

# 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: 2022-2023**

**Submitted: November 30, 2023**

# MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY

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November 30, 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  
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 Moor, 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](mailto:joseph.pignataro@maryland.gov) or 410-281-2335.

Sincerely,



Kate Bryan  
Executive Director



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

On May 19, 2023 there was an incident involving a school bus accident 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 May 19, 2023 the MCPS staff notified the Maryland Center for School Safety (MCSS) of the incident.

### **After-Action Meeting** [COMAR 14.40.05.04B]

On June 29, 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 September 21, 2023 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. School system Department of Transportation (DOT) administrators, and other identified officials, need to be given access to the scene of a vehicular accident involving students being transported in a school vehicle.
2. School officials allowed access to the scene should serve to coordinate communications with involved students, parents, and staff and ensure that any students and staff being transported at the time of the collision are assessed by on-site emergency medical personnel before leaving the scene. School officials should also account for all students and staff and ensure the release of students to verified emergency contacts.



3. School officials, in coordination with local emergency responding agencies, should develop procedures for responding to vehicular collisions involving school vehicles transporting students and/or staff.
4. Local agencies that may be involved in responding to a vehicular collision should practice the defined procedures using a multi-agency scenario-based drill at a frequency that ensures all personnel are able to appropriately implement procedures in the event of an emergency.

## School Safety Recommendations

1. Emergency Operating Plans should include procedures for a transportation incident that aligns with the system's safety and security office, and Maryland Emergency Planning Guidelines<sup>1</sup>. Applying an all-hazards approach<sup>2</sup> to school-based transportation emergencies will necessitate coordination across multiple school system divisions (transportation, professional development, human resources, safety and security, student services, leadership), and local emergency responding agencies (fire and rescue, medical, law enforcement).
2. School bus drivers must be provided with the training and tools that allow them to assess situations that may pose a threat or hazard, determine the best course of action, and take action to protect students and respond to the threat or hazard. Providing a quick reference tool similar to this one developed by the Lincoln County School District in Oregon would be advantageous. [SCHOOL BUS EMERGENCY PLAN](#)
3. In some instances of a transportation event, system level leaders may not be allowed to enter the impacted area for an extended period of time, requiring a driver to communicate with system level leaders, and assume the on site leadership role. Therefore, training for transportation personnel should include:
  - a. methods for communicating with system level leadership;
  - b. guidelines for serving as representative of the system in a unified command structure; and
  - c. procedures for the transfer of students to an approved custodial caregiver, or transfer of this responsibility to another approved school system official.

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<sup>1</sup> [Maryland Emergency Planning Guidelines for Local School Systems and Schools - December 2019 Edition](#)

<sup>2</sup> An all-hazards approach means that the range of potential threats and hazards is taken into account during the emergency planning process. <https://rems.ed.gov/Resources/Specific?Topic=AllHazards>

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4. Exercising the response to a transportation emergency provides the opportunity for individuals that would be involved in such an emergency to practice performing their role and responsibilities, as well as helps to identify gaps in the currently defined plan and procedure. Tabletop exercises for a transportation event are available on the MCSS webpage<sup>3</sup> and from other states on the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) webpage<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> [MCSS bus crash scenario tabletop exercise](#); additional tabletop exercise scenarios are posted on the MCSS "Are We Ready" webpage.

<sup>4</sup> [Iowa bus crash tabletop exercise scenario](#)

