

MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY

June 17, 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 08, 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 08, 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 March 16, 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 MCPS, the following lessons learned were identified:

1. Montgomery County Police (MCP) response to this incident worked well in part because patrol officers had previously conducted walk-throughs of the school grounds to help familiarize them with the site.
2. School system staff and first responders need to all be familiar with existing memorandums of understanding (MOUs) and school emergency plans, as well as the ICS structure in those plans to effectively manage the investigation of a critical incident, the release of public information, and inter-agency communications at the scene.

School Safety Recommendations

1. School systems should provide local first responders with access to individual floor plans as well as key or keycard access to each school in their system. Additionally, first responders, particularly those in law

enforcement, should be used as a resource while schools conduct their mandated school safety assessments.¹ Conducting safety and vulnerability assessments with law enforcement partners has the benefit of allowing responders to become familiar with the layout of the school.

2. Maryland requires public schools to conduct annual emergency preparedness exercises that test their emergency plans.² However, additional drills or exercises should be added to the school or school system training and exercise schedule when MOUs or plans are issued or updated or following the implementation of corrective actions. Exercising following the implementation of corrective actions helps to ensure the improvements have the desired effect.³
3. To effectively understand the coordination among school staff and first responders during an emergency, local school systems should require school and school system staff to enroll in Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) training on the National Incident Management System (NIMS)⁴ and Incident Command System (ICS)⁵. At a minimum, these trainings should include:
 - a. IS-700.b⁶: An Introduction to the National Incident Management System; and
 - b. ICS-100.c⁷: Introduction to the Incident Command System.

¹ The Safe to Learn Act 2018 requires school systems to conduct regular safety assessments of their schools. In addition to the physical grounds, assessments must be made of school policies, plans, or procedures in response to emergencies, both during school or at school-sponsored events after school or off school grounds. A summary of these assessments is required to be submitted to MCSS as they are completed. Md. Ed. Art. §7-1510(a).

² COMAR 13A.02.02.04C.

³ "By continually examining the implementation of corrective actions, jurisdictions/organizations can identify capability gaps and determine what corrective actions require validation through exercises. Improvement Planning activities can help shape a jurisdiction's/organization's preparedness priorities and support continuous improvement in the building and sustaining of capabilities." FEMA, *Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program 6-3* (2020),

<https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/Homeland-Security-Exercise-and-Evaluation-Program-Doctrine-2020-Revision-2-2-25.pdf>.

⁴ NIMS sets forth national guidance on the prevention, protection, mitigation, response to, and recovery from incidents. FEMA, National Incident Management System Third Edition (2017), https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/fema_nims_doctrine-2017.pdf.

⁵ ICS is a standardized national approach to managing emergencies. FEMA, National Incident Management System Third Edition (2017), https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/fema_nims_doctrine-2017.pdf.

⁶ <https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-700.b>

⁷ <https://training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-100.c>