; but

22 (2) is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard State
23 Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.

24 (g) The Task Force shall evaluate and make recommendations regarding:

25 (1) methods to address the growing incidence of student violence in
26 public schools;

27 (2) methods to provide a safe learning environment for students;

28 (3) the use of video surveillance cameras, metal detectors, and other
29 security devices to improve safety;

30 (4) ensuring the safety of students to and from school during
31 noninstructional hours;

1 (5) ensuring school officials and public safety personnel respond
2 effectively to crises including:

- 3 (i) acts and threats of violence by students;
- 4 (ii) accidental injury and loss;
- 5 (iii) natural disasters; and
- 6 (iv) exposure to hazardous or radiological substances; ~~and~~

7 (6) the use of emergency management agency and law enforcement
8 personnel to train and provide technical assistance to county school personnel in
9 areas including:

- 10 (i) crisis response team development;
- 11 (ii) crisis management planning;
- 12 (iii) safe school planning;
- 13 (iv) site surveys and safety audits;
- 14 (v) emergency operations planning;
- 15 (vi) search and seizure; and
- 16 (vii) model school safety plans;

17 (7) the use of suspension and expulsion; and

18 (8) the impact of students who exhibit chronic, escalating patterns of
19 misbehavior.

20 (h) The Task Force shall report its findings and recommendations to the
21 Governor, the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, and
22 the House Ways and Means Committee, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State
23 Government Article, on or before December 1, 2007.

24 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
25 July 1, 2006. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and 6 months and, at the
26 end of December 31, 2007, with no further action required by the General Assembly,
27 this Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

Attachment B: List of Task Force Contributors and Observers

Task Force Contributors and Observers

Susan Barrett, Sheppard Pratt Health Systems

Robert Benedetto, Coordinator of Safety and Security, Harford County Public Schools

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Attachment C: School Safety Task Force Meeting Dates, Topics, and Locations

Task Force on School Safety Meeting Dates, Topics, and Locations

November 28, 2007

Topic: Review of the Law and Charge; Current Practices and Requests for Additional Information; Plan of Work

Charles Ecker Business Training Center, Columbia, Maryland

January 9, 2007

Topic: Defining a Safe School; Subcommittee Meetings

House Ways and Means Hearing Room, Lowe Office Building, Annapolis, Maryland

March 14, 2007

Topic: Defining a Safe School; Panel Discussion – School Administrators on school safety topics

Faulkner Ridge Staff Development Center, Columbia, Maryland

May 8, 2007

Topic: Defining a Safe School- Conclusion; Panel Discussion – Consultants on Best Practices on school safety topics; Subcommittee Meetings

House Ways and Means Hearing Room, Lowe Office Building, Annapolis, Maryland

July 11, 2007

Topic: Review of DRAFT Format for final report; Presentation by Maryland School Bus Drivers' Association; Panel Discussion – Safety/Security Personnel on School Safety Topics; Subcommittee Meetings

