

MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY

June 27, 2022

The Honorable Larry Hogan
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) and Education Article §7-1510(g)(3) (MSAR #11594)

Dear Governor Hogan, President Ferguson, and Speaker Jones:

Pursuant to Education Article § 7-1502(g)(21), Education Article §7-1510(g)(3), and State Government Article §2-1257, 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 MCSS Deputy Director, J. Dino Pignataro at joseph.pignataro@maryland.gov or 410-281-2335.

Sincerely,



Kate Hession
Executive Director

Maryland Public School

Critical Life-Threatening Incident

After-Action Summary

On November 01, 2021 there was an incident involving a school 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 November 30, 2021, the MCPS School Security Coordinator (SSC) notified the Maryland Center for School Safety of the incident.

After-Action Meeting [COMAR 14.40.05.04B]

On May 05, 2022, 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 May 20, 2022, MCPS submitted an after-action report to MCSS.

Lessons Learned

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

1. Upon their arrival at the incident, first responders were quickly able to identify and connect with the appropriate school personnel because they were wearing identification vests that were clearly labeled.
2. Bystander video was collected to fill in areas not visible in security camera footage (i.e., blind spots). This additional footage was helpful to the investigation of the incident. As a result, the identified blind spots will be addressed by the installation of additional cameras.

School Safety Recommendations

1. Preparations for after-school events should include a way to clearly identify school staff and security, and also provide them with equipment to communicate directly with each other and first responders. Schools should invest in equipment (e.g., vests, radios) for school personnel.

2. School systems should conduct multi-agency (e.g., law enforcement, fire, 9-1-1 dispatch, EMS) discussion- and operational-based exercises¹ that test each school's response to various hazards and threats and develop and utilize a mechanism for assigning and tracking corrective actions to completion. These exercises should include testing emergency plans for after-school activities.
3. Schools must conduct regular assessments of their school facilities including an assessment of the lighting and video coverage of exterior grounds to ensure full visibility and identify blind spots.

¹ Discussion-based exercises include seminars, workshops, tabletop exercises (TTXs), and games and are used to familiarize players with plans, policies, procedures, and agreements. Operational-based exercises include drills, functional, and full-scale exercises used to validate plans, policies, procedures, and agreements. FEMA, Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program (2020), <https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/Homeland-Security-Exercise-and-Evaluation-Program-Doctrine-2020-Revision-2-2-25.pdf>.