

Implementation of State and local education agencies Policies and Regulations to Address Gangs, Gang Activity, and Similar Destructive or Illegal Group Behavior

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Division of Student Support, Academic Enrichment, and Educational Policy

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MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**Carey M. Wright, Ed.D.**

Interim State Superintendent of Schools

Sylvia A. Lawson, Ph.D.

Deputy Superintendent, Organizational Effectiveness

Mary L. Gable

Assistant Superintendent, Division of Student Support,
Academic Enrichment, and Educational Policy

Wes Moore

Governor

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Abisola Ayoola (Student Member)

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Introduction

The Safe Schools Act of 2010 (Section 7-424.2 of the Education Article, Annotated Code of Maryland) required the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to submit a report on or before January 1, 2011, and each year thereafter, to the Maryland General Assembly regarding the implementation of State and local education agency (LEA) policies and regulations to address gangs, gang activity, and similar destructive or illegal group behavior. This report provides the requested information for Maryland's 24 LEAs for the 2023-2024 school year.

Each LEA was required by law to: 1) publicize its policies and regulations in student handbooks, on school system websites, and at any other locations or venues LEAs determined were necessary or appropriate; and 2) develop educational programs to address gangs and gang-like activity in schools. Educational programs must include an educational gang awareness program for students, staff, volunteers, and parents. Educational programs must also include a teacher and administrator development program that trains teachers and administrators to implement the policy.

This report to the Maryland General Assembly addresses the requirements outlined in the Safe Schools Act of 2010 and is designed around three core areas: 1) where local education agency gang policies and regulations are publicized; 2) what educational gang awareness program(s) are being provided for students, staff, volunteers, and parents; and 3) how administrators and teachers are trained to implement the gang policy/regulations. In addition to these core areas, MSDE has developed a questionnaire for the purpose of identifying other areas that need to be addressed to optimize technical support. The questionnaire is constructed to appraise the implementation of State and local policies and regulations to address gangs, gang activity, and similar destructive or illegal group behaviors by all LEAs.

Local gang policies were initially developed by LEAs in accordance with the Safe Schools Act and periodically updated as appropriate. MSDE annually surveys all LEAs to collect updated information pertaining to their local gang policies. During this reporting period, there were no updates to any of the 24 LEAs gang policies.

LOCAL GANG AWARENESS PROGRAMS AND IMPLEMENTATION

Analysis of the questionnaires submitted by LEAs for this report shows that several LEAs, including Allegany, Anne Arundel, Baltimore County, and Cecil Counties partner with their local law enforcement agencies to provide training and on-going supports for staff and students. For example, Baltimore County uses a variety of strategies to provide gang prevention education. The partnership between Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) and the Baltimore County Police Department (BCPD) facilitates training for staff. In Cecil County, opportunities are presented throughout the year for students to learn about gang awareness through the Drug Abuse Resistance Education program (D.A.R.E). These classes are taught by local law enforcement agents and are presented to all middle and elementary age students. Allegany County conducts yearly training for all stakeholders. This training is provided by local law enforcement as well as system administrators.

In addition to the LEAs partnering with their local law enforcement agencies, a few LEAs have also established partnerships with their local State's Attorney's Offices. In Carroll County, the State's Attorney's office provides staff training annually. In Montgomery County, the State Attorney's Office supports

Montgomery County Public Schools around gang, awareness, prevention, and intervention by providing outreach and support to schools, administrators, students, staff, and parents.

In Somerset County, a gang prevention and resource guide was developed and distributed to all schools. As an annual requirement, school counselors in middle and high schools reviewed this guide with their students and a copy is sent home to parents. In addition, character education lessons and announcements are shared with teachers at all schools monthly and are incorporated in the classrooms.

Prince George's County has sought ways to address at-risk behaviors that students exhibit that are "warning signs" for gang involvement. They have partnered with several community agencies that provide after school activities and family partnerships to include the Latin American Youth Center, CASA Multicultural Center, Youth Services Bureau, and Community Conferencing.

All LEAs have a mechanism through which communities can report alleged gang activity and receive information regarding how investigation procedures will be conducted by appropriate staff members. St. Mary's County has three options available for community members to report gang-related activity, one of which is the LEA confidential tip line to report information. Information regarding the tip line is posted on the LEAs website. In Washington County, each secondary school has an administrator tasked to serve as the School Safety Security Coordinator. The coordinator and school resource officer will initiate an investigation upon receiving a written or verbal concern. All LEAs utilize MSDE Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form, which includes "gang-related" and "gang recruitment" as categories of bullying, harassment, or intimidation. The form may also be used to report gang-related concerns.

MSDE and the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) meet regularly with Directors of Student Services, School Safety Supervisors, and Behavioral Health Coordinators to provide technical assistance on gang policies, awareness, prevention, and a host of other school safety related topics. MSDE and the MCSS have invited guest speakers and local and national experts to lend their expertise and provide additional assistance to LEAs.

The following responses to the MSDE questionnaire provide further information regarding how school systems are addressing the three core areas (promotion of local policies, available programs, and training provided) and identified focus areas.

Allegany County Public Schools

- 1. When (date) was your gang policy/regulations approved by your board of education?**

June 15, 2011.

- 2. Have your gang policies/regulations been updated? If so, please provide date and brief summary of changes.**

No.

- 3. Where are your gang policy/regulations located/electronically communicated?**

On the School system's website.

- 4. What educational gang awareness programs does your school system provide to students, staff, and volunteers?**

The system conducts yearly training for all stakeholders. This training is provided by local law enforcement as well as system administrators.

- 5. In what ways do you feel your gang awareness programs were effective?**

Stakeholders are aware of the indicators for identifying and reporting activity.

- 6. How were/are administrators and teachers trained to implement your gang policy/regulations?**

All administrators are trained in a train-the-trainer method. Administrators then train the staff of the school.

- 7. Is there a mechanism in place for community members to report gang activity involving school age youth to local schools? If so, please describe the procedure (data collection).**

Yes, we use the forms and methods provided by MSDE.

- 8. Do you feel that gang related issues and similar destructive or illegal behavior have increased, decreased, or remained the same as the previous school year?**

Within our schools it has remained the same.

- 9. Optional: Please share any other thoughts, questions, or comments regarding gang activity, regulation, policies, or awareness programs in your Local education agency.**

N/A

Anne Arundel County Public Schools

1. When (date) was your gang policy/regulations approved by your board of education?

Policy JCCB Gang and/or Gang-like Activity was adopted on July 13, 2011. Regulation JCCB-RA Gang and/or Gang-like Activity was adopted on July 13, 2011.

2. Have your gang policy/regulations been updated? If so, please provide date and summary of changes.

No

- Anne Arundel County Public Schools Policy *JCCB - GANG AND GANG-LIKE ACTIVITIES*, History: Adopted on 7/13/11; Revised 02/06/19
- Anne Arundel County Public Schools Regulation *JCCB-RA - GANG AND GANG-LIKE ACTIVITIES*, History: Developed by Superintendent: 09/01/12; 11/07/18 Reviewed by the Board: 09/01/12; 12/05/18 Date Issued: 09/18/12; Revised 02/06/19

The Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) initial Policy JCCB Gang and/or Gang-like Activity, and initial Regulation JCCB-RA Gang and/or Gang-like Activity was updated to ensure fair and consistent procedures for prompt information sharing and investigation of suspected gang and gang-like activity, in accordance with the Safe Schools Act of 2010. In addition to updates to Reporting- Updated *Gang Incident Reporting Forms*, information sharing, violations, retaliation, and services and supports and is currently a documented violation of the AACPS Student Handbook, Code of Student Conduct.

3. Where are your gang policy/regulations located/electronically communicated?

The AACPS gang policy/regulation are outlined in the AACPS Code of Student Conduct and the AACPS Policy and Regulations site which are electronically located on the AACPS website www.aacps.org. The policy and regulation are also found at these direct links:

- <http://aacpschools.org/boardpolicies/wp-content/uploads/bsk-pdfmanager/2019/02/FINAL-JCCB-Gang-and-Gang-Like-Activities-2018Copy.pdf>
- <http://aacpschools.org/boardpolicies/wp-content/uploads/bsk-pdfmanager/2019/02/FINAL-JCCB-RA-Gang-and-Gang-Like-Activities2018.pdf>

4. What educational gang awareness programs are your school system providing for students, staff, and volunteers?

Gang-related lessons for students implemented during advisory period in each school. Professional Development for faculty, staff, and volunteers at the beginning of each school year. Outside support through the district's partnership with local law enforcement is provided to the district.

5. In what ways do you feel your gang awareness programs were effective?

The most effective approach is one that involves communication between representatives of the groups involved. Students have been encouraged to seek assistance with staff members or programs, which may be available at schools MTSS Restorative Practices (RP) circles, mentors, school nurses, teachers, school counselors, principals, school psychologists, pupil personnel workers, school resource officers, school social workers, and school administrators.