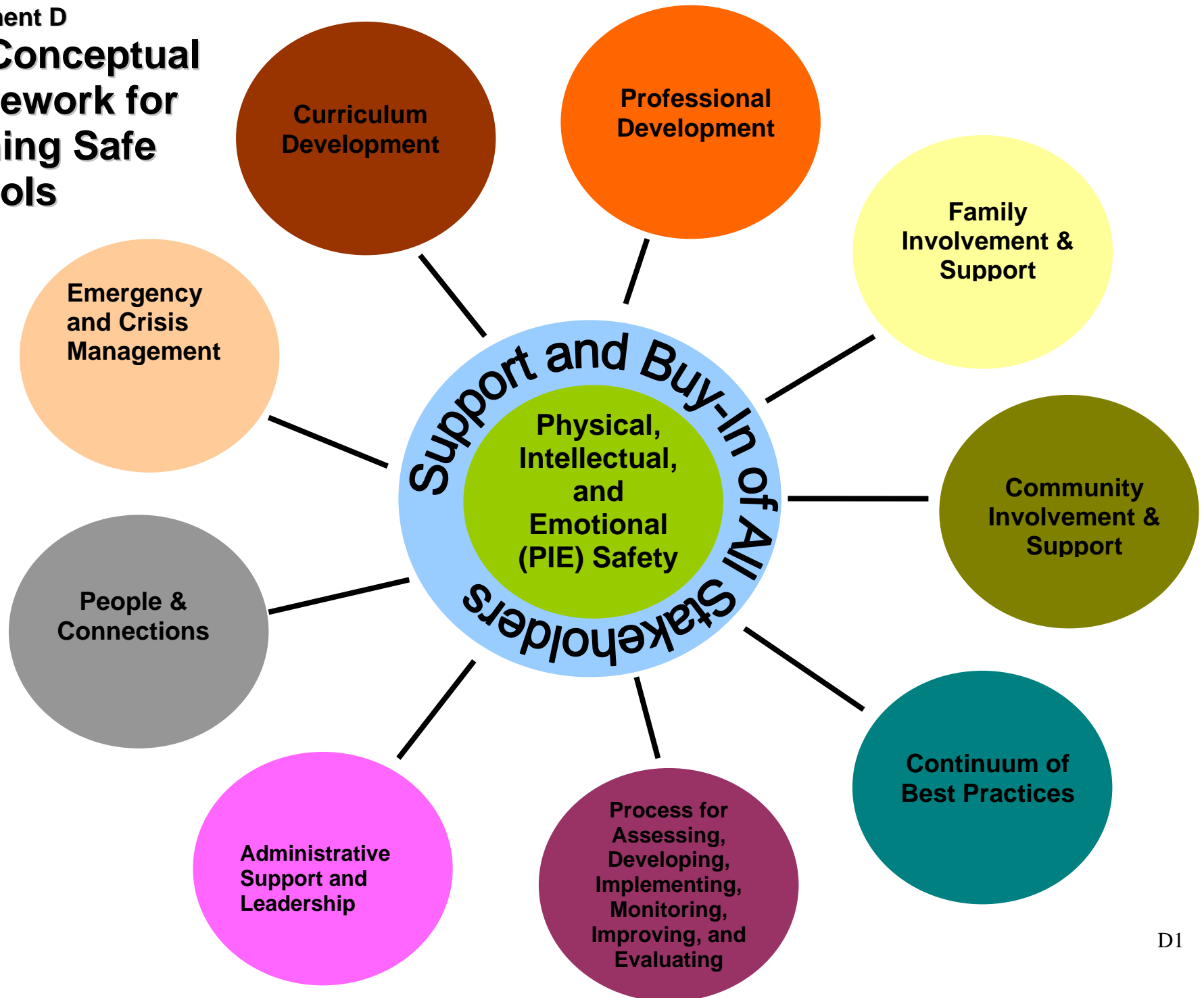
House Ways and Means Hearing Room, Lowe Office Building, Annapolis, Maryland

September 12, 2007

Topic: Review of DRAFT of Final Report with members' amendments and recommendations

House Ways and Means Hearing Room, Lowe Office Building, Annapolis, Maryland

The Conceptual Framework for Defining Safe Schools





Curriculum Development

What role does curriculum development play in creating a safe school and what must it entail to be effective?

- Needs to be engaging and responsive to students
- Heart of schools—if this is off, all other things will be off
- Should be relevant and experiential; should engage all learning styles
- Must be monitored continually
- Need to recognize the teacher's role in delivering the continuum
 - o Need buy-in from teachers
 - o Need them to model the behaviors/attitudes taught
- Needs to be multicultural, inclusive
 - o Students must see themselves in what they are being taught
- Needs to be interdisciplinary and include all teachers
- To be effective, need to have community/family buy-in
- Should be broad enough to encompass extracurricular activities
 - o This will increase academic success/decrease behavioral problems
- Has to address standardized testing
 - o Needs to be standards-based
- Needs to be based on research, cannot just be a political whim
- Needs to be intentional—has to have an outcome
- Form is the substance
- Needs to be a norm across all classes
- Should include a high level of cognitive demand that can transfer to other situations—evolving



Staff and Professional Development

What role does staff and professional development play in creating a safe school and what must it entail to be effective?

- Has to be relevant, focused
 - o Need outcomes
 - o Why are we providing this?
 - o What are we trying to accomplish?
- Should be based on an assessed need
- Implementation time and feedback
 - o Assessing outcomes and tweaking
- Needs to support the mission of school
 - o Should be a contextual fit for the school
- Should be aligned and integrated with what the school is doing
- Need sufficient support
 - o Financially and other
- Need to think broadly
 - o Not just the teachers, all staff is the school (see title change)
- Needs to be ongoing—not just a drive by
- Should be visionary and part of a long-term plan
- Needs to be sustainable (teach the teachers)
- Should include incentives
- Needs to be delivered in a respectful fashion
- Need time to implement it
 - o Should be integrated into the everyday lives of staff and students
- Needs to be planned
 - o Needs-based
 - o Contextual
 - o Assessed
 - o Allow for feedback



Family Involvement & Support

What role does family involvement and support play in creating a safe school and what must it entail to be effective?

