

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

This report details lessons learned and recommendations from the local review of a critical life-threatening incident, aimed at enhancing 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: April 3, 2026

MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY

- 2 -

April 3, 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 Pena-Melnyk:

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 February 04, 2026 there was an incident within Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) that met *Critical Life-Threatening Incident* criteria pursuant to Md. Ed. Art. § 7-1510 (g) and COMAR 14.40.05.

Notification [COMAR 14.40.05.04A]

On February 04, 2026 the AACPS staff notified the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) of the incident.

After-Action Meeting [COMAR 14.40.05.04B]

On February 28, 2026 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 March 02, 2026 AACPS submitted an after-action report to MCSS.

Lessons Learned

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

1. School staff demonstrated success by responding quickly to provide emergency medical care to the injured student and utilizing the *Hold*¹ status. By acting swiftly to treat the injury and keeping the hallways clear, staff effectively protected students from further harm, minimized trauma, and stabilized the environment.
2. While internal coordination among school leadership, central office staff, and first responders was effective, the incident highlighted the challenges of managing public messaging and combating misinformation. The release of inaccurate information on external platforms before official school communications were issued complicated messaging and contributed to unnecessary confusion and anxiety within the community.
3. Secured entry procedures, while essential for daily safety, can create logistical challenges for first responder access during an emergency. Backup officers experienced delays entering

¹ The "I Love U Guys" Standard Response Protocols include "Hold," which is followed by the directive "In Your Room or Area." This protocol is used to keep hallways clear of occupants. <https://iloveuquys.org/The-Standard-Response-Protocol.html#Pre-K-12>

the building, underscoring the need for established procedures to facilitate rapid, independent entry for emergency personnel.

4. The prompt establishment of a reunification point outside the school building facilitated a safe and orderly student release. By keeping parents outside, administrative and support staff prevented congestion and confusion inside the facility. Furthermore, successfully managing parent arrivals based on lessons learned from prior incidents validates the importance of continuous improvement through after-action reviews.
5. A lack of adequate communication resources can hinder staff coordination during a critical incident. Staff identified that expanded access to emergency radios or similar communication tools would have significantly improved operational effectiveness and situational awareness.

School Safety Recommendations

1. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) must develop and rigorously test clear emergency communication protocols to ensure staff can recognize and respond effectively to critical incidents. This readiness must be supported by comprehensive plans, adequate staff training, expanded access to essential communication tools (such as radios), and a regular schedule of drills. Additionally, schools must implement proactive communication strategies to swiftly provide the public with accurate information, which is essential to countering misinformation and managing community concerns
2. Schools and LEAs must establish clear, effective plans to grant first responders immediate, unhindered access to school buildings during an emergency. While school staff can be assigned to facilitate entry during certain protocols, it is essential that first responders have independent access to the building (e.g., via master keys, key cards, or universal access boxes) during high-level emergencies like a *Lockdown*.²
3. LEAs must be prepared to provide both immediate and long-term mental health support to students and staff following a critical incident. Because trauma responses can emerge weeks or months after an event, ongoing check-ins, debriefs, and access to crisis intervention teams are critical. Schools are encouraged to leverage resources such as the Maryland School Mental Health Response Program (MD-SMHRP)³ to supplement these recovery and intervention efforts.

² The "I Love U Guys" Standard Response Protocols include "Lockdown," which is followed by the directive "Locks, Lights, Out of Sight." This is the protocol used to secure individual rooms and keep occupants quiet and in place.

<https://iloveuguy.org/The-Standard-Response-Protocol.html#Pre-K-12>

³ The MD-SMHRP provides school systems with timely consultation, training, and professional development to support and enhance the work of existing site-based personnel in addressing student and family mental health concerns.

<https://marylandpublicschools.org/about/pages/dsfss/mentalhealth/index.aspx>

