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Interim State Superintendent of Schools

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December 22, 2015

The Honorable Larry Hogan
State House
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller
H-107 State House
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Michael E. Busch
H-101 State House
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: School Safety Center Report (MSAR #9610)

Dear Governor Hogan, President Miller and Speaker Busch:

In accordance with the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland § 7-1505 as enacted by HB 453 the Maryland Center for School Safety (hereafter referred to as the Center) is submitting its annual report to the Governor and General Assembly, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article. The Governing Board is providing this report which includes a list of all the activities of the Center and an update on its current status and its effectiveness.

Background

The Maryland Center for School Safety was established as an independent unit of State Government by the General Assembly in 2013 under House Bill 453 and approved by Governor Martin O'Malley on May 2, 2013. A Center Governing Board was created to develop an implementation plan to phase in establishment and operation of the Center; provide general oversight and direction to the Center; and approve the annual budget for the Center. Dr. Lillian M. Lowery, State Superintendent of Schools, was appointed as the first Governing Board Chair by the Governor and retained this position until her resignation as State Superintendent in September 2015. Dr. Jack R. Smith was appointed Interim State Superintendent of Schools on September 14, 2015 and as such became the Center Governing Board Chair.

An annual budget of \$500,000 is set via Chapter 372, Acts of 2013. The Center's Executive Director develops operational priorities and a budget for presentation to the Governing Board for consideration and approval.

As such, the Governing Board reviews and approves the Center's budget. Although, the Center is an independent unit of State Government it comes under the operational and fiscal arm of the Maryland State Police (MSP). The Center's Governing Board has the legislative mandate and requirement to approve the budget as MSP is where the operational funds rest and pass through. A separate budget account within MSP has been created to track Center expenditures.

On November 18, 2013, the Center became operational with the hiring of Mr. Edward A. Clarke as the Executive Director and is located at the Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center (MCAC), the State's Fusion Center. The Center is the only School Safety Center in the country that is co-located within a State Fusion Center.

The Center collaborates and works with all local school systems in the State, law enforcement agencies, state and local government, community organizations, parents, and other stakeholders to provide a comprehensive and coordinated approach to school safety, including disseminating information on best practices, providing training and technical assistance, and gathering meaningful data on school safety issues.

In addition, the Center serves as a safe school information and best practices clearinghouse for stakeholders of up-to-date, research-based, and data-driven information on effective strategies for creating and maintaining safe schools as well as violence prevention.

The sections that follow describe key activities and accomplishments of the Maryland Center for School Safety during this past year.

Center Governing Board Meetings

The Governing Board held four meetings during 2015 to discuss the Center's operations and approve action items and meeting notes. In addition, Center email updates were provided to Governing Board members as well as requests for approval pertaining to Center operations and action items.

On January 26, 2015, the Governing Board held its first meeting of the year. Mr. Clarke provided an update as to 2014 highlights and accomplishments. In addition, Center goals and objectives, staff positions, budget approval process, website development, school safety training, and a pilot human trafficking training initiative for three school districts were discussed.

The Governing Board held its second meeting on June 3, 2015 and Mr. Clarke provided an update as to Center activities and progress, staff hiring, the Baltimore City Public School Police Force operational assessment, overview of the 2016 operating budget, and the summer school safety conference.

On August 19, 2015, the Governing Board held its third meeting and Mr. Clarke provided an update as to Center activities and progress, outcomes from the summer school safety conference, staff positions and hiring process, budget priorities, on-going website development, future school safety training, and outcomes from the Prince's George's House Delegation school safety presentation.

The Governing Board held its last meeting of the year on October 28, 2015. Dr. Jack R. Smith was introduced as the new Governing Board Chair and shared his vision for school safety and the Center. Mr. Clarke presented the Center's FY 2016 budget and provided an update as to Center activities and progress, website development stage, the Center's role on the State's Safe Harbor Workgroup, school safety training, and efforts to increase substance abuse prevention outreach. The Governing Board after discussion and one modification approved the FY 2016 budget.

In addition, a presentation was made to the Governing Board by a Montgomery County parent and a recent high school graduate as to the ills and devastating effects of heroin and opioid use among students and young adults.

Center Staff Positions

The Center working in conjunction with Maryland State Police human resource specialists were able to identify a highly experienced candidate based on the hiring and interview process for the position of Administrative Officer II, School Safety/Emergency Preparedness Administrator. Mr. Joseph D. Pignataro accepted this position and began his employment with the Center on February 2, 2015 as a contractual employee.

