

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 4, 2024 there was an incident 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 September 26, 2024 the ACPS staff notified the Maryland Center for School Safety of the incident.

After-Action Meeting [COMAR 14.40.05.04B]

On September 26, 2024 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 December 2, 2024 ACPS submitted an after-action report to MCSS.

Lessons Learned

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

1. Building strong, trusting relationships with students is paramount for creating a safe and supportive learning environment. These positive relationships foster open communication and encourage students to feel comfortable reporting concerns. In this instance, students felt confident enough to disclose the issue after school hours, enabling school administrators to promptly contact the suspect's parents. This proactive intervention allowed administrators to advise the parents to keep their child at home, preventing the potential escalation of the situation and ensuring the safety of all students on campus.
2. The collaborative investigation between the local education agency and School Resource Officers (SROs) proved instrumental in achieving a successful outcome. By combining their expertise and resources, they conducted a comprehensive and impartial examination of the incident. Open communication and seamless information sharing between educators and law enforcement facilitated a timely



and efficient investigation, ultimately contributing to a positive resolution and a safer learning environment for all.

3. School Administrators took the time to properly investigate the incident, which revealed information that may not have been identified in a quick investigation. A thorough and timely investigation is paramount to ensure a complete understanding of the incident and its subsequent proper disposition.

School Safety Recommendations

1. This incident emphasizes the importance of students reporting incidents of concern to school administrators and school resource officers (SROs). Additionally, school communities have access to Safe Schools Maryland¹, which provides a mechanism to report school safety concerns.
2. School administrators must properly investigate incidents and use information gathered to prevent further incidents. The investigative process requires diligent effort to gather all relevant information, analyze evidence, and identify all contributing factors. A comprehensive investigation allows for appropriate corrective actions to be implemented, prevents future similar occurrences, and provides valuable lessons learned for continuous improvement in safety and operational procedures.
3. 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
4. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) must ensure effective and timely communication of critical information between schools to prevent similar issues from occurring elsewhere.
5. The significant rise in anonymous online threats directed at schools in recent years necessitates a critical reassessment and enhancement of school emergency operations plans (EOPs). To effectively address this growing challenge, EOPs must include a dedicated annex specifically outlining policies and procedures for handling such incidents.

¹ [Safe Schools Maryland](#) is an anonymous and free reporting system available to students, teachers, school staff members, parents, and the general public to report any school or student safety concerns, including mental health concerns.

² K-12 Anonymized Threat Response Guidance
<https://www.cisa.gov/resources-tools/resources/k-12-anonymized-threat-response-guidance>