- Genuine—we have to mean it
- Planned—what specifically do we want families to be involved with?
- Aspirational—not just minimal demands
- Responsive—need to understand your community and adjust
 - o Address language barriers, time constraints
- Realize that family is whatever the kid has—need to be open and respectful
- Needs to be accessible and understand the demands of the family
- Start it in elementary school and sustain it
- Communication to build relationship
 - o Needs to be 2-way communication
 - o Allow families to take ownership of the school
- Community has to set the standard of school safety
- Non-threatening
- Influence on academics and social behaviors
- Difficult to engage at the higher school
- Personal contact (face to face) is important; but not just negative
 - o Need to have positive and proactive interactions as well
- 2-way communication—you know their needs and they know yours
- Relevant—school safety must be appropriate to the community
- Positive and proactive—not just reacting to suspensions
- Too much of schools setting standards/demanding things
- Need to recognize competing demands (e.g., work)
 - o Bring families to the table or go to the community
- Need to define what we mean by support and involvement—this may change over time
- Need to empower parents (many parents may feel intimidated/defensive)
 - o Need to break down barriers
- Need family to buy-in to programs
- Train staff to deal with the community
 - o How to speak to parents (understand what the parents need to know)



Community Involvement & Support

What role does community involvement and support play in creating a safe school and what must it entail to be effective?


- Police, higher education, social agencies, health, religious
- Inter-school involvement and communication
 - o E.g., private and public schools, elementary-middle
- Getting the community to support students, parent education
- Needs assessment and need for collaboration
 - o Need to know available services
 - o Creating a sense of ownership of school
- Budget important
 - o Professional development for town decision-makers
- Engage businesses, stores, surrounding neighbors in monitoring
- Recognize that school may form the center of a disorganized community
- Find a way to connect communities
- Have to be present—not just sponsors, but actually there
- Agencies—look beyond social services
 - o Bar associations, professional organizations, “future leaders”
- Getting rid of the disconnect between school and community
 - o E.g., colleges, public safety departments
 - o Need to ease the process of getting people to work together
- Needs to be a distinction between the community and school
 - o NOT going to be punished for what they did outside of school (e.g., if they graffiti something outside of school—school should not be parenting)
 - o Need to make sure kids feel welcome at school even if getting into trouble elsewhere



Continuum of Best Practices

What role does the continuum of best practices play in creating a safe school and what must it entail to be effective?

- Evaluating practices—assessments
- Not just a reaction—need to focus on relationship-building, this is the foundation
 - o Within communities, public and nonpublic schools, parent involvement—broad
- Differentiated involvement—individual involvement, flexibility
 - o Look at individual cases and families
 - o Teaching what behaviors look like in various contexts
- Relationships with older students—can use to communicate
 - o Also, they are communicating with family (need to make sure students have good information)
- Need to realize that we are *servicing* a population of citizens—need “seamless” services through partnerships with law enforcement, mental health, etc.
- Need to sustain best practices
- Budget—need to find a way to spend more wisely—how to spend money in better ways



**Process for
Assessing,
Developing,
Implementing,
Monitoring,
Improving, and
Evaluating**

What role does the process for assessing, developing, implementing, monitoring, improving, and evaluating play in creating a safe school and what must it entail to be effective?

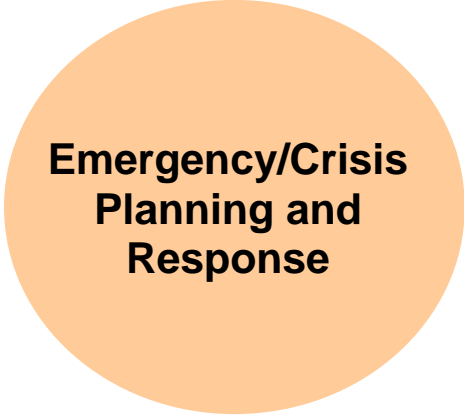
- Need to talk about the *fidelity* of best practices
 - o Needs assessment
 - o Tracking the program, deciding whether to keep it
 - o Training, classroom management
- Know what we do have—what was implemented and then forgotten
- Outcomes—should not be punitive, should be positive/proactive
- Should put more resources into it—should not be put onto the back burner
 - o Need evaluation tool to measure what we actually want to measure



People & Connections

What role do people and connections play in creating a safe school and what must it entail to be effective?

- Across the building (principal and students, staff), community, private and public schools
 - o Shared expectations—making sure the community shares expectations
- Need to involve churches/recreation centers—should be joint training with administrators
- Need to find a way to connect secondary school staff and students
- Think about who we are bringing into the schools
- Need to work with the community to provide pro-social relationships
 - o Use partnerships in a more targeted way
- Child protection strategy—all staff have criminal-background checks and receive safety training
- Need relationship among agencies→ rumor control
- Need access to school-based mental health



Emergency/Crisis Planning and Response

What role does Emergency/Crisis Planning and Response play in creating a safe school and what must it entail to be effective?

- Trained staff
- Need communication
- Instant response—know about different responses, be prepared for different situations
- National dialogue about confidentiality rules
- Need for mental health services
- Technology (cell phones)—kids communicating with parents
 - o Causes problems for emergency services and other problems
 - o Need for technological advances to deal with issues (e.g., shut down cell phone networks)
- Need to think about the responsibility of school bus drivers

Attachment F: District Survey

Introduction and Overview

The School Safety Task Force obtained information from each school system on safety issues and concerns. A survey was developed and provided to all 24 local Superintendents of Maryland Public Schools. Every school system completed the request. The survey results are displayed in tabular form according to each survey question. Written comments or responses are included in a tabular form. In few instances, comments were not legible and to the extent possible, a phone conversation ensued to clarify the comment.

