

June 7, 2023

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
Maryland 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 §7-1501(g)(3) (MSAR #11594)

Dear Governor Moore, President Ferguson, and Speaker Jones:

Pursuant to Education Article §7-1502(g)(21), Education Article §7-1501(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.

Any questions related to this report or for 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 January 6, 2023 there was an incident of physical harm to a student involving a school within Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) 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 January 10, 2023, the BCPS School Security Coordinator (SSC) notified the Maryland Center for School Safety of the incident.

After-Action Meeting [COMAR 14.40.05.04B]

On February 6, 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 April 14, 2023, BCPS submitted an after-action report to MCSS.

Lessons Learned

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

1. School leaders should provide refresher training to staff over the course of the school year on proper protocols for redirecting students to alternative locations during and after an emergency event, for example when medical aid is being rendered or emergency responders are providing support in an area.
2. The negative impacts of a student bystander video recording the incident and releasing the recording to social media was discussed by members of the after action review team. Local school policies should include actions that can be taken in response to unwanted bystander behaviors, particularly standing by and recording emergency incidents.
3. Students provided input to school officials that the event caused a degree of emotional distress for some, making them uncomfortable eating in the cafeteria area, which was adjacent to the area. School officials acknowledged the students' concerns and provided alternative locations for two weeks

following the event, in addition to increasing school counseling support for students.

School Safety Recommendations

1. Quick access to bleeding control kits and training school staff to use them is essential in providing life saving care prior to the arrival of emergency medical services (EMS).
2. An inventory of school staff skills, certifications, and specialized training as they relate to emergency response (e.g., CPR, First Aid) should be done at the start of each school year and included as part of the school emergency plan.
3. When a school does not transition properly through the levels of response protocols or does not use the proper level of response for an incident, they risk unintended consequences including unnecessary loss of instruction time, inaccurate implementation of a protocol, and desensitization to the serious nature of a lockdown protocol. For example, school hallways and other areas may need to remain off limits to ensure officials can continue an investigation, but if there is no immediate threat to life-safety, use of a “*hold*”¹ protocol may be appropriate. Therefore, school staff should be trained in how to recognize and deploy the least disruptive and appropriate response, as well as how to transition between different response protocols (e.g., hold, secure, lockdown) as an event unfolds.
4. Adult supervision of areas and times of the day within the school property that have been identified as “*hot zones*”² must be clearly identified and monitored for compliance by those adults assigned to provide supervision. School officials should be mindful of assigning school personnel who are equipped with the skills and dispositions to properly supervise these areas.
5. Schools should teach students how to safely respond to emergency incidents through reporting and sharing information with authorities, as well as when safe to do so, providing assistance to a victim. [Safe Schools Maryland](#) provides a means by which students can anonymously report information to prevent an event from occurring but methods to report information to authorities, without risk of reprisal, during and after an event must be defined and reinforced at the local level.

¹ *Hold* is the response protocol used when students and staff need to remain in their current location, and hallways kept clear of individuals other than those responding to the emergency event.

² In this context, a *hot zone* refers to a physical area and time of day known by students and staff to be where dangerous behaviors (e.g., fights, assaults, substance use, drug distribution) are likely to occur.