

July 5, 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 March 27, 2023, there was an incident of a threat involving a school within Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) 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 March 27, 2023, FCPS School Security Coordinator (SSC) notified the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) of the incident.

After-Action Meeting [COMAR 14.40.05.04B]

On May 4, 2023, an after-action meeting was held involving FCPS school representatives, law enforcement, and a representative from MCSS.

After-Action Report [COMAR 14.40.05.04C]

On May 13, 2023, FCPS Office of Safety & Security Services submitted an after-action report to MCSS.

Lessons Learned

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

1. This event reinforced the importance of students and staff knowing and reporting warning signs of potential school violence and the steps to take to prevent harm from occurring. A student and staff member immediately brought the potential threat of violence to the attention of school administrators allowing for immediate actions to be taken to investigate and prevent the incident from escalating. The building administrator isolated the student who made the threat and conducted an interview with the student to determine the nature of the threat. The administrator contacted the parents of the student who made the threat and safely transferred care of the student to them.
2. A combined team of school staff, Central Office personnel, and the

Frederick County Sheriff Office (FCSO) worked collaboratively to assess the level of threat presented by the student and determine the appropriate next steps. The behavioral threat assessment (BTA) team developed a plan to provide intervention and ongoing monitoring for those students involved. The BTA team in this instance acted promptly and appropriately confirming to FCPS officials that the current training process and defined threat assessment procedures are effective.

3. School staff need to remain mindful of the “duty to warn” students and staff who have been directly targeted. The specific details of what information to share with these individuals should be clearly defined in local policy, and communicated with personnel who would be making the notification. Due to the nature of the threat FCPS and FCSO determined it was appropriate to contact and notify the parents of each of the students identified as potential targets. Contact was made by FCSO to these individuals. FCPS school and system leaders developed and published a school wide message about the threat, current outcomes, and ongoing support available.

School Safety Recommendations

1. This incident is an exemplar of rapid coordination of efforts across agencies and stakeholders to come to a safe and speedy resolution. It is also an example of the effectiveness of promoting the importance of students in school safety. FCPS’s “See Something, Say Something” program has two tiers of reporting, a trusted adult and the local tip line. Schools with or without their own tip lines should consider adding *Safe Schools Maryland Statewide Anonymous Reporting System* as an additional resource, which is available to all public and private schools.
2. Md. Ed. Art. §7-1507(c) requires school systems to adopt a behavioral threat assessment team policy and procedures, which are consistent with the [State model policy](#). School systems and law enforcement agencies should teach and rehearse behavioral threat assessment procedures with a frequency that ensures effective implementation to determine and mitigate threats to the school community.
3. Threat reporting and communication protocols, which allow rapid notification to critical staff and law enforcement, should be tested regularly to ensure designated individuals know how to respond. Schools should participate with law enforcement in regularly scheduled

discussion-based exercises designed to test their response to school threats, both from online and direct sources.