6. How were/are administrators and teachers trained to implement your gang policy/regulations?

AACPS provides:

- Annual training for all school staff regarding gang prevention and intervention resources.
- New employees receive mandatory training as practicable.
- Security meetings are held for middle and high schools to ensure coordination of gang prevention, intervention, and suppression efforts in accordance with the Maryland Safe Schools Act of 2010.
- The Office of School Security provides schools with the gang awareness packets.
- Professional development for faculty and staff are provided the beginning of each school year.
- Gang-related lessons for students are implemented during advisory period in each school annually.
- Administrative review of gang-related activity, identification of pattern of criminal gang activity, underlying crime, anti-social behavior, gang-like activities, and signs of gang membership are conducted.

7. Is there a mechanism in place for community members to report gang activity involving school age youth to local schools? If so, please describe the procedure (data collection).

- Electronic Share Point for New Gang-Related Incident Report is located on the AACPS website www.aacps.org for students and parents
- Electronic Share Point for Bullying, Cyber-Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation Report is located on the AACPS website www.aacps.org for students and parents
- Electronic Bullying, Cyber-Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation Investigative Report Form for administrators
- Office of Safe and Orderly Schools, 410-222-5288
- Office of School Security 410-222-5083
- Maryland Center for School Safety Tip Line: 1-833-MD-B-SAFE/ 1-833-632-7233
- AA County Crisis Response System: 410-768-5522
- The Maryland Youth Crisis Hotline: 1-800-422-0009

8. Do you feel the gang-related issues and similar destructive or illegal behavior has increased, decreased, or remained the same as the previous school year?

- Increased: 2018-2019- (22) incidents of reported gang-related issues
- Decreased: 2019-2020- (9) incidents of reported gang-related issues
- Increased: 2020-2021- (11) incidents of reported gang-related issues
- Increased: 2021-2022- (22) incidents of reported gang-related issues

9. Optional: Please share any other thoughts, questions, or comments regarding gang activity, regulation, policies, or awareness programs in your Local education agency.

N/A

Baltimore City Public Schools

- 1. When (date) was your gang policy/regulations approved by your board of education?**

July 26, 2011.

- 2. Have your policies/regulations been updated? If so, please provide date and brief summary of changes.**

No.

- 3. Where are your gang policy/regulations located/electronically communicated?**

Our policy can be located at:

<https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/bcpss/Board.nsf/Public?open&id=8KSP7F61C386>

- 4. What educational gang awareness programs does your school system provide to students, staff, and volunteers?**

G.R.E.A.T. (Gang Resistance Education and Training).

- 5. In what ways do you feel your gang awareness programs were effective?**

The G.R.E.A.T. Program has allowed us to have programs in schools and at summer camp.

- 6. How were/are administrators and teachers trained to implement your gang policy/regulations?**

School based administrators were trained as part of the ongoing climate work since the policy came out. Annual training is provided to school police who we have found have the greatest impact in supporting schools relating to the most current awareness of gang activities.

- 7. Is there a mechanism in place for community members to report gang activity involving school age youth to local schools? If so, please describe the procedure (data collection).**

A gang-related Incident Reporting Form is located inside of the code of conduct.

- 8. Do you feel that gang related issues and similar destructive or illegal behavior have increased, decreased, or remained the same as the previous school year?**

We have not had any reported gang activity to date. It appears to be on the decrease.

- 9. Optional: Please share any other thoughts, questions, or comments regarding gang activity, regulation, policies, or awareness programs in your Local education agency.**

N/A

Baltimore County Public Schools

1. When (date) was your gang policy/regulations approved by your board of education?

The current Baltimore County Public Schools' (BCPS) gang policy and rule were approved by its board of education on July 12, 2011.

2. Have your gang policies/regulations been updated? If so, please provide date and brief summary of changes.

No

The BCPS gang policy and rule were readopted in May 2020.

3. Where are your gang policy/regulations located/electronically communicated?

[https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/bcps/Board.nsf/files/BXA2WG7A28BB/\\$file/POL5551_041420_Finalized.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/bcps/Board.nsf/files/BXA2WG7A28BB/$file/POL5551_041420_Finalized.pdf)

A synopsis of the policy and rule is published in the *Student Handbook* and titled Gangs, Gang Activity and Similar Destructive or Illegal Group Behavior. This handbook is distributed to all students at the beginning of each school year, reviewed, and taken home by students to be shared with their parents.

4. What educational gang awareness programs does your school system provide to students, staff, and volunteers?

Baltimore County Public Schools provide training annually for staff and administrators in partnership with local agencies. School resource officers provide education to students at the secondary level as a part of their teaching responsibilities. Several schools utilize the Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T) program for middle school students. Health education teachers provide gang related education at the secondary level. Community presentations are made available through PTAs, advisory groups, and other community associations.

5. In what ways do you feel your gang awareness programs were effective?

The BCPS uses a variety of strategies to provide gang prevention education and makes resources available on its Web site along with the form for reporting concerns. The partnership between BCPS and the Baltimore County Police Department (BCoPD) facilitates training and communication of concerns. When an issue arose involving English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students, the BCoPD sent Spanish speaking officers to the school to develop a rapport with students and hired a Spanish speaking officer as a permanent member of its SRO team.

6. How were/are administrators and teachers trained to implement your gang policy/regulations?

Administrators receive training in the gang policy/rules through the annual Safe Schools Conference and during professional learning opportunities offered after school hours.

7. Is there a mechanism in place for community members to report gang activity involving school age youth to local schools? If so, please describe the procedure (data collection).

Community members can access the *Gang-Related Incident Reporting Form* on the BCPS Web site at *Gang-Related Incident Reporting Form*. The form is submitted to a school who enters the data and addresses the issue.

8. Do you feel that gang related issues and similar destructive or illegal behavior have increased, decreased, or remained the same as the previous school year?

Anecdotal reports show no significant change in gang activity in Baltimore County.

9. Optional: Please share any other thoughts, questions, or comments regarding gang activity, regulation, policies, or awareness programs in your Local education agency.

The partnership with the BCoPD has enhanced the district's awareness of gangs and gang activities as well as prevention and intervention strategies. The BCoPD has recently added a Spanish speaking SRO to the team of SROs at one of our schools to increase communication with students in the regional ESOL program.

Calvert County Public Schools

1. When (date) was your gang policy/regulations approved by your board of education?

July 14, 2011

2. Have your gang policies/regulations been updated? If so, please provide date and brief summary of changes.

Gang Policy #1119 was reviewed and updated on 8/10/2017, however there were no changes made since the policy was originally adopted.

3. Where are your gang policy/regulations located/electronically communicated?

It is available electronically over the Calvert County Public Schools web site.

4. What educational gang awareness programs does your school system provide to students, staff, and volunteers?

The school system's website; Students Rights and Responsibilities Booklet; and grade level assemblies for each school in the system.

5. In what ways do you feel your gang awareness programs were effective?

Collective involvement between the school system, local and state law enforcement, and State's Attorney Office have joined together to share any reported gang-like activities on school property. Information is also shared regarding student involved gang-like activities occurring in the community.

6. How were/are administrators and teachers trained to implement your gang policy/regulations?

Administrators and Supervisors were informed during (A&S) meetings. Administrators then were to convey this information to their staff. All staff have access to an on-line "SafeSchool" course as a resource to identify gang-like activities.

7. Is there a mechanism in place for community members to report gang activity involving school age youth to local schools? If so, please describe the procedure (data collection).

The Gang Related issues and similar Destructive or Illegal Behavior Report is inserted in the Students' Rights and Responsibilities Booklet that all students in the district receive. The data is collected on file in the Department of Student Services.

8. Do you feel that gang related issues and similar destructive or illegal behavior have increased, decreased, or remained the same as the previous school year?

There have been no changes since the previous year's report.

9. Optional: Please share any other thoughts, questions, or comments regarding gang activity, regulation, policies, or awareness programs in your Local education agency.

N/A

Caroline County Public Schools

1. When (date) was your gang policy/regulations approved by your board of education?

June 7, 2011

2. Have your gang policies/regulations been updated? If so, please provide date and brief summary of changes.

No

Amended March 6, 2012, to include: "Activities on or near school vehicles or property".

3. Where are your gang policy/regulations located/electronically communicated?

The policy is on our school system's website.

4. What educational gang awareness programs does your school system provide to students, staff, and volunteers?

Caroline County Public Schools provides training for staff and teachers on gang prevention and locally available resources annually. This is typically done through a web-based "Safe Schools Training" or "Public School Works."

