

MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY

December 22, 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 September 20, 2022 there was an incident of a reported threat 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 September 20, 2022, 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 October 7, 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 October 20, 2022, 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 from BCPS participating in the after-action meeting:

1. Schools should identify an alternative evacuation location for staff and students who cannot walk to the designated location.
2. Ensure the existing walking pathway and alternative pathway are clear from any brush or debris and snow, which could potentially make it difficult to walk through. Ensuring both pathways are clear should be done throughout the year.
3. When physical plant contractors and vendors are operating daily at a school location these individuals must be included in emergency procedures. A specific safety plan should be created and communicated with individuals currently working on the school campus.

4. Planning for instances when school personnel are not available to allow entry of emergency responders into the building and/or classrooms should occur. For example, emergency responders could have access to a Knox-box (emergency key box) which would allow for rapid entry in the absence of a school official.

School Safety Recommendations

1. Schools should participate with law enforcement in annual discussion and operational-based exercises¹ that test their response to multiple school threats. Additionally, school and systems leaders should develop a mechanism to track corrective actions to completion.²
2. Schools should test emergency staff communication plans at the beginning of each school year, and during the year to account for staffing changes and ensure effectiveness.
3. System level leaders should ensure that all school emergency plans contain contingencies for students and staff with mobility restrictions. Options should be in place and clearly communicated that include alternative routes should an emergency event take place.

¹ “Discussion-based exercises include seminars, workshops, tabletop exercises (TTXs), and games. These types of exercises familiarize players with or develop new plans, policies, procedures, and agreements ... [and] focus on strategic, policy-oriented issues.” FEMA, Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program (2020), <https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/Homeland-Security-Exercise-and-Evaluation-Program-Doctrine>

² Id at 6-2