

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. It includes lessons learned and recommendations identified following a local review of the incident and aims to identify ways to improve the safety of Maryland public schools.

MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY

Education Article § 7-1502(g)(21)

Education Article §7-1510(g)

COMAR 14.40.05.04

School Year: 2024-2025

Submitted: January 13, 2025

MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY

- 2 -

January 13, 2025

The Honorable Wes Moore
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), Education Article §7-1510(g) (MSAR #11594), and COMAR § 14.40.05.04 (MSAR #15583).

Dear Governor Moore, President Ferguson, and Speaker Jones:

Pursuant to Education Article § 7-1502(g)(21), Education Article §7-1510(g), and State Government Article §2-1257, and COMAR § 14.40.05.04, 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 Joseph 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 September 12, 2024, an incident occurred within Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) that met the criteria for being 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 September 12, 2024, BCPS staff notified the Maryland Center for School Safety of the incident.

After-Action Meeting [COMAR 14.40.05.04B]

On September 16, 2024, an after-action meeting was held involving school representatives and a representative from MCSS.

After-Action Report [COMAR 14.40.05.04C]

On September 17, 2024, BCPS submitted an after-action report to MCSS.

Lessons Learned

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

1. Understanding and utilizing the school's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) is crucial. In this instance, the administration and law enforcement effectively coordinated their response by consulting the EOP, which ultimately led to the decision to implement a lockdown¹.
2. BCPS understands the importance of investigating every tip and social media post to the fullest extent. With resources in place to work with social media platforms, law enforcement can quickly identify individuals sharing threats and eliminate the anonymity of students sharing threats.

¹ A lockdown in BCPS secures the perimeter (doors and windows) of a building to minimize exposure to a safety threat **outside**, such as criminal activity in the area.

School Safety Recommendations

1. Schools should cultivate and sustain strong collaborative relationships with first responders, including police, fire, and emergency medical services (EMS), through regular communication and joint training exercises.²
2. In accordance with [new guidance](#) from MCSS, schools should conduct state-mandated³ lockdown drills, where students and staff are taught school procedures for responding to incidents that require common terminology. Terminology could include standard response protocol terms from the I Love U Guys⁴ program: hold, secure, lockdown, evacuate, shelter. Conducting regular drills throughout the school year helps to create muscle memory, providing students and staff with the security knowledge needed to react quickly in an emergency.
3. The significant rise in anonymous online threats directed at schools in recent years necessitates a critical reassessment and enhancement of school EOPs. To effectively address this growing challenge, EOPs must include a dedicated annex specifically outlining policies and procedures for handling such incidents.
4. In today's increasingly interconnected world, cultivating responsible digital citizenship is paramount for students. Schools play a crucial role in equipping young people with the knowledge and skills to navigate the digital landscape safely and ethically. To this end, schools should prioritize comprehensive digital citizenship education for students of all ages.

² K-12 Anonymized Threat Response Guidance

<https://www.cisa.gov/resources-tools/resources/k-12-anonymized-threat-response-guidance>

³ <https://dsd.maryland.gov/regulations/Pages/13A.02.02.04.aspx>

⁴ <https://iloveguys.org/The-Standard-Response-Protocol.html>