5. In what ways do you feel your gang awareness programs were effective?

Our school resource officers who are deputies from the county Sheriff's office are instrumental in keeping the school informed. According to policy, these people meet monthly with the appropriate school staff to share information about gang related activity in general and discuss the educational plan for and progress of each student who has been arrested or adjudicated delinquent for gang-related activity..."

6. How were/are administrators and teachers trained to implement your gang policy/regulations?

Our local police were helpful in addition to training on the "Gang Related Incident Investigation Reporting Form."

7. Is there a mechanism in place for community members to report gang activity involving school age youth to local schools? If so, please describe the procedure (data collection).

Reports can be made on the Bullying Harassment and Intimidation Reporting Form of any gang related activity.

8. Do you feel that gang related issues and similar destructive or illegal behavior have increased, decreased, or remained the same as the previous school year?

It has remained the same.

9. Optional: Please share any other thoughts, questions, or comments regarding gang activity, regulation, policies, or awareness programs in your Local education agency.

N/A

Carroll County Public Schools

1. When (date) was your gang policy/regulations approved by your board of education?

Adopted July 6, 2011.

2. Have your gang policies/regulations been updated? If so, please provide date and brief summary of changes.

No

Revised on February 22, 2012.

3. Where are your gang policy/regulations located/electronically communicated?

General Information:

<https://www.carrollk12.org/about/Documents/2021-22InformationalCalendarHandbook.pdf>

Reporting Form:

<https://www.carrollk12.org/instruction/studentservices/Documents/Gang.pdf>

4. What educational gang awareness programs does your school system provide to students, staff, and volunteers?

Health curriculum, counselor lessons, presentations by Vince DeVivo – School Outreach Coordinator, U.S. Attorney’s Office. Carroll County State’s Attorney’s Office also provided staff training.

5. In what ways do you feel your gang awareness programs were effective?

The training has made staff aware that gangs are not just found in large cities. It has also provided staff with gang indicators and current trends to look for in Carroll County Public Schools. Carroll County Public Schools takes a proactive approach and because of our informational ongoing training, we try to be very alert for the potential of gangs forming at all times.

6. How were/are administrators and teachers trained to implement your gang policy/regulations?

Utilizing the train-the-trainer model, administrators were trained by Larry Faries (former CCPS Supervisor of Security) and/or Vince DeVivo.

7. Is there a mechanism in place for community members to report gang activity involving school age youth to local schools? If so, please describe the procedure (data collection).

We have a good partnership and communication with our local law enforcement agencies therefore, if any gang activity involving school age students occurs, they will alert Carroll County Public Schools. Information collected typically goes through the normal referral process for school infractions; however, the new Safe Schools Maryland anonymous tip line can also be used to report gang activity.

8. Do you feel that gang related issues and similar destructive or illegal behavior have increased, decreased, or remained the same as the previous school year?

Gang related activity has remained the same as previous years.

- 9. Optional: Please share any other thoughts, questions, or comments regarding gang activity, regulation, policies, or awareness programs in your Local education agency.**

N/A

Cecil County Public Schools

1. When (date) was your gang policy/regulations approved by your board of education?

Gang Policy was approved July 11, 2011. Regulations were updated in September 2012.

2. Have your gang policies/regulations been updated? If so, please provide date and brief summary of changes.

The Cecil County gang policy was last reviewed on April 1, 2016. No changes were made to the existing policy.

3. Where are your gang policy/regulations located/electronically communicated?

The Gang Policy and Regulations are publicized on the Cecil County Public Schools'

(CCPS) website, along with being published in the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook. This handbook contains the Code of Conduct. The handbook is distributed to each student in Cecil County Public Schools during the first week of classes.

4. What educational gang awareness programs does your school system provide to students, staff, and volunteers?

Throughout the year, opportunities are presented to the public to engage with law enforcement to address and inform the public about current trends in adolescent behavior and gang related activities. Opportunities are also presented throughout the year for students to learn about gang awareness through DARE classes. These classes are taught by local law enforcement agents and are presented to all middle and elementary age students. Also, during Local Management Board Meetings, information is shared by participating groups about gang activity and recruitment. These meetings occur monthly. At monthly School Resource Officers (SRO) meetings, all of the local law enforcement agencies gather to share pertinent information regarding criminal activities in CCPS. Standing agenda items include a report on gang activity and recruitment. At the September meeting, law enforcement officials were all in agreement that gang activity is at a minimum but one particular community was beginning to see issues with a small group within the community. The principals of schools within this community have been notified of the activities and reminded of our Gang Policy. This was reinforced at the October meeting as well.

5. In what ways do you feel your gang awareness programs were effective?

The information shared with various stakeholders is critical to keeping knowledge about gangs and gang activity in the forefront of key individuals. While Cecil County has not seen growth in gang activity, keeping information flowing is critical to being proactive in limiting the spread of this activity.

6. How were/are administrators and teachers trained to implement your gang policy/regulations?

Throughout the year, meetings occur with our Safe School Steering Committee. Various law enforcement agencies are present, along with representatives from the school system, community agencies, and the school resource officers assigned to each of our schools. At this meeting, current trends in student and adolescent behaviors are discussed, along with community trends. During these discussions, gang related activities are also discussed. School resource officers also have frequent communication with school level administration and teachers discussing adolescent behavior trends and gang related activity.

7. Is there a mechanism in place for community members to report gang activity involving school age youth to local schools? If so, please describe the procedure (data collection).

Cecil County has a Gang Incident Reporting Form that is available online for any interested stakeholders to complete and return to the appropriate school. Cecil County has an open-door policy for community members who should and would feel comfortable coming forward to report gang activity.

- 8. Do you feel that gang related issues and similar destructive or illegal behavior have increased, decreased, or remained the same as the previous school year?**

It has remained the same. We have very little gang activity in Cecil County.

- 9. Optional: Please share any other thoughts, questions, or comments regarding gang activity, regulation, policies, or awareness programs in your Local education agency.**

N/A

Charles County Public Schools

1. When (date) was your gang policy/regulations approved by your board of education?

August 9, 2011

2. Have your gang policies/regulations been updated? If so, please provide date and brief summary of changes.

No.

3. Where are your gang policy/regulations located/electronically communicated?

- School system website (ccboe.com)
- Dept of Student Services Resource Handbook available on our internal drive and distributed to all schools
- Located on Board Docs
- Referenced in our Code of Student Conduct

4. What educational gang awareness programs does your school system provide to students, staff, and volunteers?

- Schools hold Safe Schools presentations for staff and parents that are conducted by School Safety & Security Office and includes information on gang awareness
- DARE and Truth and Consequences programs also include this information and are presented to our students
- Summer Youth Achievement Program for at-risk students includes gang awareness and resistance
- As of 2018, all volunteers must complete training and a background screening

5. In what ways do you feel your gang awareness programs were effective?

During the 2018/19 school year CCPS began hosting a quarterly gang intervention and prevention meeting where an administrator from each middle and high school, along with gang detectives meet to share information and intelligence on local gangs operating within Charles County. The meetings have resulted in the identification of no less than 3 criminal street gangs and closed a number of felony arrests. The aforementioned meetings have been discontinued for the 2020-2021, 2021-22 school years due to COVID-19 protocol. Scheduled Gang Intervention meetings have resumed for the 2022/23 SY.

6. How were/are administrators and teachers trained to implement your gang policy/regulations?

Administrators were trained and in turn trained their school staff.

Administrative staff receives updates from quarterly meetings with the Sheriff's Office.

7. Is there a mechanism in place for community members to report gang activity involving school age youth to local schools? If so, please describe the procedure (data collection).

Community members have access to and can complete the gang reporting form.

Police officers visit various communities and speak to residents about on-going issues.

8. Do you feel that gang related issues and similar destructive or illegal behavior have increased, decreased, or remained the same as the previous school year?

Charles County is experiencing an increase in gang related activity; however, the perceived increase could be resulting from better awareness and collaboration between CCPS and law enforcement.

- 9. Optional: Please share any other thoughts, questions, or comments regarding gang activity, regulation, policies, or awareness programs in your Local education agency.**

N/A

Dorchester County Public Schools

1. When (date) was your gang policy/regulations approved by your board of education?

September 15, 2011.

2. Have your gang policies/regulations been updated? If so, please provide date and summary of changes.

No additional updates since 2011.

3. Where are your gang policy/regulations located/electronically communicated?

The policy is available on our district website and listed under the Student Services tab and hard copies will be available to parents/community upon request. Dorchester County Public Schools (DCPS) sends a summer mailing to all parents and guardians every year that includes the Dorchester County Board of Education Gang Policy and Student Code of Conduct. The DCPS Board Policy, procedures, and code of conduct is also available on the Dorchester County Public Schools website. In addition, the Gang Reporting Form is posted on the Dorchester County Public Schools website under the Student Services Department.

