

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

This report has been compiled in response to a life-threatening incident that occurred on public school grounds. The report includes lessons learned and recommendations identified following a local review of the incident and is aimed at identifying ways to improve the safety of Maryland public schools.

MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY
Education Article § 7-1502(g)(21) (MSAR #11851)
Education Article §7-1510(g)(3) (MSAR #11594)
COMAR 14.40.05

School Year: 2023-2024

Submitted: April 24, 2024

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April 24, 2024

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 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 Bryan
Executive Director



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

On November 27, 2023 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 November 28, 2023 the MCPS staff notified the Maryland Center for School Safety of the incident.

After-Action Meeting [COMAR 14.40.05.04B]

On December 1, 2023 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 21, 2024 MCPS submitted an after-action report to MCSS.

Lessons Learned

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

1. All threats to a school must be taken seriously and can be unsettling and disruptive for everyone involved. However, having clear and well-rehearsed protocols in place can ensure that everyone knows precisely what steps to take in response to threats. Reacting promptly and safely in such situations could potentially save lives.
2. The evacuation of the school was completed in an organized and efficient manner, serving as a clear demonstration of the importance of regular training and testing of emergency plans and procedures. This incident underscored not only the value of having a well-thought-out emergency plan in place but also the necessity of familiarizing both staff and students with response procedures through frequent drills. Such preparedness efforts ensure that in times of crisis, students and staff will be prepared to follow procedures.



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3. School emergency plans should include pre-identified on-site and off-site evacuation locations with ample space to accommodate all students and staff. These locations and emergency procedures should be tested regularly and identified gaps, vulnerabilities, or improvements should be corrected.

School Safety Recommendations

1. Schools should conduct frequent tests of evacuation and other emergency response protocols. Drills and exercises are essential for testing the collaboration between schools and emergency responders in an effort to support a coordinated response. Moreover, by regularly testing these protocols, schools can significantly minimize confusion and panic during actual emergencies, safeguarding both students and staff.
2. Schools should include off-site evacuations in their annual emergency preparedness training and exercise schedules. These exercises not only prepare students and staff for a crisis but allow schools to evaluate and refine their emergency procedures. Practicing in all forms (e.g., discussions, drills, full-scale exercises) can help participants test plans and identify gaps in their planning assumptions including ensuring evacuation locations will have sufficient capacity to hold all students and staff.

