

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: January 8, 2026

MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY

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January 8, 2026

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 Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk
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



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

On September 25, 2025 there was an incident within Garrett County Public Schools (GCPS) 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 October 6, 2025 the GCPS staff notified the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) of the incident.

After-Action Meeting [COMAR 14.40.05.04B]

On October 14, 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 December 19, 2025 GCPS submitted an after-action report to MCSS.

Lessons Learned

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

1. Effective communication between schools and law enforcement is not merely beneficial but absolutely crucial for ensuring the rapid and effective investigation of incidents that impact the school community. A robust communication protocol supports partnership between school administrators, staff, and School Resource Officers (SROs) or other local law enforcement agencies. The primary benefit of rapid notification is the initiation of a timely investigation. When school officials immediately alert law enforcement to an incident, it allows an SRO or responding officer to arrive on the scene quickly, assess the situation, and commence the investigative process while the situation is still fresh.
2. To ensure the utmost discretion and minimize unnecessary speculation or gossip within the school community, the initial meetings involving the student, their



parents or guardians, and relevant school staff members should be purposefully scheduled and conducted offsite. This deliberate decision to meet away from the school campus serves a crucial function in maintaining confidentiality and creating a neutral, less public environment for these sensitive discussions. Furthermore, utilizing a neutral, private location can help foster a more open and comfortable dialogue among all parties, promoting a more constructive and effective start to addressing the matter at hand.

School Safety Recommendations

1. To proactively address and significantly reduce the occurrence of conflict, a strong emphasis should be placed on fostering a culture of school-led conflict resolution discussions. These discussions must serve as dynamic forums focused on effective problem-solving strategies. By making these discussions central to the school environment, students are equipped with the necessary social and emotional skills to navigate complex interpersonal situations constructively, thereby minimizing the frequency and severity of behavioral incidents, fostering a more positive and supportive learning environment.