4. What educational gang awareness programs does your school system provide to students, staff, and volunteers?

All DCPS staff complete a 30 minute online Safe Schools' Gang Awareness course prior to the start of each school year and participate in ALICE Training. Annually, administrators, counselors, local police representatives, State's Attorney and Public Defenders meet yearly to discuss trends in local gang activity. Information from these meetings is shared with other administrators and staff.

5. In what ways do you feel your gang awareness programs were effective?

Our efforts have been effective in making administration, staff, students, and the community aware of the identification and reporting of gang related activities. It provides details on a process for anyone who may feel that gangs are present.

6. How were/are administrators and teachers trained to implement your gang policy/regulations?

All DCPS staff complete a 30 minute online Safe Schools' Gang Awareness course and ALICE refresher prior to the start of each school year. Policies and procedures are reviewed with administrators by student services and by administrators at the school levels.

7. Is there a mechanism in place for community members to report gang activity involving school age youth to local schools? If so, please describe the procedure (data collection).

Yes, community members can report gang activity involving school age youth by completing and submitting the Gang Reporting Form which is posted on the Dorchester County Public Schools website under the Student Services Department. We have posted the reporting form on our website and provide the link in the calendar handbook for parents and students.

8. Do you feel that gang related issues and similar destructive or illegal behavior have increased, decreased, or remained the same as the previous school year?

Reports and data reveal that currently there has not been an increase or decrease in gang related issues. The amount of gang related activity has remained the same over the past few years. Dorchester County Public Schools will continue our efforts to maintain a safe and gang free environment for our students.

- 9. Optional: Please share any other thoughts, questions, or comments regarding gang activity, regulation, policies, or awareness programs in your Local education agency.**

N/A

Frederick County Public Schools

1. When (date) was your gang policy/regulations approved by your board of education?

Board Policy 423 *Gang Activity* adopted 9/14/11, amended 11/11/20

<https://apps.fcps.org/legal/doc.php?number=423>

FCPS Regulation 400-87 *Gang Activity* issued 10/3/07, amended 2/27/12

<https://apps.fcps.org/legal/doc.php?number=400-87>

2. Have your gang policies/regulations been updated? If so, please provide date and brief summary of changes.

FCPS Regulation 400-87 *Gang Activity* was amended 2/27/12 as follows:

- Updated to correspond with state's model
- Added language – if a report is of a high level of severity, then an investigation will be initiated immediately, but not later than 24 hours
- Listed additional resources, including FCPS brochure “Youth Gang Involvement”

FCPS Policy 423 *Gang Activity* was amended 11/11/20 as follows:

- Amended to include a Policy Statement, Purpose, Definitions, Standards/Prohibitions, and Delegation of Authority

3. Where are your gang policy/regulations located/electronically communicated?

Policy and regulation are located on the FCPS Web site: <https://apps.fcps.org/legal/?type=R>

4. What educational gang awareness programs does your school system provide to students, staff, and volunteers?

The “Youth Gang Involvement” brochure (English and Spanish) is distributed to all schools. It is also located on the FCPS Web site under Security and Emergency Management.

<https://www.fcps.org/centraloffice/security-emergency-management>

5. In what ways do you feel your gang awareness programs were effective?

- Educating parents/guardians on “look fors” regarding gang related behavior.
- Educating administrators on “look fors” regarding gang related behavior; how to intervene; the importance of connecting with local law enforcement.

6. How were/are administrators and teachers trained to implement your gang policy/regulations?

- One of the mandatory online trainings required by FCPS is “Gang Awareness” through Safe Schools: <http://fcps.md.safeschools.com/login>
- This course provides basic information about gang culture, ideology, and behaviors.
- Currently planning annual training for designated school administrators with an expert on gang behavior.

7. Is there a mechanism in place for community members to report gang activity involving school age youth to local schools? If so, please describe the procedure (data collection).

Per FCPS Regulation 400-87 *Gang Activity*, reports can be filed at school or with the FCPS Supervisor of School and Emergency Management.

FCPS Regulation 400-48 *Bullying – Harassment – Intimidation Complaint Process for Students* includes descriptors for “gang related” and “gang recruitment” on the reporting form and investigation form. <https://apps.fcps.org/legal/?type=R>

The bullying, harassment or intimidation reporting form is attached to the regulation. It is located on the FCPS Web site: <http://education.fcps.org/publicforms/bullying>

Other information related to bullying, harassment, or intimidation can be located on the FCPS Web site: <http://www.fcps.org/academics/Stop-Bullying.cfm>

8. Do you feel that gang related issues and similar destructive or illegal behavior have increased, decreased, or remained the same as the previous school year?

The student data report demonstrates gang related disciplinary offenses remained the same in the last school year. However, recent data demonstrates an increase in activity.

9. Optional: Please share any other thoughts, questions, or comments regarding gang activity, regulation, policies, or awareness programs in your Local education agency.

FCPS Regulation 400-08 *Discipline* lists gang activity consequences with tiers of intervention, including applicable criminal and civil penalties with specific reference to FCPS Regulation 400-87 *Gang Activity*. <https://apps.fcps.org/legal/doc.php?number=400-08>

Section 439.III.5 of Board Policy 439 *Dress Code for Students* indicates: “Students are prohibited from wearing specific gang-related attire.” <https://apps.fcps.org/legal/doc.php?number=439>

Garrett County Public Schools

1. When (date) was your gang policy/regulations approved by your board of education?

September 14, 2011.

2. Have your gang policies/regulations been updated? If so, please provide date and brief summary of changes.

No.

3. Where are your gang policy/regulations located/electronically communicated?

Board of Education Website and Policies & Procedures Handbook.

4. What educational gang awareness programs does your school system provide to students, staff, and volunteers?

Training has been scheduled for administrators, teachers, and support staff. Consultation regarding the policy and procedure is provided on a case-by-case basis as needed.

5. In what ways do you feel your gang awareness programs were effective?

Students become aware of the impact of their choices and decisions

6. How were/are administrators and teachers trained to implement your gang policy/regulations?

Safe schools training videos are utilized online to ensure training of designated staff. Discussion and consultation regarding the application of the policy and procedures are provided with staff as needed.

7. Is there a mechanism in place for community members to report gang activity involving school age youth to local schools? If so, please describe the procedure (data collection).

Activity can be reported by submitting the Gang reporting form or reporting to the School Resource Officers or local and state police.

8. Do you feel that gang related issues and similar destructive or illegal behavior have increased, decreased, or remained the same as the previous school year?

It remained the same.

9. Optional: Please share any other thoughts, questions, or comments regarding gang activity, regulation, policies, or awareness programs in your Local education agency.

N/A

Harford County Public Schools

1. When (date) was your gang policy/regulations approved by your board of education?

April 25, 2005

2. Have your gang policies/regulations been updated? If so, please provide date and brief summary of changes.

No

The last change happened on December 3, 2012, the addendum to the policy included a distinction of a "School Security Officer".

3. Where are your gang policy/regulations located/electronically communicated?

All HCPS policies available on the HCPS Website by clicking on Board of Education and selecting [HCPS Procedures and Board Policies](#).

4. What educational gang awareness programs does your school system provide to students, staff, and volunteers?

Administrators meet with students and parents on an individual basis when students are suspected of gang association. We use a brochure titled, "Parents' Guide to Gangs," to offer school counseling for positive ways to belong, and provide consultation with the school resource officer so the student and parents better understand the risks associated with gang involvement.

5. In what ways do you feel your gang awareness programs were effective?

Principals now collaborate with the School Police Team/SROs on identifying emerging gang activities within schools. Students who are involved with gangs generally keep their gang-related activities and affiliation out of school, based on principal reports. We distribute gang awareness brochures to counseling offices, and they are in the waiting room at the Superintendent's suspension hearing office.

6. How were/are administrators and teachers trained to implement your gang policy/regulations?

Originally, the Harford County Sheriff's Office provided a presentation to school administrators. That information is available on the Sheriff's office website link. SROs now keep administrators informed of emerging gang activities and incidents that occur in the community that may impact their school. All staff are able to access the policy on the school system's website.

7. Is there a mechanism in place for community members to report gang activity involving school age youth to local schools? If so, please describe the procedure (data collection).

Yes, it is usually reported using the online bullying report.

8. Do you feel that gang related issues and similar destructive or illegal behavior have increased, decreased, or remained the same as the previous school year?

County-wide, there has been a decrease. However, we have had an increase in a few of our schools. Gang-related reportable offenses have also increased leading to several crimes involving firearms, attempted murder, and armed robberies. Criminal charges have increased because of the inclusion of 2nd degree assault as a reportable offense for incidents outside of school and for fights within school. Fights and attacks have increased, likely a function of the aggravating nature of social

media. The increase in reportable offenses have been associated with increased awareness and the incorporation of including a check off block on incident reports identify gang involvement.