Task Force on School Safety Survey

SECTION 1. We would like to know whether the following methods or processes are in place in your school system. We would also like you to rate the method or processes for effectiveness using the “Effectiveness Scale.” Take the opportunity to write in any new or missed methods or processes you think are appropriate. Please circle the appropriate answers.

EXAMPLE:

Circle the appropriate response. Leave blank “effectiveness ratings” where methods and processes are not in place.

Method or Process	In Place?		Effectiveness Scale				
			Not Effective	←————→			Effective
Crisis Intervention Team	Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>	1	2	3 <input checked="" type="radio"/>	4	5
School Police	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input checked="" type="radio"/>	1	2	3	4	5

1. *What methods or processes are in place to prevent or intervene in school violence?*

Method or Process	In Place?		Effectiveness Scale				
			Not Effective	←————→			Effective
PBIS	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>	1	2	3	4	5
Code of Conduct	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>	1	2	3	4	5
Character Education	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>	1	2	3	4	5
Peer Mediation/Conflict Resolution	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>	1	2	3	4	5
School Counseling Services	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>	1	2	3	4	5
School Psychological Services	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>	1	2	3	4	5
*Other (optional):	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>	1	2	3	4	5
*Other (optional):	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>	1	2	3	4	5
*Other (optional):	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>	1	2	3	4	5

* Please use these spaces to write-in any items you feel are relevant to the topic and rate the item.

Task Force on School Safety Survey (Continued)

2. What methods or processes are in place to provide a safe learning environment for students?

Method or Process	In Place?		Effectiveness Scale				
			Not Effective	←————→			Effective
SROs/School Police/Security	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Curricular Programs (e.g. Second Step, GREAT)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Staff/Student ID Cards	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Visitor Guidelines	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Practicing Safety Drills (e.g. fire, bomb threat, lockdown)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Daily Security Procedures (e.g. locked doors, grounds/building inspection)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Scheduled Daily Monitoring (e.g. halls, bathrooms)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Annual Safety Audits of Physical Plant	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Regular Maintenance and Repair	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Suspension	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Expulsion	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
*Other (optional):	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
*Other (optional):	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
*Other (optional):	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5

* Please use these spaces to write-in any items you feel are relevant to the topic and rate the item.

Task Force on School Safety Survey (Continued)

3. *What methods or processes are in place to ensure the safety of students to and from school during non-instructional hours?*

Method or Process	In Place?		Effectiveness Scale				
			Not Effective	←————→			Effective
Bus Transportation	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Crossing Guards	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Safe Walking Zones (e.g. designated "safe" buildings/areas, sidewalks)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Drug-Free Zones	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
*Other (optional):	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
*Other (optional):	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
*Other (optional):	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5

* Please use these spaces to write-in any items you feel are relevant to the topic and rate the item.

Task Force on School Safety Survey (Continued)

SECTION 2. We would like to know whether the following technological devices are in place in your school system and at what rate. We would also like you to rate the technological device for effectiveness using the “Effectiveness Scale.” Please write in and circle the appropriate answers as shown in the example below.

EXAMPLE:

Write in the percent of schools using the technological device by school type. In this example, 30% of the High Schools use a Laser Grid Detection System.

Circle the appropriate response. Leave blank “effectiveness ratings” where methods and processes are not in place.

Technological Device	School Type	Rate of Use by School Type (Percent)	Effectiveness Scale				
			Not Effective	←————→			Effective
Laser Grid Detection System	High	30%	1	2	3	4	5
	Middle	10%	1	2	3	4	5
	Elementary	0%	1	2	3	4	5

5. *What technological devices are in use by your schools?*

Technological Device	School Type	Rate of Use by School Type (Percent)	Effectiveness Scale				
			Not Effective	←————→			Effective
Video Surveillance Cameras	High		1	2	3	4	5
	Middle		1	2	3	4	5
	Elementary		1	2	3	4	5
Metal Detectors	High		1	2	3	4	5
	Middle		1	2	3	4	5
	Elementary		1	2	3	4	5
*Other (optional):	High		1	2	3	4	5
	Middle		1	2	3	4	5
	Elementary		1	2	3	4	5
*Other (optional):	High		1	2	3	4	5
	Middle		1	2	3	4	5
	Elementary		1	2	3	4	5

* Please use these spaces to write-in any items you feel are relevant to the topic and rate the item.

Task Force on School Safety Survey (Continued)

6. Who is trained for responding to accidental injury or loss (e.g. accident in industrial arts) in your school system?

Individual or Group	Trained?		Preparedness Scale				
			Not Prepared	←————→			Very Prepared
Administrators	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Counselors	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Teachers	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Other School Staff	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Central Office Personnel	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Law Enforcement	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Fire Department	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
*Other (optional):	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
*Other (optional):	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
*Other (optional):	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5

* Please use these spaces to write-in any items you feel are relevant to the topic and rate the item.