As the School Safety/Emergency Preparedness Administrator, Mr. Pignataro will provide administrative direction and oversight, technical knowledge, assistance, and support to the Center and stakeholders in the areas of school safety, emergency preparedness, critical incident response management, safe school operations, violence prevention, and safe school design as well as training.

The second Administrative Officer II position, School Prevention/Intervention Administrator remains vacant as the first candidate identified turned down the job offer for personal reasons. This position has been re-advertised and interviews are being scheduled to identify and select a highly qualified candidate.

The selected candidate will provide administrative direction and oversight, technical knowledge, assistance, and support to the Center and stakeholders in the areas of school administration, school safety, violence prevention, student behavior and disciplinary consequences/alternatives, school climate and culture, and at-risk student prevention and intervention strategies and services as well as training.

Efforts are in place to identify future staff needs and positions.

The Center continues to work with the Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention as to a potential partnership with a local police department to have a School Resource Officer assigned to the Center.

Center Website

The Center is in the final stages of launching a comprehensive, dynamic, and interactive website for a variety of stakeholders to include, but not limited to, public and private school administrators, staff, students, school security staff, parents, school resource officers, law enforcement officers, community organizations, higher education staff and students, and state and local government.

A website devolvement team has assisted the Center in designing and creating the website as well as troubleshooting the various technical aspects of launching the website. The website will contain a searchable database of definitive research, books, videos, white papers, speakers, websites, training opportunities, and other school safety resources.

The Governing Board has approved the Center to operate the website under two domain names: www.SafeSchoolMD.org and www.MCFSS.maryland.gov.

It is anticipated that the Center's website will be ready for public access by early 2016.

School Safety and Emergency Preparedness Partnerships

Mr. Clarke and Mr. Pignataro continue to proactively develop and enhance collaborative partnerships with various educational and governmental entities, local school systems, public safety entities, school safety centers, and professional organizations as well as with state, county, municipal, and federal law enforcement in order to enhance school safety and emergency preparedness for schools throughout the State. Outlined below is a summary of those partnerships and key accomplishments.

Association of Independent Maryland & DC Schools (AIMS)

- The Center continues to dialogue with AIMS to understand the needs of private schools in the area of school safety, emergency preparedness, and training

- The Center continues to provide technical assistance in the areas of school safety, emergency preparedness, and incident command system to private schools including Talmudical Academy of Baltimore and THE IVYMOUNT SCHOOL (which provides quality educational programs and therapeutic services to students with special needs from 4 to 21 years of age and is located in Montgomery County)

Baltimore City Public Schools

- The Center conducted a comprehensive operational assessment of the Baltimore City School Police Force in response to an official request by Dr. Gregory E. Thornton, Chief Executive Officer of Baltimore City Public Schools
- Mr. Clarke as part of the assessment facilitated several community forums to discuss school safety and the role of the Baltimore City School Police Force
- The assessment is in the final stages with the drafting of an assessment outcome report
- The Center and MSDE are collaborating partners with Baltimore City Public Schools in a recently awarded FY2015 \$4,987,399 National Institute of Justice (NIJ) Comprehensive School Safety Initiative Grant to address mental health and school safety issues

Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention (GOCCP)

- Continued discussions as to school safety, emergency preparedness, human trafficking, and utilization of law enforcement grant resources

Governor's Office of Homeland Security

- A partnership has been established with the Governor's Office of Homeland Security to share timely information as to critical school safety incidents or concerns
- Mr. Clarke briefed Director Walter Landon on the Center's mission and functions

Lieutenant Governor's Heroin & Opioid Emergency Task Force

- Mr. Clarke in concert with representatives of the Maryland State Department of Education supported the charge of the Task Force by attending regional summit meetings, participating on the Prevention, Public Awareness & Education Subcommittee, and provided recommendations as to how schools and the school community can become more involved in promoting and delivering strategies on education, prevention, and intervention for students, school staff, and parents
- The Center will continue to develop and implement substance abuse education, prevention, and intervention strategies, resources, and trainings in order to provide the same to school systems and communities impacted by substance abuse

Local School Systems Safety and Security Directors

- The Center continues the partnership with all 24 local school systems safety and security directors to regularly share information on school safety, emergency

preparedness, school emergency plans and drills, violence prevention, and other issues impacting safe school operations