- 9. Optional: Please share any other thoughts, questions, or comments regarding gang activity, regulation, policies, or awareness programs in your Local education agency.**

N/A

Howard County Public Schools

1. When (date) was your gang policy/regulations approved by your board of education?

July 1, 2011.

2. Have your gang policies/regulations been updated? If so, please provide date and brief summary of changes.

No.

3. Where are your gang policy/regulations located/electronically communicated?

Through our web site HCPSS.org, along with other HCPSS policies.

4. What educational gang awareness programs does your school provide to students, staff, and volunteers?

When requested, our school system works with the Howard County Police Department Gang Unit to conduct the most up-to-date gang information training.

5. In what ways do you feel your gang awareness programs were effective?

Providing increased awareness through education is the key to reducing gang activity.

6. How were/are administrators and teachers trained to implement your gang policy/regulations?

We request support from the Howard County Police Gang Unit to provide up-to date training.

7. Is there a mechanism in place for community members to report gang activity involving school age youth to local schools? If so, please describe the procedure (data collection).

Students, staff, and parents are encouraged to report any gang related activity to an administrator who is required to complete and submit a Gang Related Incident Reporting Form. We have posters at every school prohibiting gang activity and encouraging the reporting of any gang related activity.

8. Do you feel that gang related issues and similar destructive or illegal behavior have increased, decreased, or remained the same as the previous school year?

Gang activity has remained about the same.

9. Optional: Please share any other thoughts, questions, or comments regarding gang activity, regulation, policies, or awareness programs in your Local education agency.

HCPSS is looking into an on-line training module through Safe Schools to be tailored with our gang policy for staff to access throughout the school year.

Kent County Public Schools

1. When (date) was your gang policy/regulations approved by your board of education?

The policy was approved on August 1, 2011, and the procedure was approved on June 4, 2012.

2. Have your gang policies/regulations been updated? If so, please provide date and brief summary of changes.

No.

3. Where are your gang policy/regulations located/electronically communicated?

The policy/regulations are communicated through our website and Board Docs.

[Gang Activity Procedure, 600-89](#)

4. What educational gang awareness programs does your school system provide to students, staff, and volunteers?

Students – Material from MSDE is being used in health classes and assemblies that include gang related activity as a topic.

Volunteers and Staff – Safe Schools training.

5. In what ways do you feel your gang awareness programs were effective?

The SROs are deputies from the Sheriff's Office and are instrumental in keeping the schools informed about reportable offenses, as well as gang related activity. School climate survey results provides information from stakeholders about general school safety.

6. How were/are administrators and teachers trained to implement your gang policy/regulations?

Through the Safe Schools Training. The safety Coordinator participates regularly in calls and meetings with Maryland Center for School Safety.

7. Is there a mechanism in place for community members to report gang activity involving school age youth to local schools? If so, please describe the procedure (data collection).

- The Bullying/Harassment Intimidation Form is also available online from the district website.
- The District App includes a local tip line accessible not only to students but any stakeholder.
- The Safe Schools Maryland app tip line is a second avenue that can be used by anyone to report unsafe gang-like behavior.
- Being in a rural community, stakeholders will often call-in reports directly to our schools or student services office and we complete the paperwork.

8. Do you feel that gang related issues and similar destructive or illegal behavior have increased, decreased, or remained the same as the previous school year?

It has remained the same – we have few issues in Kent County. We communicate with local and state police at our security meetings held twice per year.

9. Optional: Please share any other thoughts, questions, or comments regarding gang activity, regulation, policies, or awareness programs in your Local education agency.

MSDE has coordinated the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force to present at meetings and I think something similar would be beneficial from the Gang Task Force in Maryland.

Montgomery County Public Schools

1. When (date) was your gang policy/regulations approved by your board of education?

MCPS Regulation [JHG-RA](#), *Gangs, Gang Activity, or Other Similar Destructive or Illegal Group Behavior Prevention*, was developed initially in August 2011, revised in September 2012, and revisions were made July 24, 2017, to address where copies of the gang reporting form are distributed to facilitate better reporting and monitoring within MCPS and to reflect the appropriate MSDE contact name and contact information.

2. Have your gang policy/regulations been updated? If so, please provide date and brief summary of changes.

MCPS Regulation JHG-RA, *Gangs, Gang Activity, or Other Similar Destructive or Illegal Group Behavior Prevention*, was revised in September 2012 to incorporate information received from the Maryland State Department of Education. The major change by the state was that upon receipt of a Gang-Related Incident Report, the principal or designee, assistant principal, and the school security officer would initiate an investigation within 24 hours. Revisions were made again in July, 2017 to establish reporting requirements that allow the district to follow and monitor the number of incidents, types of behaviors, and findings from school investigations. Related documents related to the MCPS gang regulation include:

- a) Montgomery County [Board of Education Policy COA, Student Well-being and School Safety](#), (June, 24, 2019) which builds upon the ongoing work of MCPS to promote student well-being and school safety. This policy also aligns with [Board Policy JPG, Wellness: Physical and Nutritional Health](#).

MCPS work on the [Be Well 365: The Framework to Support the Physical, Social, and Psychological Well-being of All Students](#) as well as the MCPS Restorative Justice Initiatives. Specifically, Board Policy COA addresses safety from the Perspective of promoting a positive school climate, accountability for all, behavioral threat assessment, facilities, security staff, and technology, collaboration with county partners including health and law enforcement agencies, and emergency planning and preparedness.

- b) Revised [MCPS Regulation COA-RA, Behavior Threat Assessment](#), which addresses Maryland legislative mandates in the Maryland Safe to Learn Act of 2018, and the [Maryland's Model Policy for Behavior Threat Assessment](#) that sets forth mechanisms, best practices, procedures, policies, and guides for the establishment of an assessment team or teams in each Local education agency.
- c) Montgomery County Board of Education Policy [JFA-RA](#), *Student Rights and Responsibilities* (revised in August 2021).
- d) MCPS Regulation JFA-RA, *Student Rights and Responsibilities*. Related publications include the *2021-2022 Student's Guide to Rights and Responsibilities in MCPS*, and the *2021-2022 [Student Code of Conduct](#) in MCPS*, which are revised and published annually.

3. Where are your gang policy/regulations located/electronically communicated?

The MCPS gang regulation is located on the MCPS website at: www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/pdf/jhgra.pdf. It is also referenced in the mandatory online training for staff (see #6 below). The regulation is available in multiple languages to ensure broad access to our school community.

4. What educational gang awareness programs are your school system providing for students, staff, and volunteers?

The curriculum for the high school Health Education course includes specific indicators and objectives that address the issue of gang awareness and violence.

These are to recognize and examine contributors to gang violence:

- a) Describe appropriate behavior to resist and prevent gang activity and violence.
- b) Analyze how personal attitudes, values, and beliefs influence healthy and unhealthy safety and injury prevention practices and behaviors.

MCPS collaborates with the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Identity, Inc. to help provide gang awareness programs and interventions to students, staff members, and volunteers. An extremely valuable resource and intervention specialist is Luis Cardona, administrator, Positive Youth Development Initiative, DHHS. He serves as the coordinator of the Street Outreach Network whose mission is to “prevent, neutralize, and control hostile behavior in high-risk youth and youth gangs through the development of positive relationships between youth [and] community stakeholders and outreach workers. The outreach worker(s) utilize[s] positive youth development programs and leisure time activities serve as the intervening vehicle for redirecting antisocial, aggressive behaviors, and gang related activities and concerns within the community.

The Montgomery County State’s Attorney’s Office continues to support MCPS in the area of gang awareness, prevention, and intervention by providing outreach and support to schools, administrators, students, staff, and parents. They assist in providing needed school-based assemblies and community meetings on gangs and other unsafe behaviors. The State’s Attorney has pledged to continue coordination of services with MCPS and other agencies to promote prevention and mitigation efforts of gang and gang like activities.

5. In what ways do you feel your gang awareness programs were effective?

MCPS has maintained a proactive approach towards training staff members to recognize, document, report, and investigate any suspected gang-related signs or activities. As a result, gang activity in schools is limited and when it does occur, staff members respond immediately to investigative and mitigate the negative impact it could have on a positive and safe learning environment.

6. How were/are administrators and teachers trained to implement your gang policy/regulations?

Beginning in the 2017-2018 school year, MCPS incorporated training on gang awareness into the [online compliance training](#) that is mandatory for all employees. The training, which is mandated each year was revised to be more interactive and engaging, includes guidance regarding:

- Definitions of criminal gang and patterns of criminal gang activity, as well as warning signs (behavioral, social, and physical)
- Requirements that schools must have prevention and intervention strategies.
- Requirement that all school employees must report any incident of suspected gang behavior using MCPS Form 230-37, as well as the investigation process and timeline.
- Prevention and intervention strategies such as making changes to the physical building and creating a school climate that is conducive to a safe environment.
- Information as to why students join gangs, and factors that may increase the risk of participation in gang activity.
- Links to in-school resources, community resources, internet sites, and hotlines
- Collaboration with **UMD Criminology and Criminal Justice at Universities at Shady**

Grove to enhance our Gangs Behavior compliance module to include an increase in how to recognize and report Child/Human Sex Trafficking.