Task Force on School Safety Survey (Continued)

7. Who is trained for responding to natural disasters (e.g. flood or tornado) in your school system?

Individual or Group	Trained?		Preparedness Scale				
			Not Prepared	←————→			Very Prepared
Administrators	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Counselors	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Teachers	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Other School Staff	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Central Office Personnel	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Law Enforcement	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Fire Department	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
*Other (optional):	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
*Other (optional):	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
*Other (optional):	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5

* Please use these spaces to write-in any items you feel are relevant to the topic and rate the item.

Task Force on School Safety Survey (Continued)

8. Who is trained for responding to exposure to hazardous or radiological substances (e.g. spill in chemistry lab) in your school system?

Individual or Group	Trained?		Preparedness Scale				
			Not Prepared	←————→			Very Prepared
Administrators	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Counselors	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Teachers	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Other School Staff	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Central Office Personnel	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Law Enforcement	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Fire Department	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
*Other (optional):	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
*Other (optional):	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
*Other (optional):	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5

* Please use these spaces to write-in any items you feel are relevant to the topic and rate the item.

Task Force on School Safety Survey (Continued)

SECTION 4. We would like to know what training and technical assistance is being provided by emergency management and law enforcement agencies in your school system. We would also like to know how you would rate the quality of training or technical assistance provided using the "Quality Scale." Please circle the appropriate answers.

9. What training and technical assistance is provided by the local emergency management agency?

Training or Technical Assistance	Provided?		Quality Scale				
			Low Quality	←————→			High Quality
Crisis Response Team Development	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Crisis Management Planning	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
School Safety Plans (school specific)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Model</i> /School Safety Plans (non-school specific)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Emergency Operations Planning	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Search and Seizures	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Site Surveys and Safety Audits	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
*Other (optional):	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
*Other (optional):	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
*Other (optional):	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5

* Please use these spaces to write-in any items you feel are relevant to the topic and rate the item.

Task Force on School Safety Survey (Continued)

10. What training and technical assistance is provided by the local law enforcement agencies?

Training or Technical Assistance	Provided?		Quality Scale				
			Low Quality	←————→			High Quality
Crisis Response Team Development	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Crisis Management Planning	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
School Safety Plans (school specific)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Model School Safety Plans (non-school specific)	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Emergency Operations Planning	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Search and Seizures	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
Site Surveys and Safety Audits	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
*Other (optional):	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
*Other (optional):	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5
*Other (optional):	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5

* Please use these spaces to write-in any items you feel are relevant to the topic and rate the item.

Task Force on School Safety Survey (Continued)

SECTION 5. We would like to know what additional comments you would like to make in regards to school safety and security.

11. What recommendations do you have in regards to school safety and security?

12. What programs or resources would you like to see made available?

13. (Optional) Take this opportunity to share any comments you would like to make regarding school safety and security or this survey.

**Summary of Findings for Safety Questionnaire
By Question**

Question 1: What methods or processes are in place to prevent or intervene in school violence?

Method or Process	In Place # LSSs?		Effectiveness Scale		
	Yes	No	Not Effective	↔	Very Effective
			1		5
PBIS	24	0	4.08		
Code of Conduct	24	0	4.21		
Character Education	24	0	3.88		
Peer Mediation/Conflict Resolution	20	0	3.75		
School Counseling Services	24	0	4.19		
School Psychological Services	24	0	3.96		

Other things mentioned in comments as being used included:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| Community Conferences | Anger management | Mental Health Clinicians |
| Community Mediation | FISH | After-school Tutorials |
| Community Service Alternative | School Support Teachers | CPI training |
| Check and connect | Violence Assessment | Alternative Education Programs |
| School Based Wellness | Cluster and school-based crisis teams | Anti-bullying initiatives |
| School Resource Officers | Student Programs | Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention |
| Inter-Agency Collaboration | School Based Mental Health | Pupil Personnel Worker |
| My Space awareness | Sexual Harassment and bullying training and procedures | Behavior modification program |
| Threat management process | Juvenile Intervention Officers | Bullying Prevention |
| Pupil Personnel Worker | Mentoring | |
| Student service teams | | |

Question 2: What methods or processes are in place to provide a safe learning environment for students?

