

# **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: December 2, 2025**

# MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY

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December 2, 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 September 03, 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 04, 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 MCPS held an after-action meeting involving school representatives, law enforcement, and a representative from MCSS.

### **After-Action Report** [COMAR 14.40.05.04C]

On November 4, 2025 MCPS submitted an after-action report to MCSS.

### **Lessons Learned**

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

1. Communication to parents was delayed due to a temporary system failure and unclear expectations regarding which office should issue the first alert during a 'Lockdown'. The delay in messaging to families contributed to confusion. MCPS has addressed the technical failure and provided clearer countywide expectations to ensure that the Central Office sends the first message in similar emergencies.
2. MCPS arranged mental health supports for students and staff following this incident, reinforcing their commitment of support for those impacted by high-stress incidents.
3. The security protocols were challenged by the early arrival of some parents before the school perimeter was fully secured, which complicated lockdown procedures. Additionally, the incident, occurring near dismissal, coincided with the arrival of school buses. These events underscore the need to reinforce perimeter security procedures and ensure comprehensive communication protocols are in place for both parents and the transportation department during emergency events.



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4. The inconsistency in applying the 'Secure' action across neighboring MCPS schools, despite both being notified of the threat, underscores the critical need to strengthen and consistently reinforce clear emergency protocols and communication training for all school staff.

## School Safety Recommendations

1. Schools should establish and formalize direct, rapid communication protocols with all families, neighboring educational institutions (public and private), and affected off-site personnel, such as transportation staff. These protocols must utilize immediate, verified channels to ensure that upon detecting a potential threat, all affected parties are quickly and directly notified. Sharing this information enables the coordinated deployment of resources and a more cohesive, safe response. Furthermore, neighboring schools and transportation staff should participate in joint training and exercises with local first responders to foster inter-agency coordination.
2. Local education agencies must provide schools with dedicated recovery resources and personnel trained to address and support students and staff experiencing trauma and stress following incidents. Schools are further encouraged to leverage supplementary resources and timely consultation available through the Maryland School Mental Health Response Program (MD-SMHRP).<sup>1</sup>
3. Schools adopting the “I Love U Guys” Foundation Standard Response Protocol (SRP)<sup>2</sup> should continue to reinforce the standardization of responses based on the nature of threats and emergencies. This establishes a common language that makes the response to an incident more predictable, ensuring that everyone understands the actions to take in emergencies. This is achieved through consistent training, drills, and exercises that also incorporate transitioning from one protocol to another when situations change, such as from a “Lockdown” to a “Hold”. While in ‘Lockdown’ status, it is important that each classroom and school space be released or transitioned out of ‘Lockdown’ by school personnel or law enforcement, rather than using a public address system.
4. Drills and exercises are a key element in emergency preparedness that test school capabilities and enhance community resilience. They reinforce emergency plans and procedures for school and security staff by clarifying crucial roles such as establishing and maintaining the security perimeter during a ‘Lockdown’ or ‘Secure’ action. These activities also prepare staff for their responsibilities when local law enforcement sweeps the building. Consistent practice helps develop the muscle memory and confidence needed to execute specific, decisive actions effectively during a real-world emergency.

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<sup>1</sup> The Maryland School Mental Health Response Program (MD-SMHRP) provides consultation, training, and support to school systems to address student and family mental health concerns, aiming to support and enhance the work of existing site-based student services personnel. This comprehensive program utilizes a dedicated team, partnerships, and a learning community focused on topics like substance use, discipline, crisis management, and equitable practices.

<https://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/DSFSS/MentalHealth/index.aspx>.

<sup>2</sup> The “I Love U Guys” Foundation SRP is an easy-to-understand, action-based system using five core directives (Hold, Secure, Lockdown, Evacuate, Shelter) to provide a uniform and flexible response for everyone—from students to first responders—to various safety threats or incidents. Its simple vocabulary ensures all stakeholders share a common understanding and consistent approach for rapid and predictable action. <https://iloveu guys.org/The-Standard-Response-Protocol.html>

