

MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY

February 3, 2023

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 Bryan
Executive Director



Maryland Public School

Critical Life-Threatening Incident

After-Action Summary

On October 19, 2022, there was an incident of a reported threat involving a school within St. Mary's County Public School System (SMCPS) 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 November 21, 2022, the SMCPS School Security Coordinator (SSC) notified the Maryland Center for School Safety of the incident.

After-Action Meeting [COMAR 14.40.05.04B]

On December 14, 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 January 9, 2023, SMCPS submitted an after-action report to MCSS.

Lessons Learned

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

1. School system emergency management standard operating procedures should be clear on how the school will address threats against the school or community, regardless of how the threat is made or its nature. Sharing these procedures and the methods used to investigate threats of violence against schools with students and parents in advance and separate from any specific event may alleviate fears and reduce confusion.
2. When students and families promptly notify school officials of threats of violence against a school or student(s) it allows school officials and law enforcement agencies to respond quickly to mitigate the occurrence of an event through a coordinated investigation.
3. The system level behavior threat assessment team and school personnel's prior training, knowledge, and experience with the behavior threat

assessment process allowed for a rapid response and completion of a thorough assessment, determination, and appropriate steps taken to ensure school safety.

4. The nature of investigating and addressing online threats and school safety concerns differ from threats and concerns that occur person to person and within the school building (i.e., notes, verbal statements, writing on a surface). School staff and law enforcement officials must develop and become familiar with response to online threat procedures to ensure an effective response.

School Safety Recommendations

1. Md. Ed. Art. §7-1507(c) requires school systems to adopt a behavioral threat assessment team policy and procedures, which are consistent with the [State model policy](#). School systems and law enforcement agencies should teach and rehearse behavioral threat assessment procedures with a frequency that ensures effective implementation to determine and mitigate threats to the school community.
2. Threat reporting and communication protocols, which allow rapid notification to critical staff and law enforcement, should be tested regularly to ensure designated individuals know how to respond. Schools should participate with law enforcement in regularly scheduled discussion-based exercises designed to test their response to school threats, both from online and direct sources.
3. Maryland schools and school systems should continuously encourage students to immediately report school safety concerns to a trusted adult or through an electronic reporting system.