

# **Bond Case Briefs**

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## **Schools are Vulnerable to Breaches – and Hackers Know It.**

**Schools face unique challenges in shoring up their cyber defenses. Just ask Baltimore County Public Schools. It suffered a successful attack in 2020, and while its cyber protection has improved, it still faces roadblocks.**

James Corns first got wind of a cybersecurity incident one evening in November 2020, when a live stream of the Baltimore County Board of Education was interrupted.

By 11 p.m. that night, after getting calls from staff across the Baltimore County Public Schools system about their laptops malfunctioning, Corns realized the school system faced a “full scale attack.”

An investigation later found that hackers had been in the school system’s networks for about two weeks, after what Corns, executive director of IT, described as an “operator error” let them in. It started when a staff member who received an Excel spreadsheet in an email was unable to access it and forwarded it to a contractor who could, opening the door to the attack.

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### **Route Fifty**

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