Method or Process	In Place # LSSs?		Effectiveness Scale		
	Yes	No	Not Effective	↔	Very Effective
			1		5
SROs/School Police/Security	22	2	4.68		
Curricular Programs (e.g. Second Step, GREAT)	18	6	3.22		
Staff/Student ID Cards	21	3	3.90		
Visitor Guidelines	24	0	4.29		
Practicing Safety Drills (e.g. fire, bomb threat, lockdown)	24	0	4.67		
Daily Security Procedures (e.g. locked doors, grounds/building inspection)	22	2	4.32		
Scheduled Daily Monitoring (e.g. halls, bathrooms)	24	0	4.33		
Annual Safety Audits of Physical Plants	20	4	4.10		
Regular Maintenance and Repair	23	1	4.30		
Suspension	24	0	3.79		
Expulsion	23	1	4.09		

Other things mentioned in comments as being used included:

Communications center	MVERS
Alternative program	Parent Involvement
School computer check in and out.	Law enforcement meetings

Heather Ridge & Evening High School
(alternative education)
Alternative School
CC TV systems
County-wide drills for safety
Diversity Programs
Emergency Plans

In-school Suspension/Saturday
School
Anti-bullying
Radio Communications
Spotlight on Schools
Alternative Learning Center

Question 3: What methods or processes are in place to ensure the safety of students to and from school during non-instructional hours?

Method or Process	In Place # LSSs?		Effectiveness Scale		
	Yes	No	Not Effective	↔	Very Effective
			1		5
Bus Transportation	24	0	4.42		
Crossing Guards	17	7	4.47		
Safe Walking Zones (e.g. designated "safe" buildings/areas, sidewalks)	16	8	4.19		
Drug-Free Zones	24	0	3.21		

Other things mentioned in comments as being used included:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Parents on patrol | 2-way radios on buses. |
| Staff traffic control on property | Fly-by Grant |
| Traffic sign on school property | Reduced-speed school zones. |
| Videos on buses. | Traffic Advisory |
| S.R.2.S. Grant | Security cameras on buses |
| Bus driver training | Bus driver training on gang awareness |

Question 4: What technological devices are in use by your schools?

Method or Process	In Place # LSSs?		Percentage In place	Effectiveness
	Yes	No		
Video Surveillance Cameras -- High	21	0	78 %	4.19
Video Surveillance Cameras -- Middle	18	7	62 %	4.11
Video Surveillance Cameras -- Elementary	14	10	39 %	3.72
Metal Detectors -- High	6	18	55 %	3.67
Metal Detectors -- Middle	1	23	13 %	3.00
Metal Detectors -- Elementary	1	23	2%	1.00

Other things mentioned in comments as being used included:

- | | |
|---|--|
| Key Par Locks on Doors | Hand-held radios. |
| Architectural design changes for new facilities | Visitor & Sex Offender control - vsoft |
| ID badge keycard access to buildings | Magnetic locking system |
| Buzzer/Door Access Entry | Door Buzzer Monitor |
| Comp. sign in and out. | Hand Held Metal Detectors |
| Swipe card door locks with intercoms | ID Scanners |
| Proximity lock systems. | Bus cameras |
| Juvenile Int officers. | Access Control - All Phones |
| Alco Blow | |

Question 5: Who is trained for responding to acts and threats of violence by students (e.g. a “hit list”) in your school system?

Method or Process	In Place # LSSs?		Effectiveness Scale		
	Yes	No	Not Effective	↔	Very Effective
			1		5
Administrators	24	0	4.42		
Counselors	23	1	4.09		
Teachers	22	2	3.64		
Other School Staff	22	2	3.45		
Central Office Personnel	23	1	3.78		
Law Enforcement	24	0	4.46		
Fire Department	19	5	4.58		

Other things mentioned in comments as being used included:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| School crisis teams | Pupil personnel workers/school psychologists. |
| Health department | Nurses |
| Community mediation | Psychologists |
| Law enforcement management | School Social Workers |
| School nurses. | Emergency Responders |
| Custodians | |

Question 6: Who is trained for responding to accidental injury or loss (e.g. accident in industrial arts) in your school system?

Method or Process	In Place # LSSs?		Effectiveness Scale		
	Yes	No	Not Effective	↔	Very Effective
			1		5
Administrators	20	4	4.35		
Counselors	16	8	4.50		
Teachers	20	4	3.85		
Other School Staff	22	2	3.82		
Central Office Personnel	18	6	3.89		
Law Enforcement	21	3	4.43		
Fire Department	22	2	4.73		

Other things mentioned in comments as being used included:

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| School Nurse | Psychologists |
| School Nurse | JROTC Staff |
| EMS/Paramedics | Psychological Services |
| Health Assistants | Environmental Division |
| School Nurse | |

Question 7: Who is trained for responding to natural disasters (e.g. flood or tornado) in your school system?

Method or Process	In Place # LSSs?		Effectiveness Scale		
	Yes	No	Not Effective	↔	Very Effective
			1		5
Administrators	24	0	4.04		
Counselors	20	4	3.81		
Teachers	21	3	3.60		
Other School Staff	22	2	3.77		
Central Office Personnel	23	1	4.00		
Law Enforcement	24	0	4.33		
Fire Department	23	1	4.43		

Other things mentioned in comments as being used included:

School nurses	County emergency management
Custodians	GCEM
Department of Emergency Services	Homeland Security
School Nurses	PPWs/Psychologists
Emergency	

Question 8: Who is trained for responding to exposure to hazardous or radiological substances (e.g. spill in chemistry lab) in your school system?

