

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

MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY

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June 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 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 April 15, 2026, 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 April 15, 2026, the MCPS staff notified the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) of the incident.

After-Action Meeting [COMAR 14.40.05.04B]

On May 27, 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 May 28, 2026, MCPS submitted an after-action report to MCSS.

Lessons Learned

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

1. The incident generated significant community anxiety due to explicit references to historical mass casualty events, triggering a surge of unverified speculation across social media platforms. While the school district and law enforcement actively communicated the status of the investigation and current safety measures, the viral spread of misinformation created substantial operational friction, underscoring the critical need for aggressive, real-time crisis communication strategies to counter community panic.



2. Initial surveillance footage was structurally insufficient to identify the perpetrator due to inadequate lighting and poor camera positioning in less visible areas of the campus. This operational gap reinforces the necessity of conducting comprehensive physical security assessments to ensure that camera placement, illumination, and recording capabilities provide complete, high-resolution coverage of vulnerable campus zones.
3. School administration and law enforcement successfully executed the apprehension of a student suspect by leveraging a planned "HOLD" protocol. By scheduling the tactical intervention during a controlled, non-emergency drill, authorities successfully minimized operational disruption, maintained building security, and prevented students or staff from witnessing the arrest.

School Safety Recommendations

1. LEAs should proactively disseminate accurate, rapid, and multi-format public communications during an incident to establish a single source of truth, preempt digital speculation, and mitigate community panic before unverified misinformation spreads across social media networks.
2. School safety evaluations are required of public schools at least every 2 years.¹ These evaluations need to include assessments of the current condition and functionality of school cameras, both interior and exterior. Evaluations should include whether cameras currently cover all critical assets and areas, whether sufficient lighting exists to render usable images at night, whether the image quality is sufficient to be of evidentiary value, and whether images are stored for the recommended 60 days.
3. When absolutely necessary, arrests on school grounds should be conducted in such a manner as to avoid embarrassment to the arrested student and protect the safety of other students.² Utilizing a "HOLD" to keep hallways and common areas clear when arrests are necessary can be effective in protecting the arrestee, other students, and staff.

¹ COMAR 14.40.06.02

² COMAR 13A.08.01.D