I. Establishment of the Team(s)

The superintendent shall establish a threat assessment team or teams. In determining the number of threat assessment teams appropriate to a jurisdiction, the superintendent shall consider multiple factors, including, but not limited to: available resources, history of threats and behavioral risk within the jurisdiction, number of schools, demographics, and geography. Each school within a jurisdiction is not required to have its own assessment team. The assessment teams shall coordinate among school officials and law enforcement, mental health, and other appropriate entities to monitor and respond to information about behavior, statements, or plans that may pose a threat of violence at a school or a school function.

A particular threat assessment team may serve one or more schools as determined by the superintendent. A threat assessment team must include individuals with expertise in student counseling (e.g., a school counselor, a school psychologist and/or school social worker), education instruction (e.g., a teacher or administrator with instructional experience), school administration (e.g., a principal or other senior administrator from the school(s) covered by the team and human resources professionals), and law enforcement (typically a school resource officer). Although not required by statute, a best practice should include consulting with an individual with expertise in human resources, or other staff when applicable. Other school staff (or community resources) may serve as regular members on the team, or be consulted during the threat assessment process, as appropriate, and as determined by the statutorily required members of the assessment team. However, it is not recommended to have parents or students participate either directly or as consultants in the threat assessment process.

II. Structure of the Team(s)

Threat assessment team(s) should have a designated team leader, typically a principal for the school(s) team or senior administrator for the school system team. Team members shall work collaboratively with each other, with other school staff, and (as appropriate) with community resources to support the purposes of the team and the safety of the school and its students and staff. The threat assessment team leader may designate a subset of team members to triage cases reported to the team. All team members shall be trained to effectively triage cases. This triage process serves to screen cases and determine their appropriateness for review and/or action by the full team. If the team elects to implement a triage process, at least two members of the team will review initial reports of concern to determine if existing resources and mechanisms are sufficient to address those concerns, or whether the full team should further assess and manage the situation. All triaged cases must be shared with all members of the assessment team.

Unless it is not feasible to do so, all team members should be involved with the assessment and intervention of individuals whose behavior poses a threat to the safety of school staff or students. Team members shall actively, lawfully, and ethically communicate with each other; with school administrators; and with other school staff who have a need to know particular information to support the safety and well-being of the school, its students and its staff.

In fulfilling statutory responsibilities, threat assessment teams shall:

1. Provide guidance to students and staff regarding recognition of threatening behavior that may represent a threat by conducting presentations, broadly disseminating relevant information, and ensuring access to consultation from threat assessment teams;
2. Clearly identify members of the school community to whom threatening behavior should be reported;
3. Implement local school system policies in an effective manner for the assessment of and intervention with individuals whose behavior poses (or may pose) a threat to the safety of school staff or students, including (where appropriate) referrals to community services boards or health care providers for evaluation or treatment.
III. School System-Level Oversight Team

If established by the superintendent, a school system-level oversight team shall oversee and provide support for school threat assessment teams. The team shall include a senior school system administrator (e.g., Assistant Superintendent for Administration) and senior school system administrators in school safety, in student services and/or school-based mental health services, human resources, and other school system staff as needed. The school system-level oversight team may consult with local law enforcement, community mental health providers, and departments of social services as needed. The school system level oversight team shall provide oversight to school level threat assessment teams; maintain processes for effective information sharing between the school system and community mental health and law enforcement agencies; assess the effectiveness of the threat assessment process throughout the school system; and recommend changes to policies and procedures, as needed, to maintain an effective threat assessment process reflecting known best practices.

IV. Other Duties of Assessment Team

Each assessment team shall:

1. Provide guidance to students and staff regarding recognition of threatening behavior that may represent a threat to the community, school, or self;
2. Identify members of the school community to whom threatening behavior should be reported; and
3. Implement local school system policies for the assessment of and intervention with individuals whose behavior poses a threat to the safety of school staff or students.
4. In cases where determined to be appropriate, assessment teams shall follow established procedures for referrals for evaluation or treatment.
5. Regardless of threat assessment activities, disciplinary action and referral to law enforcement are to occur as required by local school system policies and regulations, the Maryland Code, and COMAR.