Method or Process	In Place # LSSs?		Effectiveness Scale		
	Yes	No	Not Effective	↔	Very Effective
			1		5
Administrators	17	7	3.59		
Counselors	11	13	3.82		
Teachers	19	5	3.58		
Other School Staff	19	5	3.53		
Central Office Personnel	19	5	3.00		
Law Enforcement	22	2	3.82		
Fire Department	23	1	4.30		

Other things mentioned in comments as being used included:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| School nurses | Plants Ops |
| GCEM | Science Dept. |
| Dept. of Emergency Services | Health department |
| HAZMAT Team | School Nurses |
| Maintenance | |

Question 9: What training and technical assistance is provided by the local emergency management agency?

Method or Process	In Place # LSSs?		Effectiveness Scale		
	Yes	No	Not Effective	↔	Very Effective
			1		5
Crisis Response Team Development	23	1	4.13		
Crisis Management Planning	23	1	4.04		
School Safety Plans (school specific)	19	5	4.21		
Model School Safety Plans (non-school specific)	12	12	4.00		
Emergency Operations Planning	24	0	4.00		
Search and Seizures	15	9	4.33		
Site Surveys and Safety Audits	14	10	3.64		

Other things mentioned in comments as being used included:

- Mock drills
- Incident Command System
- Security
- Emergency Call Down Line
- Continuity of Operations
- Radio communication to police dispatcher

Question 10: What training and assistance is provided by the local law enforcement agencies?

Method or Process	In Place # LSSs?		Effectiveness Scale		
	Yes	No	Not Effective	↔	Very Effective
			1		5
Crisis Response Team Development	18	6	4.22		
Crisis Management Planning	20	4	4.05		
School Safety Plans (school specific)	20	4	4.00		
Model School Safety Plans (non-school specific)	12	12	3.75		
Emergency Operations Planning	21	3	3.95		
Search and Seizures	17	7	4.29		
Site Surveys and Safety Audits	12	12	4.25		

Other things mentioned in comments as being used included:

School shooter drill School violence incident drill
 Verified School Investigators Threat response

Question 11: What recommendations do you have in regards to school safety and security?

LEA_Name	Comments
Allegany	I feel that the safety program at every school the administration should have the option to substitute at least two of the mandatory fire drills, for lock down drills, or one of the other designated postures of response in their emergency plan.
Anne Arundel Calvert	A valuable resource would be an organization at the state level established for the sole purpose of sharing safety and security ideas and resources. This organization would be comprised of local school system professionals in the fields of safety and security who would meet on a regular basis to share information that would benefit all systems.
Caroline Carroll Cecil	Continue to stress the importance of school safety and continue to practice and refine procedures as necessary.
Charles	First, we have to accept the fact that we can't prepare for all possible situations everywhere. We must evaluate the degree of likelihood of a particular thing happening. We can't afford an armed police force officer at every Amish school for example. There must be an acceptable level of risk.
Frederick Garrett	I would recommend that we continue with additional technological security tools and to consider ways to provide greater depths of training to groups of staff. Better guidelines from the state. Regional meetings. Statewide training.
Harford	1. Surveillance cameras remote access by emergency personnel and administration should be a consideration.
Harford	2. Establish an Incident Command Center -- isolated from external distraction. Modeled after the county EOC.
Howard	Task Force needed to include safety, security, risk management staff. Without these individuals, the document appears weak and short on content to be titled School Safety.
Kent	1. More training in the area of preparing students, staff, and others for potential emergencies and disasters.
Montgomery Queen	More state funding for security initiatives such as CCTV systems, visitor management systems, access control, and upgraded alarm systems
Anne's Queen	Be sure to review school safety procedures.
Anne's	Upgrade video cameras and add additional cameras.
Somerset	We have pursued grant funding for SRO's in all schools with the local police departments and have only been able to maintain 1 SRO in 1 of our 7 schools. We need ideas, assistance, etc. in looking at avenues to support this need.

St. Mary's Talbot	<p>It would be beneficial to district level personnel if MSDE would sponsor an annual conference or workshop on best practices in school safety. Information provided at the state level could then be incorporated into annual crisis training conducted at the district level.</p> <p>A menu of table top exercises available to all counties.</p>
Washington	<p>WCPS has adopted the recommendation set by FEMA: Shelter in place, Duck and Cover, etc. It would be beneficial to have a 3-5 minute educational CD produced by the state which would assist in training teachers and students on the proper safety procedures.</p>
Wicomico	<p>Annual site safety and crisis readiness assessments by a qualified assessor.</p>
Wicomico	<p>Limited or controlled access through designated areas for all school buildings.</p>
Wicomico	<p>Additional lighting around all school buildings.</p>
Wicomico	<p>More uniform and consistent visitor procedures with uniform screening of required visitor passes.</p>
Wicomico	<p>More cameras throughout the schools and surrounding school yard areas.</p>
Wicomico	<p>A comprehensive upgrade of the Code of Conduct to include gang activity, student dress.</p>
Wicomico	<p>Comprehensive anti-bullying and harassment program.</p>
Wicomico	<p>More school specific safety and security guidelines from MSDE.</p>
Wicomico	<p>More statewide meetings with representation from each county to discuss comment, and voice concerns and needs pertaining to safety and security.</p>
Wicomico	<p>Guidelines for the increasing number of portable classrooms and the strain on security they cause.</p>
Worcester	<p>Continued technical support from MSDE.</p>

