School Safety and Security

The Department of School Safety within the Division of School Climate and Safety is responsible for developing and implementing initiatives and strategies that establish safe and orderly teaching and learning environments for Baltimore County Public Schools’ (BCPS) students and personnel. Department of School Safety personnel work with other departments and offices to coordinate safety and security efforts and assist schools and offices in responding to safety concerns and emergencies.

The Safe Schools Initiative that oversees the School Resource Officer (SRO) Program with 84 SROs is under the Department of School Safety with a liaison (major) and assistant liaison (sergeant) from the Baltimore County Police Department (BCoPD). The Office of Building Security under the Department of Facilities Management coordinates efforts that include security personnel (non-police) and security features for buildings and offices such as cameras and door access. The Department of Social Emotional Supports focuses on social, emotional, and behavioral safety enhancing school climate.

Goals

- Ensure BCPS compliance with relevant State of Maryland regulations, Board policies, Superintendent’s Rules, and safety and security protocols, and procedures.
- Facilitate the investigation of major safety related incidents involving BCPS students, staff and/or property.
- Act as the primary liaison between BCPS and external law enforcement agencies and the Baltimore County Fire Department.
- Provide guidance to schools and offices in preventing and responding to emergencies.
- Promote safe school climates through awareness and evidenced-based prevention strategies.
- Provide emergency/crisis management assistance to schools and community partners when responding to critical incidents and crises.
- Ensure the development of site-based emergency plans for all BCPS schools and office buildings.
- Monitor the completion of required drills to assure compliance.
- Ensure there are procedures in place for the proper identification of students, staff, and visitors in BCPS schools and offices.
- Seek resources to ensure the safety and security of BCPS students, personnel, and property.

Current initiatives

- Install and upgrade security cameras at select schools (Office of Building Security).
- Install additional camera systems in elementary schools to provide more complete coverage.
- Secure 13 spaces in schools that are identified as “open space” with security doors or walls which leaves 14 schools to complete when funds are available (Office of Building Security).
- Implement a plan to reduce disproportionate suspensions of minority students and students with disabilities (various departments).
- Implement the ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate) active assailant response.
- Implement a child sex trafficking initiative.
Accomplishments

In pursuit of the objective of improving the safety and security of BCPS students, staff, and property, the following safety and security goals have been accomplished:

- Developed an eight volume Comprehensive Safety Plan
- Recognized as an ALICE certified school system (largest in the country)
- Trained over 300 SROs and administrators as ALICE instructors
- Implemented an electronic bullying, harassment, and intimidation reporting form which is submitted to principals via e-mail and monitored for entry in the BCPS Student Information System by staff in the Department of School Safety
- Implemented the One-card system for identification, door entry, timekeeping, library checkout, and inventory control (devices)
- Implemented electronically controlled entry systems at all schools
- Implemented a visitor identification system that also checks for sex offenders
- Implemented interior and exterior cameras at all schools
- Conducted security assessments in all 168 school buildings
- Secured funding to provide coverage of classroom door view panels
- Updated locks on classroom doors so that all can remain in the locked position
- Revised the Emergency Universal Response Procedures for staff
- Created parent document explaining emergency responses
- Conducted two Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) drills annually
- Assigned SROs to elementary schools using a cluster model of 8 to 16 schools

Security Standards

Safety and security baseline standards have been developed and established in close collaboration with partners in the areas of law enforcement, fire, and emergency management.

Technology Standards

1. Schools will have an electronically controlled entry system. *Completed*
2. Schools will have interior and exterior cameras. *Completed with scheduled expansions*
   - Minimal camera standard - lobby/main door and office area. All elementary schools (some new elementary schools have optimal standard camera systems).
   - Optimal camera standard - all common areas (cafeteria, gym, halls) lobby, main office, all doors, parking lot, and playground. Majority of secondary schools (exception is parking lots).
3. Schools will maintain and support a standard visitor identification system (ID) that will check the sex offender registry for offenders. *Completed*
4. Schools will maintain and support a standardized identification system for staff and students that employs the One-card system. *Completed*
5. A swipe entry system will be used by staff to make access available for staff and students when necessary (i.e., movement from portable learning units to the main building). *Completed*
Facility Standards

1. All exterior doors will be equipped with functional locks and will remain locked during school hours. Completed
2. Classroom doors will remain in the locked position and ready for secure lockdown. Completed
3. Open space areas will be enclosed as funding becomes available and when needed to provide safety and security for students and staff. 14 of 27 Partially Completed
4. Large areas such as gymnasiums, cafeterias, and auditoriums will be able to be secured. Partially Completed

Human Resource Standards

1. Secondary schools will have a SRO. Completed
2. SROs will be assigned to elementary schools using a cluster model of 8 to 16 schools, one officer per precinct. Completed
3. Security personnel will be assigned to patrol after school hours and check for security concerns. Completed

Requirements in future operating and capital requests will be used to address needs identified in the 2019 and 2020 security assessments conducted in all 168 school buildings. Details on efforts to identify safety and security capital needs are addressed in the Facility Needs section of this document.