This year, the prevailing Memorandum of Understanding with law enforcement agencies in Montgomery County, including the Montgomery County Police Department and the Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office (SAO) was revised as a result of the revamping process of the previous School Resource Officer Program into a new model and format known as the Community Engagement Officer Program, to include a section specifically focused on gang awareness and prevention. The revised [MOU](#) was executed on August 30, 2021.

In addition to the gang reporting and awareness activities specified elsewhere in the MOU, pursuant to the Maryland Safe Schools Act of 2010, the parties will collaborate "to develop and implement gang awareness, prevention, and intervention programs for MCPS students and their families with a focus on outreach to at-risk MCPS students." The SAO and law enforcement agencies also will "assist MCPS in developing ongoing training on gang awareness for MCPS staff"; "to meet regularly to address current trends in gang activity; and to "convene regular school security meetings for the middle schools and high schools to ensure the coordination of gang prevention, intervention, and suppression efforts."

- The MCPS Department of Systemwide Safety and Emergency Management collaborates with the Maryland Center for School Safety to share information and learn how other counties throughout the State of Maryland have or are developing strategies to reduce gangs or gang like activities.
- The Montgomery County Police Department and other national experts continue to present gang awareness training to MCPS security staff, school administrators, and staff which includes what gangs are active in Montgomery County, the types of activities each gang is involved in, which gangs are active in different geographical areas of the county, what administrators and security staff should watch for, and how to report suspected gang activity.

7. Is there a mechanism in place for community members to report gang activity involving school age youth to local schools? If so, please describe the procedure (data collection).

Parents, guardians, students, or a close adult relative may report suspected gang-related behavior utilizing [MCPS Form 230-37, Gang-Related Incident Reporting Form](#) and submit the same to the school principal for follow up. In addition, [MCPS Form 230-35, Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form](#), which includes "gang related" and "gang recruitment" as categories of bullying, harassment, or intimidation may also be used to report gang-related concerns. MCPS developed specific processes on how we monitor/receive Maryland Safe Schools Tipline allegations and connect immediately with the schools and police partners to ensure swift investigation.

8. Do you feel the gang related issues and similar destructive or illegal behavior has increased, decreased, or remained the same as the previous school year?

With the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and students being away from traditional education for approximately eighteen months it is difficult to assess the current status of gang-related issues and concerns. It appeared some middle school students may have been recruited or lured into gang related activities during this period. Needed outreach and support were directed to these students and families. It will be important for MCPS to track and monitor suspected and confirmed gang related incidents and concerns to determine from the system and community perspective if we are seeing an increase or decrease in these areas.

MCPS will work with our service and outreach partners to continue to address and respond to any gang-related as well as similar or destructive behavior issues and concerns.

9. Optional: Please share any other thoughts, questions, or comments regarding gang activity, regulation, policies, or awareness programs in your Local education agency.

MCPS internally developed a Culture of Respect Student Training Module, providing students (grades 6-12) with an asynchronous learning opportunity to be more knowledgeable in recognizing and knowing how to report discrimination and concerns of bullying/harassment and intimidation, including aspects of gang related activity and behaviors.

Prince George's County Public Schools

1. When (date) was your gang policy/regulations approved by your board of education?

The Gang Policy 5175 was approved on June 20, 2011, by the Prince George's County Board of Education. On August 1, 2011, the Superintendent and Executive Cabinet approved the administrative procedure (AP 5142), which explains the process by which the policy is implemented.

2. Have your gang policies/regulations been updated? If so, please provide date and brief summary of changes.

No

3. Where are your gang policy/regulations located/electronically communicated?

The Prince George's County Public School system posts all policies and Administrative Procedures on a web site that is accessible to all employees and the public-at-large. In addition, available in both Spanish and English, an informational brochure on gangs has been published and distributed to schools. *The Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook* has information about gangs. An electronic version of the handbook is available to students and parents each year. This handbook addresses consequences for gang involvement, gang activity, and similar destructive or illegal behavior. Prince George's County Public Schools also maintains a Gang Google site, which has resources for schools to use.

4. What educational gang awareness programs does your school system provide to students, staff, and volunteers?

School Administrators and Pupil Personnel Workers (PPWs) review *The Student Rights and Responsibility Handbook* with all students annually. Students are required to sign a Code of Conduct Memorandum of Understanding indicating that they understand the policies and regulations outlined in *The Student Rights and Responsibility Handbook*. The system-wide student dress code also prohibits the wearing of gang colors and/or gang paraphernalia.

Staff members receive awareness training annually at the beginning of the school year. PPWs receive an annual refresh on gang involvement and the implications for student truancy. Principals have had the School Resource Officers and staff members from the Department of Student Services conduct parent informational sessions on gangs and how to look vigilantly for signs that gangs may be recruiting their children. Schools also develop school-based interventions and programs that are germane to the needs of their buildings.

Additionally, Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) has reached out to parents to provide awareness on gangs through the Department of Family and School Partnerships and Community Outreach (DFSPCO). This division also provided a session on "Warning Signs: Gangs/Drugs and At-Risk Behaviors developed to illuminate adolescent behaviors indicative of gang involvement.

5. In what ways do you feel your gang awareness programs were effective?

The programs were effective in helping both staff and parents understand what signs to look for in children of gang related activities. These programs have increased gang awareness for adults.

6. How were/are administrators and teachers trained to implement your gang policy/regulations?

Over the years, school administrators received training on the implementation of the Administrative Procedure related to gangs and gang prevention. All security staff members have received training through local police entities. An internal Google site maintained by the

Department of Security is a place where administrators can go for information. We currently provide a Gang Awareness Training module through the Safe-Schools portal that is available to all school staff on gangs and school safety.

The goal of this course is to provide school staff members with basic information about gang culture, ideology, and behavior. Knowledge gained through the 30minute course will help school staff better understand gang activity and the role they play to build a safe school environment. Topics covered include gang facts, why young people join gangs, identifying gang members in school, and actions you can take to increase safety in your school.

7. Is there a mechanism in place for community members to report gang activity involving school age youth to local schools? If so, please describe the procedure (data collection).

PGCPS' Anti-Bullying website has a link which may be accessed to complete the Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Form. This form also provides an opportunity to report gang-related or gang recruitment activity. The electronic report can be found at <http://stopbullying.pgcps.org/> and can be translated in English, Spanish and French.

Schools are required to investigate each reported incident. In every case, schools use the student information system to record gang information. The Department of Student Services and the Department of Security Services work collaboratively to record and review data to determine trends and action steps to reduce gang related incidents.

To make anonymous reporting easier for students, parents, and community onlookers, PGCPS has developed a new Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation (BHI) app that will be released in January 2020. This platform can be used to report Gang-related activity. Videos for staff members to provide training on how to use the app as well as a BHI Parent Tutorial have been developed to provide guidance on how to use this new tool. We recognize this avenue provides all stakeholders with the power to report incidents without trepidation.

Additionally, PGCPS has collaborated with Crime Solvers in a program called "See Something Say Something". Community members are able to report incidents via a toll free number.

8. Do you feel that gang related issues and similar destructive or illegal behavior have increased, decreased, or remained the same as the previous school year?

Gang related activity has remained flat from the prior year.

9. Optional: Please share any other thoughts, questions, or comments regarding gang activity, regulation, policies, or awareness programs in your Local education agency.

PGCPS realizes gang activity, involvement, and recruitment are not just community issues but involve those who enter our school doors. We have sought ways to address at-risk behaviors that students exhibit that are "warning signs" for gang involvement.

We have partnered with a number of community agencies that provide after school activities and family partnerships to include Latin American Youth Center, CASA Multicultural Center, Youth Services Bureau, and Community Conferencing to name a few. We have now hired a Restorative Practices Coordinator to usher in restorative circles aimed at connecting students and teachers that would facilitate an environment that is nurturing, positive, and fosters a sense of belonging for all of our students. When we build opportunities for greater student engagement through academics, career academies, mentoring, and community services, we are hoping to build mechanisms for better student-school connectivity and self-fulfillment.

Lastly, through trauma informed approaches, we will be able to build bridges with students whose life changing traumatic experiences are often fertile ground for gang involvement or other at-risk behaviors.

Queen Anne's County Public Schools

1. When (date) was your gang policy/regulations approved by your board of education?

September 2011

2. Have your gang policies/regulations been updated? If so, please provide date and brief summary of changes.

We have not updated our policy. We continue to model the state policy.