- Regular meetings are held to discuss key issues and concerns regarding school safety
- The Center sends email alerts and information pertaining to critical school safety issues
- Notifications of critical incidents are sent via the School Safety Notification Network
- The Center/School Safety and Security Directors Advisory Council continues to function
- Mr. Clarke and Mr. Pignataro continue to conduct school site visits and individual meetings with school safety and security directors across the State
- The Center established a weekly conference call among the local school systems safety and security directors, risk managers, private school safety and security officials, school resource officers, and law enforcement officials to discuss school safety concerns as a result of the Paris terrorist attacks. The call includes an update from the Executive Director of MCAC and other regional officials as to potential terrorist threats abroad and within the U.S and a roundtable discussion as to school safety best practices. The purpose of the call is to provide timely and accurate information regarding potential terrorist threats and other school safety concerns such as approval of school field trips into major cities so that school superintendents can use this information in making decisions pertaining to safe school operations. To date, there have been five weekly statewide school safety conference calls facilitated by the Center

Local School Systems Superintendents

- The Center shares critical school safety information and concerns with all 24 local school Superintendents through the Office of the State Superintendent of Schools
- Mr. Clarke has provided emergency preparedness training and a tabletop exercise to Dr. Kevin M. Maxwell, Chief Executive Officer, Prince George's County Public Schools, senior leadership team to enhance their emergency preparedness and response management skills
- The Center has established a partnership with Prince George's County Public Schools newly created Homeland Security Academy to assist with curriculum development and classroom presentations
- Mr. Clarke provided St. Mary's County Public Schools Superintendent, Mr. James Scott Smith, with a briefing on the Center's mission and functions to include a discussion on ways the Center could provide support and technical assistance

Maryland Active Assailant Incident Response Workgroup (MAAIRWG)

- Mr. Clarke continues to participate on the MAAIRWG representing interests of the school safety community and will also be assisting with community awareness and outreach efforts pertaining to the Active Assailant Response Guidelines

Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE)

- Meetings/email exchanges continue with MABE staff to discuss issues of school safety
- Mr. Clarke and Mr. Pignataro participated in MABE meetings with school safety and security directors to discuss issues of school safety and emergency preparedness

Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center (MCAC)

- On-going meetings and discussions with MCAC staff as to school safety issues
- School safety information is shared with all 24 school systems safety/security directors
- Collaborative problem solving efforts continue among MCAC staff, law enforcement, and the Center in resolving critical school safety incidents to include identification of students in crisis to assist schools with providing mental health support
- On-going participation with the MCAC MView Coordinator to establish a pilot school safety CCTV sharing initiative

Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)

- The Center in concert with MCAC and MEMA continues to utilize the established school safety emergency notification network using multiple communication modalities to notify all 24 school districts safety/security directors and identified law enforcement personnel of a critical school safety incident or concern in a timely manner. Several notifications have been made throughout the year to network recipients of a real time incident or pending concern
- The Center in concert with MCAC is in the process of establishing a joint in-house emergency notification system to alert school safety/security directors and law enforcement of a school emergency or safety incident in a timely manner

Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commissions (PCTC)

- Continued discussions pertaining to school safety, “active shooter”, and classroom instructor training for School Resource Officers (SROs)\

Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE)

- Meetings with MSDE staff to discuss school safety, emergency preparedness, school emergency plans, substance abuse, school discipline data, and student disability and mental health issues
- Joint discussion with MSDE senior leadership and Governor’s Office on substance abuse education/prevention strategies
- Sharing of school safety information with all School Superintendents via the Office of the State Superintendent of Schools

Maryland State Workgroup to Study Safe Harbor Policy for Youth Victims of Human Trafficking

- Mr. Clarke served as an adjunct member and supported the charge of the Workgroup by attending meetings, participating on the Compile Existing Information on Needs and Identifying Resources Subcommittee, and provided recommendations as to how schools and the school community can become more involved in promoting and delivering Human Trafficking educational, prevention, and intervention strategies for students, school staff, and parents

Mental Health Association of Maryland

- Mr. Clarke recently completed a 40 hour Youth Mental Health First Aid instructors certification course offered by the Mental Health Association of Maryland
- The Center in conjunction with the Mental Health Association of Maryland and MSDE will be providing Youth Mental Health First Aid training to SROs, school administrators, and school staff from across the State in the upcoming year

National Capital Region Emergency Preparedness Council (NCREPC)

