

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 30, 2026

MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY

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June 30, 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 29, 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 30, 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 15, 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. Standard Response Protocol (SRP) actions must be clear and consistent with staff training. As “Reverse Evacuation” is not an official SRP action, its use is ambiguous. Consequently, SRP procedures and transitions require regular review to ensure they remain accurate and aligned with standardized protocols.
2. Review emergency communication settings and conduct comprehensive staff training to ensure urgent notifications for families are disseminated using consistent alert functions. By establishing protocols with pre-scripted messages, clear activation triggers, and scripts for office staff, schools can prevent notification delays and mitigate the spread of misinformation during active incidents.
3. Establish a standardized protocol for providing timely notifications to nearby schools and school clusters during an active incident. These notifications provide



critical situational awareness that helps neighboring administrators inform their own protective actions and proactively manage public concerns within their respective communities. Effective cross-school communication ensures a coordinated regional response and mitigates the risk of secondary incidents or unauthorized parental self-deployment to adjacent campuses.

4. Previous experience with similar incidents informed the MCPS response strategy. During the investigation, a “HOLD” status was implemented, with students permitted to use restrooms under escort. The school operated on a delayed opening the following day, and supplemental counseling services were maintained for two days. To manage community engagement effectively, parents were required to submit questions for the post-incident meeting in advance; limiting live Q&A sessions prevented potential escalation and focused the discussion on structured information sharing.

School Safety Recommendations

1. Regular school safety evaluations should incorporate assessments of exterior campus locations, including opportunities for natural or artificial surveillance by staff and cameras. Additionally, evaluations must review exterior PA coverage, fencing, signage, traffic control, and campus radio and Wi-Fi infrastructure to ensure robust communication and operational safety during emergencies.
2. Staff training must reinforce school safety policies, specifically regarding prompt Incident Command System (ICS) activation, weapon recovery protocols, and effective coordination with local law enforcement.
3. LEAs should proactively educate parents to refrain from responding to the school site during an active incident. This ensures that school resources remain focused on critical safety and security operations rather than parent management.
4. Prioritize mental health support for administrative, service, health, and security staff directly involved in the emergency. Proactive, long-term resources are essential to mitigate the risk of re-traumatization caused by recurring requests to recount the incident.