3. Where are your gang policy/regulations located/electronically communicated? Our Gang Policy is publicized on our website. It is available for download at www.qacps.org. The policy is also mentioned in our calendar/handbook which goes home to every parent.

4. What educational gang awareness programs does school system provide to students, staff, and volunteers?

All school staff receive Gang Awareness training annually through Safe Schools. The Sherriff's Department has also worked with school staff in an effort to educate staff about gang awareness.

5. In what ways do you feel your gang awareness programs were effective?

We feel our gang program is effective. We feel that our school staff are aware of the policy and how to report.

6. How were/are administrators and teachers trained to implement your gang policy/regulations?

The Supervisor of Student Services reviewed the policy with principals and provided a Power Point that they were to share with all staff. As a follow-up to that presentation the Supervisor of Student Services contacted principals to make sure they were sharing information with staff. All staff receive annual gang awareness training through Safe Schools.

7. Is there a mechanism in place for community members to report gang activity involving school age youth to local schools? If so, please describe the procedure (data collection).

The Gang Policy, as well as the Gang Reporting Form is on our webpage and all community members can make a report.

8. Do you feel that gang related issues and similar destructive or illegal behavior have increased, decreased, or remained the same as the previous school year?

We have a low incidence of gang related activity in Queen Anne's County. Overall gang activity has decreased over the past few years.

9. Optional: Please share any other thoughts, questions, or comments regarding gang activity, regulation, policies, or awareness programs in your Local education agency.

N/A

St. Mary's County Public Schools

1. When (date) was your gang policy/regulations approved by your board of education?

June 8, 2011

[Policy JF - Student Responsibilities - Gang Activity and Similar Destructive Behaviors Prohibited in School Number JFDJ](#)

2. Have your gang policies/regulations been updated? If so, please provide date and brief summary of changes.

The policy was reviewed on November 13, 2013. The companion regulation was reviewed and revised on July 1, 2013. There were no changes.

3. Where are your gang policy/regulations located/electronically communicated?

The gang policy and regulation are posted on the St. Mary's County Public School's (SMCPS) website.

[SMCPS - Student Handbook & Code of Conduct](#)

4. What educational gang awareness programs does your school system provide to students, staff, and volunteers?

Gang awareness information is included in the Student Handbook and is reviewed annually by students and staff. All staff receive training through an online training program.

5. In what ways do you feel your gang awareness programs were effective?

SMCPS has been transparent about emerging student involvement in reported gang related activities and the increasingly destructive and disruptive actions taken by individuals identifying themselves as members of local community gangs. We have actively partnered with the Sheriff's office to coordinate messaging, information, and appropriate responses. The [Memorandum of Understanding between schools and the State's Attorney's Office \(required under Maryland Education Article 7-424.2\)](#) was reviewed and revised on February 15, 2018 for a term of three (3) years. The [Memorandum of Understanding between schools and law enforcement \(required under Maryland Education Article 7-424.2\)](#) was reviewed and revised on August 24, 2019. The above referenced Memorandums of Understanding are currently being reviewed and revised. They are scheduled for publication in 2023.

6. How were/are administrators and teachers trained to implement your gang policy/regulations?

Administrators and teachers are trained annually as part of the required online training. Staff members are required to complete the training by mid-October of each school year.

7. Is there a mechanism in place for community members to report gang activity involving school age youth to local schools? If so, please describe the procedure (data collection).

There are three options available for community members to report gang-related activity. First, the school system has a confidential tip line to report information. Information regarding the tip line is posted on the school system website. [Second, the gang-related incident reporting form is available on the school system website.](#) Third, the gang-related incident reporting form is also available in the [electronic student handbook.](#)

8. Do you feel that gang related issues and similar destructive or illegal behavior have increased, decreased, or remained the same as the previous school year?

The number of gang-related incidents in St. Mary's County continues to increase. Gang activity is having a residual impact on the school environment. We continue to work with local and state law enforcement agencies to investigate reported gang activity. The number of students involved is isolated to a very small percentage of the total number of students. Disruptions in the school environment have occurred ranging from physical attack on students and staff as well as other illegal activity to include vandalism, drug possession, and weapons on campus. There has been an increase in the number of student-involved in gun related crimes occurring in the community. This has resulted in outreach to law enforcement partners to investigate and potentially validate suspected gang activity and further coordination with the St. Mary's County State's Attorney's Office. Meetings are held on a weekly basis with law enforcement and school administrators to address any gang related concerns. The Department of Student Services is proactively engaged in intervention strategies to assist students who have been determined to be a significant risk to the school environment due to their declared gang affiliation and participation in crimes both on and off the school campus.

9. Optional: Please share any other thoughts, questions, or comments regarding gang activity, regulation, policies, or awareness programs in your Local education agency.

St. Mary's County Public Schools and law enforcement have a collaborative working relationship that is beneficial to the ongoing work in both the schools and community.

Somerset County Public Schools

1. When (date) was your gang policy/regulations approved by your board of education?

Originally approved on June 14, 2011.

2. Have your gang policies/regulations been updated? If so, please provide date and brief summary of changes.

No

Minor revisions were made on July 8, 2019, and approved on August 20, 2019, by the Board. The revisions included adding the language “3 or more” individuals in defining a gang; Language changed from School Security Officer to School Resource Officer and the reporting procedures were removed from the policy and added to the administrative procedures section.

3. Where are your gang policy/regulations located/electronically communicated?

The gang policy/regulation information is publicized in student handbooks, the county calendar (given to every student for parents), on the county website, and also shared with the County Safety Team.

4. What educational gang awareness programs does your school system provide to students, staff, and volunteers?

- A gang prevention and resource guide were developed and distributed to all schools, has been posted on our website, and was shared with administrators and support staff
- School Counselors in middle and high schools reviewed this guide with their students and a copy was sent home to parents (annual requirement).
- Character education lessons and announcements are shared with teachers at all schools on a monthly basis to be incorporated in the classrooms (i.e., respect).
- Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) initiatives at all eligible school includes specific strategies that address a safe and healthy school climate
- Parent Orientations were held for all schools and the review of procedures and expectations was shared for academics, attendance, and behavior.
- Annual review with school Administrators and school staff.

5. In what ways do you feel your gang awareness programs were effective?

Improved school climate; staff and student awareness.

6. How were/are administrators and teachers trained to implement your gang policy/regulations?

- Policy/regulation review requirement was shared with Administrators during an Administrators & Supervisors meeting.
- Annual requirement for all staff to be trained at each school; principals submit a verification of that training to Central Office.

7. Is there a mechanism in place for community members to report gang activity involving school age youth to local schools? If so, please describe the procedure (data collection).

Yes, the gang reporting form is available on our website and at schools; we have a partnership with our local police departments that provide officers that conduct walk-throughs regularly; we have SROs that are based at or provide services to all of our schools.

- 8. Do you feel that gang related issues and similar destructive or illegal behavior have increased, decreased, or remained the same as the previous school year?**

In reviewing the incidents that have been reported, which are very small if any, there has been no change.

- 9. Optional: Please share any other thoughts, questions, or comments regarding gang activity, regulation, policies, or awareness programs in your Local education agency.**

N/A

Talbot County Public Schools

1. When (date) was your gang policy/regulations approved by your board of education?

May 18, 2011

2. Have your gang policies/regulations been updated? If so, please provide date and brief summary of changes.

No.

3. Where are your policy/regulations located/electronically communicated?

Talbot County Public Schools (TCPS) sends a summer mailing to all parents and guardians every year that includes the Talbot County Board of Education Gang

Policy and Administrative Regulation. The TCPS Board Policy and Administrative Regulation is also available on the Talbot County Public Schools website. In addition, the Gang Reporting Form is posted on the Talbot County Public Schools website under the Student Services Department.

4. What educational gang awareness programs does your school system provide to students, staff, and volunteers?

All TCPS staff complete a 30 minute online Safe Schools' Gang Awareness course prior to the start of each school year. Gang awareness is presented to the elementary students through Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) classes and is taught by an officer from the Talbot County Sheriff's Department. Middle and high school students review gang awareness through the health curriculum. Annually, administrators, counselors, local police representatives, State's Attorney and Public Defenders meet yearly to discuss trends in local gang activity. Information from these meetings is shared with other administrators and staff.

5. In what ways do you feel your gang awareness programs were effective?

Our efforts have been effective in making administration, staff, students, and the community aware of the identification and reporting of gang related activities.

6. How were/are administrators and teachers trained to implement your gang policy/regulations?

All TCPS staff complete a 30 minute online Safe Schools' Gang Awareness course prior to the start of each school year. Policies and procedures are generally reviewed at the school levels.

7. Is there a mechanism in place for community members to report gang activity involving school age youth to local schools? If so, please describe the procedure (data collection).

