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The City of Fredericksburg Continues Focus on Community and School Safety in 2023-24 School Year

*Training, technology, and partnerships lead to enhanced safety throughout the
community and schools*

FREDERICKSBURG, VA — The City of Fredericksburg (the City) and Fredericksburg City Public Schools (FCPS) continue to place a priority on school safety and security as they plan for the 2023-24 school year. In an effort to keep safety as our top priority, a *Community Engagement Roadmap* has been jointly created by the City and FCPS. It addresses teen violence in our City and seeks to engage our whole community in support of the City's and FCPS' safety and prevention measures to help keep our youth and our community safe. This roadmap includes our joint efforts to share information about school safety measures and protocols implemented over the past two years, as well as plans to reestablish a multi-jurisdictional Regional Taskforce. A City of Fredericksburg Steering Committee on Teenage Violence is also being created. The roadmap includes plans to engage the community on discussion areas and progress and make resources and information available to families to help support our community-wide effort to reduce teen violence in Fredericksburg.

The current nationwide risk environment is elevated, as violence in our communities is rising. The City of Fredericksburg specifically is seeing an increased number of juveniles with access to firearms or possessing firearms. The City has experienced the murders of two of our young people, Jasiah Smith in March and Antione Fox in June of this year. The Fredericksburg Police Department has arrested two young men as suspects in the murder of Jasiah Smith, while the person or persons who murdered Antione Fox are still at large with the investigation into his murder remaining open at this time.

Our school division takes student safety very seriously. Last school year, the division implemented a variety of new and updated safety initiatives. This includes holding regular meetings with the Fredericksburg Police Department, the Fredericksburg Sheriff's Office, Emergency Services, and Fredericksburg Fire Department. A School Resource Officer was assigned to Walker-Grant Middle School, and a Safety and Operations Coordinator position was also introduced in FCPS.

The division has maintained strong partnerships with local law enforcement, City leadership, the Department of Social Services and other agencies, bolstering its safety and security efforts. In August

2022, all staff were trained by the Fredericksburg Police Department in how to respond in a crisis. In September 2022, FCPS held a Public Safety Forum in partnership with multiple local police and emergency services departments.

In the 2023-24 school year, FCPS will purchase and install weapons detection systems at entrances in James Monroe High School, the alternative education building (Original Walker-Grant) and Walker-Grant Middle School. 3M protective film will also be placed on all main entrance doors, safety vestibules, and office windows. Meetings and training, in partnership with the City's public safety and emergency services departments, will continue this school year as our teams keep student safety a top priority.

"We understand that recent community events involving teenagers and young adults with violence have caused a heightened level of concern," said Dr. Marceline Catlett, Superintendent. "With the opening of schools approaching, we want to assure the community that we will continue to plan for protecting our students and staff each day. Our top priority is maintaining a safe, secure, and welcoming learning environment throughout our schools."

The joint efforts to support City Schools' increasing safety measures and protocols, combined with our ongoing safety protocols touching every aspect of community relations, are a large part of the work that the City of Fredericksburg is doing to help address community safety. Additionally, the Fredericksburg Police Department has been working tirelessly to address crime in the City, as evidenced in their recent announcement of summer arrests, including multiple weapons charges. Our Fredericksburg Emergency Services teams have trained, and continue to train, on a variety of safety initiatives. And our Parks, Recreation and Events Department has worked hard to create safe parks and facilities, along with more engaging programs and ensuring safe public events are being held in our City parks.

"This Community Engagement Roadmap is some of the most important work we are doing in the City right now. Our youth, their safety and care, is of utmost importance, and we encourage everyone in our community to take ownership of these community efforts to reduce violence in our community, especially among our youth," states Tim Baroody, City Manager.

Please follow the City and FCPS websites and social media for ongoing updates:
City website: [Fredericksburgva.gov](https://fredericksburgva.gov) | Facebook: @FXBGgov | Instagram: @FXBGgov
Police website: [FXBGpolice.com](https://fxbgpolice.com) | Facebook: @FXBGPolice | Instagram: @FXBGpolice
FCPS website: [Fxbgschools.us](https://fxbgschools.us) | Facebook: @FredSchools | Instagram: @FredSchools

The investigation on the recent shooting is ongoing and the Fredericksburg Police Department asks anyone with information regarding this incident to call (540) 373-3122. To make an anonymous tip, send a text to "847-411" and text "FPDtip" followed by your tip. Or, download the free FPD Tip app available for Android and iPhones. To download the app, search "FPD Tip" in the Google or iTunes App Store.

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