

Maryland Public School Critical Life-Threatening Incident After-Action Summary Final 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: March 26, 2026

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March 26, 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
Executive Director



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

On October 09, 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 October 09, 2025 the MCPS staff notified the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) of the incident.

After-Action Meeting [COMAR 14.40.05.04B]

On December 17, 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 17, 2025 MCPS submitted an initial (preliminary) after-action report to MCSS. On February 17, 2025 MCPS submitted an addendum to the after-action report.

Lessons Learned

Following the accident review investigation by Montgomery County Police (MCP) and the after-action review led by MCPS, the following lessons learned were identified by individuals participating in the after-action meeting:

1. Comprehensive and continuous training for school bus operators is vital for ensuring student and community safety. Regular review of intersection safety, crosswalk vigilance, and post-collision procedures ensures that drivers are prepared to navigate high-traffic pedestrian areas and manage emergency scenes effectively until first responders arrive.
2. Critical incidents occurring on or near school grounds, particularly during highly vulnerable periods like dismissal, have a profound and lasting impact on the school community. Recognizing that recovery begins the moment an incident occurs highlights the necessity of immediate and sustained mental health and trauma support for both students and staff.



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3. Ongoing interagency coordination with local partners is essential to maintain and improve pedestrian safety. Collaborating consistently with county or municipal officials helps ensure that school zones are properly evaluated and that traffic and pedestrian safety measures are effectively applied around campuses.

School Safety Recommendations

1. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) should ensure that all school bus operators, whether contracted or direct employees, receive comprehensive annual training on safe bus operations. This training must emphasize safety around school zones, intersections, crosswalks, pedestrians, and cyclists. Furthermore, training should clearly outline post-collision procedures, LEA expectations during and after an emergency, and specific strategies to limit trauma to students on the bus.
2. School systems must be prepared to provide robust, immediate, and long-term support from crisis counselors to address trauma following a critical incident. Because recovery from a critical incident begins at the time it occurs, schools should have established protocols and resources readily available to support the mental and emotional health needs of students, staff, and the broader community impacted by the event.
3. LEAs should actively partner with external agencies and community organizations to promote and educate the public on safe travel within school zones. Collaborative educational campaigns targeting the larger community, as well as students and staff, are critical to reinforcing safe driving, walking, and biking practices in and around school campuses.

