

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 23, 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 and swift communication between schools and law enforcement is essential for the rapid investigation of incidents affecting the school community. Establishing a strong communication protocol fosters a vital partnership among school administrators, staff, and School Resource Officers (SROs) or local law enforcement agencies. This rapid notification system's chief advantage is the ability to launch a timely investigation. Immediate alerts from school officials enable SROs or responding officers to arrive quickly, evaluate the situation, and begin the investigative process while the details are fresh in everyone's mind.
2. When an individual makes a threat or engages in concerning communications or behaviors that suggest the likelihood of a threatening situation, the local Behavioral Threat Assessment (BTA) Policy shall be followed. The overarching goal of the threat



assessment process is to engage in a non-adversarial, holistic analysis providing interventions and support where needed while maintaining a safe school Environment. Time is of the essence when a report of threatening or concerning behavior is received. When a threat is reported, the school administrator or threat assessment team leader shall initiate an initial inquiry/triage with at least one other member of the threat assessment team.

School Safety Recommendations

1. School systems should prioritize updating their training protocols related to the BTA process. This updated training is essential for ensuring all school personnel involved in the decision-making and implementation phases are fully informed about the latest procedures, best practices, and legal requirements for conducting effective and equitable threat assessments. Training for BTA teams must be comprehensive, ensuring that all members are fully aware of their lawful requirements and responsibilities. This training should clearly delineate the specific roles and expected collaborations among school administrators, law enforcement personnel, and mental health service providers. The goal is to establish a cohesive, legally compliant, and effective process for identifying, assessing, and managing potential threats to the school community.
2. To ensure that all personnel are prepared for emergency situations, school systems should commit to yearly reviews of emergency plans, the Incident Command System (ICS), and BTA policies. This annual review is particularly critical for all new employees, serving as a foundational element of their onboarding and ensuring they possess a clear understanding of the established protocols for managing emergencies and assessing potential threats within the school environment. Consistent and comprehensive training on these critical elements is essential for maintaining a unified, effective, and safe response to any school-based incident.

