

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: April 24, 2025

MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY

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April 24, 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 January 22, 2025 there was an incident 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 January 24, 2025, the FCPS staff notified the Maryland Center for School Safety of the incident.

After-Action Meeting [COMAR 14.40.05.04B]

On March 5, 2025, 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 March 6, 2025, FCPS submitted an after-action report to MCSS.

Lessons Learned

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

1. The most effective response is a staged approach that prioritizes immediate safety, contains the situation, and expands focus as appropriate. This tiered response begins with ensuring student and staff safety and providing immediate medical attention. Next, the incident is contained to prevent escalation and secure the area. Finally, the response expands to include a thorough investigation, stakeholder communication, and a return to normal operations.
2. Implementing a "Hold" means securing the designated area, in this case the hallway, to restrict access and prevent scene disturbance. This security measure allows SRO and other personnel to conduct initial investigations, document the scene and collect evidence without interference. Schools should utilize a "Hold" in the affected area to protect the area and aid in evidence collection.



School Safety Recommendations

1. To address staffing shortages during emergencies, schools should develop comprehensive protocols that include cross-training staff members in various emergency response functions. This approach ensures that multiple individuals are equipped to handle critical tasks, such as first aid, communication, and evacuation procedures. By diversifying staff skill sets, schools can create a more resilient emergency response team capable of adapting to unexpected absences or staff shortages.

Furthermore, these protocols should encompass strategies for reassigning staff members to cover essential roles during emergencies. This may involve temporarily shifting responsibilities, utilizing substitute teachers or support staff, or calling upon trained volunteers from the school community. With a flexible staffing plan in place, schools can maintain a baseline level of emergency response capability, even in the face of unforeseen staffing challenges.

2. The "I Love U Guys" Standard Response Protocol (SRP)¹ offers a consistent and easily understood framework for schools to manage various safety situations. The SRP's strength lies in its simplicity, utilizing concise directives like "Hold," "Secure," "Lockdown," "Evacuate," and "Shelter" which provide clear actions for staff, students, and responders. This clarity reduces confusion and hesitation during critical moments, enabling quicker and more effective responses to threats. By providing a common language and set of procedures, the SRP streamlines communication and coordination, both within the school and between the school and external agencies such as law enforcement and emergency services.

Recommending a common protocol like the SRP statewide offers significant advantages in enhancing school safety and emergency preparedness. Statewide adoption would establish a uniform approach to safety across all schools, ensuring that students, staff, and families can easily understand and adapt to safety procedures regardless of location. This consistency is especially crucial during inter-district events or when students transfer between schools. Furthermore, a statewide protocol facilitates more efficient training for staff and emergency responders and improves interoperability between different agencies, ultimately leading to a more coordinated and effective response to emergencies.

¹ <https://iloveuguy.org/The-Standard-Response-Protocol.html>