Yes, community members are able to report gang activity involving school age youth by completing and submitting the Gang Reporting Form which is posted on the Talbot County Public Schools website under the Student Services Department.

8. Do you feel that gang related issues and similar destructive or illegal behavior have increased, decreased, or remained the same as the previous school year?

Talbot County is a rural school system with very little gang related activity. The amount of gang related activity has remained the same over the past few years. Talbot County Public Schools will continue our efforts to maintain a safe and gang free environment for our students.

- 9. Optional: Please share any other thoughts, questions, or comments regarding gang activity, regulation, policies, or awareness programs in your Local education agency.**

N/A

Washington County Public Schools

1. When (date) was your gang policy/regulations approved by your board of education?

July 12, 2011, Policy:

[https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/wcps/Board.nsf/files/8UDRHK6DE5CD/\\$file/JICF%20FINAL%2015May12.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/wcps/Board.nsf/files/8UDRHK6DE5CD/$file/JICF%20FINAL%2015May12.pdf)

Regulation- [https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/wcps/Board.nsf/files/8L8JM74DCDE2/\\$file/JICF-R%20final%2012Jul11.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/wcps/Board.nsf/files/8L8JM74DCDE2/$file/JICF-R%20final%2012Jul11.pdf)

2. Have your gang policies/regulations been updated? If so, please provide date and brief summary of changes.

No

Last updated was on May 15, 2012. The MSDE review team recommended that the principal or designee initiate an investigation *within 24 hours* of receiving a Gang Related Incident Reporting Form. WCPS Policy JICF, entitled "Addressing Gangs,

Gang Activity, and Similar Destructive or Illegal Group Behavior; "was updated to include this language.

3. Where are your gang policy/regulations located/electronically communicated?

Information on the WCPS gang policy is published in our annual student handbook and is available on the WCPS website- links provided above.

4. What educational gang awareness programs does your school system provide to students, staff, and volunteers?

WCPS has a Manager of Safety & Security who maintains close contact with local law enforcement and works closely with our school administrators. The School Resource Officer (SRO) at South Hagerstown High School is a member of the Mid Atlantic Regional Gang Investigators Network (MARGIN). This SRO meets with the school administrators, pupil personnel workers, counselors, and our county Gang & Safety Committee. Each middle and high school has a representative on the committee. Several elementary schools attend these meetings, but this committee is not required for elementary staff. The Hagerstown City Police and Washington County Sheriff's Department also assist WCPS by providing updates to designated school administrators throughout the year.

5. In what ways do you feel your gang awareness programs were effective?

There is communication between the police, the school administration and students who identify as gang members. The communication has prevented problems in the schools and the community.

6. How were/are administrators and teachers trained to implement your gang policy/regulations?

Secondary schools have school-based safety committees that meet regularly.

These committees discuss issues and share information/updates out to staff. The SROs participate with these school-based safety committees, but they do not educate or inform students. Students, parents, and staff have access to information on gangs and what constitutes gang activity. All parties are made aware of the procedures to report gang activities. Staff is required to report suspected gang activity.

7. Is there a mechanism in place for community members to report gang activity involving school age youth to local schools? If so, please describe the procedure (data collection).

Students, parents, and staff have access (paper and electronically) to the Gang Related Incident Reporting Form. Gang-Related Incident Reporting Form:

[https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/wcps/Board.nsf/files/8JVRTF6F8887/\\$file/JICF-E\(1\)%20final%2012Jul11.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/wcps/Board.nsf/files/8JVRTF6F8887/$file/JICF-E(1)%20final%2012Jul11.pdf)

Each secondary school has an administrator tasked to serve as the School Safety Security Coordinator. The coordinator and SRO initiate an investigation upon receiving a written or verbal concern. Gang-Related Incident Investigation Form:

[https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/wcps/Board.nsf/files/8JVRTF6F8887/\\$file/JICF-E\(1\)%20final%2012Jul11.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/wcps/Board.nsf/files/8JVRTF6F8887/$file/JICF-E(1)%20final%2012Jul11.pdf)

We have an SRO who is a member of the MARGIN. We also have a Task Force members meeting with the school administration on a regular basis. Information received by social media or parents is shared with the above contacts.

8. Do you feel the gang related issues and similar destructive or illegal behavior have increased, decreased, or remained the same as the previous school year?

It appears that some students are identifying to a gang. Outside influences have increased. There is a perception that violence has increased in the city of Hagerstown. A 2019 FBI report indicates Hagerstown violent crime rose 3% and is above the national average.

9. Optional: Please share any other thoughts, questions, or comments regarding gang activity, regulation, policies, or awareness programs in your Local education agency.

N/A

Wicomico County Public Schools

1. When (date) was your gang policy/regulations approved by your board of education?

Adopted 9/14/2011

2. Have your gang policies/regulations been updated? If so, please provide date and brief summary of changes.

No

Last revision was Approved on 7/12/2016.

- Format changes for presentation purpose.
- Removed term “gang-like” and replaced with “gang related”.

3. Where are your gang policy/regulations located/electronically communicated?

- Included in student handbook.
- Posted on wcooe.org website.
- Posted on Safe Schools page.

4. What educational gang awareness programs does your school system provide to students, staff, and volunteers?

Wicomico County Sheriff’s Office provides sharing sessions on an as needed basis with school communities.

5. In what ways do you feel your gang awareness programs were effective?

Gang activity in our schools is minimal. Very limited/minimal presentation of flags, colors, etc.

6. How were/are administrators and teachers trained to implement your gang policy/regulations?

- Original PD – through policy review with director
- Implementation – When gang activities are suspected or detected, the school administrators contact the Office of Safe Schools and the School Resource Officer unit.

7. Is there a mechanism in place for community members to report gang activity involving school age youth to local schools? If so, please describe the procedure (data collection).

Community members can contact school administrators with suspicion/concern. School administrators, in turn, communicate such suspicion/concern with the Office of Safe Schools and, again in turn, the information is forwarded to the school resource officer (SRO) unit to investigate and/or determine validity of gang information.

8. Do you feel that gang related issues and similar destructive or illegal behavior have increased, decreased, or remained the same as the previous school year?

There has been a decrease from past reporting periods.

9. Optional: Please share any other thoughts, questions, or comments regarding gang activity, regulation, policies, or awareness programs in your Local education agency.

N/A

Worcester County Public Schools

1. When (date) was your gang policy/regulations approved by your board of education?

July 2011.

2. Have your gang policies/regulations been updated? If so, please provide date and brief summary of changes.

No.

3. Where are your gang policy/regulations located/electronically communicated? All policies are
Kept in at least two different locations in each school. In addition, the policies are housed on the county website.

4. What educational gang awareness programs does your school system provide to students, staff, and volunteers?

- Some schools have researched the G.R.E.A.T. Program.
- School administrators and school deputies address the issues of gangs during faculty meetings.
- We work collaboratively with Worcester County Sheriff's Department to present information to the community.
- Our Administrators and Supervisors receive periodic training from law enforcement agencies.

5. In what ways do you feel your gang awareness programs were effective?

The gang awareness programs were effective because it prepares the staff to be proactive with identifying characteristics of gang related activity.

6. How were/are administrators and teachers trained to implement your gang policy/regulations?

- Administrators are formally trained every two to three years.
- We review our policies and practices on a monthly basis with school administration. As a result, we review this policy at least once per school year.

7. Is there a mechanism in place for community members to report gang activity involving school age youth to local schools? If so, please describe the procedure (data collection).

- Entered into a memo of understanding with the State Attorney's Office to foster coordination of current, and future gang prevention, intervention, and suppression efforts.
- Anyone having knowledge of alleged gangs, gang activity, similar destructive behavior, or illegal group behavior shall report it immediately to the principal/designee.
- A report of alleged gang-related activity, similar destructive, or illegal behavior is required using the Worcester County Public Schools Gang-related Incident Reporting Form.
- Initial reports may be given verbally or in writing. If a verbal report is given, a written report shall be requested and submitted using the WCPS Gang-related Incident Reporting Form.
- If a student, parent, guardian, or other person informs a school employee of any alleged gang-related activity, similar destructive or illegal group behaviors, the school employee shall report that information to the principal/designee.

- Reporting forms can be obtained from the principal/designee. The principal/designee shall maintain original alleged gang reports and related information in a secure file and shall not be part of student's educational record.
 - Retaliation against a student for making a report in good faith is prohibited. Individuals knowingly making a false report will be subject to a range of consequences under the WCPS Code of Conduct.
- 8. Do you feel that gang related issues and similar destructive or illegal behavior have increased, decreased, or remained the same as the previous school year?**
- Activity remained the same as the previous school year.
- 9. Optional: Please share any other thoughts, questions, or comments regarding gang activity, regulation, policies, or awareness programs in your Local education agency.**

N/A