

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)

Education Article §7-1510(g)

COMAR 14.40.05.04

School Year: 2024-2025

Submitted: November 12, 2024

MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY

- 2 -

November 12, 2024

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 Hogan, 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 17, 2024, an incident occurred within Carroll County Public Schools (CCPS) 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 17, 2024, CCPS staff notified the Maryland Center for School Safety of the incident.

After-Action Meeting [COMAR 14.40.05.04B]

On October 01, 2024, an after-action meeting was held involving school representatives and a representative from MCSS.

After-Action Report [COMAR 14.40.05.04C]

On October 02, 2024, CCPS submitted an after-action report to MCSS.

Lessons Learned

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

1. Swift communication and coordinated actions between law enforcement agencies and school officials were instrumental in mitigating the impact of this incident. The exchange of information and immediate response efforts prevented the threat from escalating and affecting the entire school or community. Specifically, the rapid mobilization of federal and local law enforcement agencies played a critical role in containing the situation and limited the spread of misinformation and rumors that often accompany such incidents.
2. Searches of students, while sometimes necessary for safety, should always be conducted in private areas, away from the view of other students and staff. Prioritizing a student's dignity and privacy by performing searches in a discreet



setting helps to minimize potential embarrassment and maintain a positive school environment.

3. Incidents, even minor ones, can spark concern and curiosity within the school community. To alleviate these concerns and foster trust, schools should proactively communicate with parents and guardians, even when incidents aren't widely publicized. Transparent and timely communication can help dispel rumors and ensure that the school community is well-informed.

School Safety Recommendations

1. School systems should collaborate with local law enforcement agencies to ensure that their Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) aligns with the guidelines outlined in [COMAR 13A.08.01.12](#). This regulation emphasizes the importance of conducting arrests and related searches in a manner that minimizes disruption to the school environment and protects student privacy. Specifically, such actions should be carried out in private areas, away from the view of other students and staff, whenever feasible.
2. Physical arrests in school witnessed by staff and students can generate questions and emotional responses from staff and students who witness them. Timely communication with the staff, students, and parents of involved students can help reduce the need for further questions and anxiety among parents and the community.
3. Schools and parents must work together to educate students about the severe consequences of making false threats to a school. These threats disrupt learning environments, cause fear and anxiety among students and staff, and can lead to criminal charges and other serious penalties. Open and honest conversations between schools, parents, and students can help prevent these harmful actions and promote a safe and supportive learning environment for all.

