

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

This report, compiled in response to a life-threatening incident on public school grounds, details lessons learned and recommendations gathered from a local review to enhance 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: 2025-2026

Submitted: November 12, 2025

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November 12, 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 11, 2025 there was an incident within Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) 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 11, 2025 MCPS staff notified the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) of the incident.

After-Action Meeting [COMAR 14.40.05.04B]

On September 24, 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 September 24, 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. When a neighboring educational institution, public or private, detects a potential hazard or criminal activity near another campus, timely notification to a neighboring school can serve as immediate, actionable information. Establishing and utilizing these communication channels among school leadership teams eliminates delays, allowing the recipient school to quickly initiate standardized response protocols.
2. School systems must be prepared for the challenge of managing confusion when two incidents occur simultaneously. Systems must establish clear protocols for distinguishing between and managing multiple concurrent emergencies.



3. School leadership demonstrated success by responding quickly and initiating the "Secure" status within minutes of the initial report. The school then successfully transitioned to a "Lockdown" status, which responding officers praised as effectively executed. This reinforces the value of training, drilling, and implementing standardized, action-based response protocols.
4. The incident caused significant stress and trauma for both staff and students. The potential presence of a weapon created a high-tension environment, and the subsequent response and management of the situation further contributed to the emotional distress experienced by everyone involved.
5. The incomplete documentation provided to MCPS impacted their internal reporting processes, making it challenging to finalize the necessary reports in a timely manner.

School Safety Recommendations

1. Schools should establish and formalize direct, rapid communication protocols with all neighboring public and private educational institutions. These protocols must create immediate, verified channels so that upon detecting a hazard, the adjacent school is quickly and directly notified. Sharing information allows neighboring schools and shared emergency response personnel to coordinate their response. Schools in close proximity should also train and exercise with their local responders together for a more cohesive coordinated effort.
2. Schools should adopt the "I Love U Guys" Standard Response Protocol (SRP),¹ which uses five specific, action-based terms: Hold, Secure, Lockdown, Evacuate, and Shelter. These protocols provide consistent, clear, standardized language among students, staff, and first responders, making the response to an incident more predictable.

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

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3. Critical incidents can change in severity and location. Therefore, it is crucial to develop adaptable emergency plans and functional annexes, and to practice transitions between response protocols during drills and exercises that address changing situations. It is for this reason that more complex situations of this nature are frequently the scenarios chosen for the MCSS State-wide Tabletop Exercises, which are available to all Maryland schools.²
4. Local education agencies must provide schools with recovery resources and staff trained to respond to and assist staff and students who have experienced trauma and stress following emergency responses. Additional resources are also available from the [Maryland School Mental Health Response Program \(MD-SMHRP\)](#).
5. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between police departments and local education agencies should clearly define the documentation and reporting requirements for both parties in emergency situations. This ensures that all necessary information is collected and shared.

² The statewide TTXs are school-based events that can be conducted across Maryland schools to test emergency preparedness. Public and private schools have the unique opportunity to uncover specialized needs, resource gaps, and areas for improvement within their emergency preparedness plans. The statewide TTXs have provided valuable insights into how to support schools at the state level, ensuring a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to school safety. <https://schoolsafety.maryland.gov/Pages/RES-Training-SWE.aspx>

