

# MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY

December 22, 2022

The Honorable Larry Hogan  
Governor  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable William C. Ferguson IV  
President  
Senate of Maryland  
State House, H-107  
Annapolis, MD 21401

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 Hogan, 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 Deputy Director, J. Dino Pignataro at [joseph.pignataro@maryland.gov](mailto:joseph.pignataro@maryland.gov) or 410-281-2335.

Sincerely,



Kate Hession  
Executive Director



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

On August 21, 2022 there was an incident of a reported threat involving a school within Allegany County Public Schools (ACPS) that 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 August 22, 2022, the ACPS School Security Coordinator (SSC) notified the Maryland Center for School Safety of the incident.

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

On September 16, 2022, an after-action meeting was held involving school representatives, law enforcement, and a representative from MCSS.

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

On September 19, 2022, ACPS submitted an after-action report to MCSS.

## **Lessons Learned**

Of note, this event occurred prior to the start of the 2022-2023 school year when students and staff were not yet in school.

Based upon the after-action review led by the ACPS, the following lessons learned were identified by the ACPS after-action review team:

1. The Cumberland Police Department were the recipients of the information and conducted the investigation through direct contact with the student and caregiver. Cumberland Police notified ACPS officials and worked in collaboration with the ACPS School Safety Coordinator.
2. Initial communication between law enforcement and ACPS occurred; however once the student was taken into custody and transported for an Emergency Petition, no updates on the location of the individual were available. A plan for how the student would safely engage with school upon her return home was developed by an ACPS Pupil Personnel Worker (PPW). All involved school personnel were not fully aware of the plan developed by the PPW to start the school year creating some confusion.

3. Communication among involved parties further broke down because of the timing of the event. Since this occurred prior to the start of the school year, the SRO was still assigned to a patrol shift and was not working at the time the incident happened. The case was handled without the knowledge of the SRO and the SRO was not made aware of the incident until later. It was determined by the after action review team that the School Resource Officer (SRO) from a student's previous school year would be the most effective way to relay critical information to school and system level leaders. This individual would be most likely aware of a student and any relevant historical information to inform the investigation.

### **School Safety Recommendations**

1. Seek to improve communication between law enforcement, the school system, health care providers, and the parent/guardian regarding the immediate location of the student to prevent the student from returning to school unannounced. Involving the ACPS Director of Students Services and/or Behavioral Health Coordinator, each a system level administrator, would ensure that the correct school level administrators are made aware of a situation so as to engage the appropriate resources and supports.
2. When investigating threats during periods of time that school is not in session it is advantageous for local law enforcement agencies to conduct investigations with the SRO or other school based safety official. Involving the school based official in the initial threat investigation allows for the sharing of pertinent information and facilitates communication between involved partners that may be more difficult to contact during that time.