

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 or 410-281-2335.

Sincerely,



Kate Hession
Executive Director



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

On August 18, 2022, there was an incident of a reported threat involving a school within Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) 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 18, 2022, the FCPS School Security Coordinator (SSC) notified the Maryland Center for School Safety of the incident.

After-Action Meeting [COMAR 14.40.05.04B]

On September 12, 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 26, 2022, FCPS submitted an after-action report to MCSS.

Lessons Learned

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

1. Use of the term “Hold” is fairly new to school personnel and may have led to uncertain response by students and staff. Having identified that miscommunication occurred school administrators reviewed Standard Response Protocols with students and staff and conducted a “safety week” during which the school performed multiple emergency drills.
2. The school hallways were named for streets and labeled as such on the security cameras. This caused confusion among staff as they do not generally reference the hallways in this manner and were unable to effectively communicate and locate desired footage. It was determined that the security cameras will be relabeled using location based names (gym area, cafeteria, grade level hall, art hall, etc.).

3. Communication protocols were utilized effectively. School and system leaders quickly coordinated efforts allowing for appropriate resources and support to be utilized. School leaders and first responders worked together to quickly respond and investigate the alleged concern allowing for minimal disruption to the school day and minimal concern by staff, students and caregivers. Responding deputies parked in the rear of the building and the Deputy assisting with the investigation was familiar to students allowing for the rapid sharing of information.
4. The school identified the need for additional portable radios to communicate with various building personnel and has made this purchase. Additionally, the school and system also acknowledged the need to make upgrades to the school's Public Address (PA) system to ensure adequate coverage and volume inside and outside of the school.
5. School and system leaders acknowledged the need to ensure that the command center location inside of the school building had the capacity to host multiple responding agencies.

School Safety Recommendations

1. System and school leaders should assess the working condition of all communication systems over the course of the summer to identify and address needs prior to the start of school.
2. Conducting a tabletop exercise with personnel and first responders before the start of the school year is a method that can serve several purposes and assist in identifying and addressing potential problem areas before an emergency event occurs.
3. Training of standard response protocol (SRP) terms should occur multiple times for staff, students, caregivers and first responders throughout the school year with a particularly heavy emphasis to start the new school year. Visual representation of the SRP terms should be posted throughout the school building, the local education agency's central office buildings and other school related public facilities. Visuals help to continuously reinforce and expand awareness and knowledge.