Question 12: What programs or resources would you like to see made available?

LEA_Name	Comments
Allegheny	Every school system is not blessed with an over abundance of resources. I feel the state should allocate specific funds dedicated to school emergency equipment; this could be applied for in the form of grant monies. If this were accomplished, every school in the state would be afforded the same level of security needs. State grants and funding specifically for school safety and security for the local school systems. This could be similar to the US Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools grants. Funding sources could be realized from businesses and foundations within the State of Maryland with an interest in supporting school safety and security.
Anne Arundel Calvert	School based resource officers provided by local law enforcement agencies.
Caroline Carroll	Grant money for training to be provided for county-wide crisis teams during the summer.
Charles	MSDE/Homeland Security sponsored group of school security directors for training and material, equipment, procedure programs. I would like to see GREAT program made available to all middle school students throughout the country and more funding for technological tools.
Frederick	S.R.O.'s being mandatory/recommended. S.R.O.'s being state/federally funded.
Garrett Harford	Standard, state-wide best practices.
Howard Howard	Minimum level of security and safety requirements in each building. Environmental issues which impact student behavior and a safe school environment.
Howard Kent	1. State level inservice and training.
Montgomery Queen	Expanded training opportunities for personnel
Anne's	Sponsor a tabletop crisis response each year at each school. Technical assistance in creating, modifying our current crisis plan. Copies of plans that could be modified for us would be a great short cut time wise.
Somerset	Local school districts are in need of grant funding for equipment and training related to safety and security. In addition, it would be beneficial if coordinated opportunities were provided for school districts to exchange ideas and learn from one another.
St. Mary's	

Lastly, school personnel are in need of information on how to identify students at risk for engaging in extreme acts of violence. This information should include practices which would help deter the occurrence of violent acts within the school environment.

St. Mary's

Talbot Increase funding for local law enforcement (sheriff's department) as school security in secondary schools.

Washington Training CD's explaining a Lockdown procedure. Scenario CD's for in-service training.

Wicomico There was an evaluation from for our crisis plans two years ago from MSDE. It would be helpful for that to be updated and redistributed.

Wicomico We need a form to discuss security and surveillance methods, techniques, and equipment.

Wicomico Examples of tabletop and other drills would be useful.

Wicomico Increased funding for lighting, locks, camera systems, and resource officers.

Wicomico Crime prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principals utilized.

Wicomico Additional resources for PBIS coaches and resources statewide.

Wicomico MSDE assistance with anti-gang and anti-violence curricula.

Worcester Grant funding for school go kits. Web site for assistance. Best practices sharing.

Question 13: (Optional) Take this opportunity to share any comments you would like to make regarding school safety and security or this survey.

LEA_Name	Comments
Allegany Anne Arundel Calvert Caroline Carroll Cecil	No comment.
Charles	We need to keep the concept of reasonable level of preparation based on the level of likelihood of events. Also, if we use the student, parent, community, anxiety level, to become too high, we have caused the terrorist factions to win without effort. Frederick County Public Schools is in decent shape regarding school safety and security due to the outstanding support of Frederick County first responder agencies.
Frederick Garrett Harford	School systems have safety, risk management and school security professionals. The Task Force did not include these professionals.
Howard	Survey does not distinguish between security/emergency management, safety in schools or adequately cover "school safety."
Howard	1. The survey is good because it will give information about what is needed.
Kent Montgomery Queen Anne's Somerset St. Mary's Talbot Washington	

The Wicomico County Board of Education has a good working relationship with our local fire service, law enforcement and emergency management departments. We have had an excellent relationship with the Wicomico County Sheriff's office and we currently have School Resource Officers in all of our secondary schools with the exception of Pittsville Middle School, which is an elementary and middle school combination. Our SROs have become excellent liaisons between the school and local community, as well as assisting with safety and security.

Wicomico

When programs and procedures are recommended or mandated through legislation or by other means, the ability of the local systems to comply is often ignored. Finances, personnel and resources are often prohibitive and limiting factors resulting in less than optimal implementation of programs. When there are new mandates there should be an adequate level of funding to facilitate the implementation of the program and its survival for a defined period of time.

Wicomico

In Worcester County, we have excellent working relationships with all local agencies.

Worcester