

# **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: June 02, 2025**

# MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY

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June 02, 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](mailto:joseph.pignataro@maryland.gov) or 410-281-2335.

Sincerely,



Kate Bryan  
Executive Director



## Maryland Public School Critical Life-Threatening Incident After-Action Summary

On March 17, 2025, an incident occurred within Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) 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 March 17, 2025, the MCPS staff notified the Maryland Center for School Safety of the incident.

### **After-Action Meeting** [COMAR 14.40.05.04B]

On April 29, 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 April 30, 2025, MCPS submitted an after-action report to MCSS.

### **Lessons Learned**

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

1. In response to a threat made to the school, school staff properly followed their response procedures by initiating a *shelter-in-place* and immediately contacting 9-1-1. Students and staff outside the building were brought inside and exterior doors were locked. This immediate and appropriate action is critical for minimizing exposure to potential threats and securing the building, buying precious time for first responders to arrive and assess the situation. These swift measures are foundational to protecting lives during an emergency.
2. Effective and practiced operational communication and coordination among school system leadership, school security and emergency management teams, and local law enforcement are necessary in response to school emergencies. Additionally, schools providing timely updates to families throughout the day, followed by detailed communication at the conclusion of the incident, helps reduce



panic, build trust, and empower individuals to take appropriate action during and following an emergency. These multi-faceted communication strategies are vital for maintaining calm and fostering community resilience during times of crisis.

## School Safety Recommendations

1. While school staff followed their emergency procedures and took quick action to initiate a shelter-in-place, having three distinct shelter-in-place protocols with differing actions introduces the potential for incorrect staff responses. Therefore, MCSS recommends schools and school systems implement the nationally recognized Standard Response Protocol (SRP) from the [“I Love U Guys” Foundation](#). This system utilizes distinct, standardized vocabulary (e.g., Hold, Secure, Lockdown, Evacuate, and Shelter), allowing everyone involved, both within and outside the school community, to clearly understand the actions a school is taking during an emergency. Additionally, shared language and protocols create a more predictable incident scene, facilitating clear communication and coordinated action among responding agencies. Finally, staff need to be trained on each protocol and its applicable situations, followed by regular practice as part of a comprehensive emergency preparedness training and exercise plan.
2. Given the increasing prevalence of anonymous threats directed at schools, it is crucial for school systems, law enforcement agencies, telecommunication providers, and social media companies to proactively establish strong relationships and establish clear procedures for rapidly tracing the origins of threats. This collaboration is essential for enabling schools and law enforcement to quickly triage and assess the credibility of threats, thus making informed decisions regarding emergency responses and mitigating potential impact on students, staff, and the school community. This integrated approach is paramount for transforming ambiguous threats into actionable intelligence, thereby fostering safer and more secure learning environments.
3. Threat reporting and communication protocols, which allow rapid notification to critical staff, law enforcement, and parents, should be regularly tested to ensure designated individuals know how to respond effectively. Schools should collaborate with law enforcement in regularly scheduled discussion- and operations-based exercises designed to test coordinated response to school threats, whether they originate online or directly. Providing rapid and consistently updated communication to stakeholders, especially parents, can significantly lessen the impact and anxiety these events often cause.