- Mr. Clarke continued to assist the Council in developing training curriculum for the NCR School Preparedness Seminars and also presented a session on *School Emergency Family Reunification* at the Montgomery County Office of Emergency Management Homeland Security School Emergency Preparedness Workshop

Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM)

- Continued discussions occur with State Fire Marshal as to school safety, emergency preparedness, emergency drills, and life safety code requirements

State School Safety Centers Network

- Mr. Clarke participates in a monthly conference call with other State Safety Center Directors as to school safety issues and best practices

U. S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Healthy Students (OSHS)

- The Center continues its partnership with OSHS staff with discussions and email exchanges pertaining to school safety and emergency preparedness
- Mr. Clarke continues to participate in national discussions pertaining to school safety and emergency preparedness issues

Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety (VCSCS)

- The Center and VCSCS continue their collaborative approach to sharing best practices, resources, and training opportunities regarding school safety and emergency preparedness
- Mr. Clarke and Mr. Pignataro attended the VCSCS 2015 Summer Safety Conference Xero Associates, Inc.
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- The Center and MSDE are collaborating partners with Xero Associates, Inc. in a recently awarded FY2015 \$299,994 U.S. DOJ COPS Community Policing Development Collaborative Reform for Technical Assistance Grant to develop and pilot a community policing training curriculum and tool kit for Maryland SROs
- This initiative will involve identified school systems and local law enforcement agencies who will be participating in the pilot program that will begin in 2016

Community and Stakeholder Outreach

Mr. Clarke and Mr. Pignataro continue to proactively provide outreach to various community and governmental entities, school districts, law enforcement agencies, and other stakeholders to inform them of the Center's Mission and to establish collaborative relationships related to school safety and emergency preparedness. Outlined below is a synopsis of outreach efforts to include presentations and training to the various entities.

- Archdiocese of Baltimore
- Drug Free Coalition of Queen Anne's County
- Governor's Office of Homeland Security
- Heroin Action Coalition of Montgomery County
- Many Voices for Smart Choices - Montgomery County Alliance to Prevent Youth Substance Abuse
- Maryland PTA
- Maryland School Psychologist Association
- Montgomery County Keeping It SAFE: Under 21 Alcohol Prevention Coalition
- National Association of School Resource Officers and Maryland Association of School Resource Officers
- Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland
- Sherwood High School Parent Teacher Student Association

Center School Safety Conference

The Center developed and held its Annual Summer School Safety Conference on June 25/26, 2015 in Annapolis, Maryland which was widely attended by school administrators, school safety and security directors, school security and support staff, state educational staff members, school resource officers, and law enforcement officers and executive officers. Feedback from Conference attendees was extremely positive as to the topics, quality of the training, and subject matter experts who provided the training.

Two sessions that received outstanding accolades were – *A Survivor's Perspective of the Virginia Tech Shooting* presented by Ms. Kristina Anderson, an actual shooting survivor and *School-To-Prison Pipeline Alternatives, Clayton County Georgia Approach* presented by the Honorable Judge Steven Teske.

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Efforts are in place to develop various school safety trainings and the 2016 School Safety Summer Conference.

School Safety Training and Conferences Attended

Mr. Clarke and Mr. Pignataro attended various school safety trainings and conferences to enhance their knowledge of school safety, emergency preparedness, violence prevention, threat assessment, school climate and culture, and active shooter situations. Outlined below is a summary of the training and conferences.

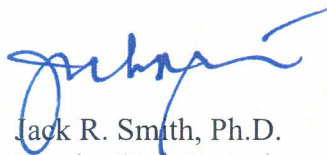
- University of Maryland National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to terrorism (START) – *How to Effectively Research and Interrupt Data*
- National School Safety Briefing – One Day Symposium, Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety
- Human Trafficking Forum, Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety
- School Safety Summer Conference, Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety
- ALERRT Active Shooter Training Course, Maryland State Police

Summary

The Governing Board and Center have had a very productive year. Building on the Center's accomplishments, the Governing Board and Center will continue to focus on their legislative mandate to ensure our schools throughout the State remain a safe place to obtain a high quality education. In 2016, the Maryland Center for School Safety with the addition of staff will be able to expand its base of operations and provide additional school safety and emergency management services and technical assistance to both public and private schools.

Should you have questions or need additional information, please contact me or Edward A. Clarke, Center's Executive Director, by email at (301) 370-3497 or by email at edward.clarke@mcac.maryland.gov.

Sincerely,



Jack R. Smith, Ph.D.
Interim State Superintendent of Schools