

# Maryland Public School Critical Life-Threatening Incident After-Action Summary Report

*This report has been compiled in response to a life-threatening incident that occurred on public school grounds. The report includes lessons learned and recommendations identified following a local review of the incident and is aimed at identifying ways to improve the safety of Maryland public schools.*

**MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY**  
Education Article § 7-1502(g)(21) (MSAR #11851)  
Education Article §7-1510(g)(3) (MSAR #11594)  
COMAR 14.40.05

**School Year: 2023-2024**

**Submitted: July 29, 2024**

# MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY

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July 29, 2024

The Honorable Wes Moore  
Governor  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Willam C. Ferguson IV  
President  
Senate of Maryland  
State House, H-107  
Annapolis, MD 201401

The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones  
Speaker  
House of Delegates  
State House, H-101  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Critical Life Threatening Incident Report required by Education Article § 7-1502(g)(21) (MSAR #11851) and Education Article §7-1510(g)(3) (MSAR #11594)

Dear Governor Moore, President Ferguson, and Speaker Jones:

Pursuant to Education Article § 7-1502(g)(21), Education Article §7-1510(g)(3), and State Government Article §2-1257, the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) respectfully submits the following report, which contains identified lessons learned and school safety recommendations following a critical life-threatening incident on public school grounds.

If you have any questions about this report or would like additional information, please contact MCSS Director of Program Management J. Dino Pignataro at [joseph.pignataro@maryland.gov](mailto:joseph.pignataro@maryland.gov) or 410-281-2335.

Sincerely,



Kate Bryan  
Executive Director



## Maryland Public School Critical Life-Threatening Incident After-Action Summary

On June 07, 2024, an incident occurred within Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), which met the criteria to be considered a *Critical Life-Threatening Incident* pursuant to Md. Ed. Art. § 7-1510 (g) and COMAR 14.40.05.

### **Notification** [COMAR 14.40.05.04A]

On June 07, 2024, MCPS staff notified the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) of the incident.

### **After-Action Meeting** [COMAR 14.40.05.04B]

On July 03, 2024, an after-action meeting was held involving school representatives and a representative from MCSS.

### **After-Action Report** [COMAR 14.40.05.04C]

On July 08, 2024, MCPS submitted an after-action report to MCSS.

### **Lessons Learned**

Based upon the after-action review led by MCPS, the following lessons learned were identified by individuals participating in the after-action meeting:

1. Communication with parents, first responders and school staff was clear, prompt and effective.
2. Following evacuation, approximately 75% of students did not return to class and left school for the rest of the day. Several factors contributed to this:
  - The incident occurred the Friday before the end of the school year at lunchtime;
  - Some teachers and staff were not directly supervising students during the evacuation as protocol dictates;
  - Parents instructed their students to leave early; and
  - Several evacuation locations were in the student parking area, providing students access to their vehicles to leave school, creating a safety hazard.



To address these factors in the future, schools should review proper evacuation protocol with staff, students, and parents each school year.

## School Safety Recommendations

1. This incident underscores the importance of regular training on school emergency plans and procedures, not only for school staff but also for the entire school community including first responders and parents. Not only is there value in having a well-thought-out emergency plan in place, but also in familiarizing staff, students and parents with response procedures through regular training as well as frequent drills. Such preparedness efforts ensure that students and staff will be prepared to follow procedures in times of crisis.
2. It is critical for schools to have plans in place and to test those plans for various times throughout the school day, including school opening, class transitions, lunch periods, and specialized activities (e.g., field trips). By practicing drills across the school day and at various times, schools can ensure all staff and students are comfortable and familiar with emergency procedures, leading to coordinated and efficient response during a crisis.
3. Conducting an after-action review of this real-world incident allowed school staff and responders to review their response decisions and actions. This review helped those involved identify areas of success, areas for improvement, and specific corrective actions that should improve future responses. Such an after-action review process should be a part of emergency plans for all local education agencies. Issues identified in drills and actual events, such as traffic conflicts with evacuation points, should then be used to update emergency plans.