

Subject: Fwd: Lock down
From: Eric Bush <bushe@mokena159.org>
Date: 8/28/2023, 7:29 PM
To: Lisa Zielinski <zielinskil@mokena159.org>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Julie Oost <oostj@mokena159.org>
Date: Mon, Aug 28, 2023 at 2:07 PM
Subject: Lock down
To: Eric Bush <bushe@mokena159.org>

Eric, I feel strongly that we fully discuss and provide direction on next steps following the lock down. I learned about the lockdown the same way most of the Board did - via text that said it was a planned drill and all went well.

I later spoke with Mark after trading phone calls. I was told the following in that phone call: A fire alarm was pulled, Rachel decided to state it was a lockdown (did not say it was a drill), "Rachel went off script", a phone call was made to 911 by a teacher, 5 or 6 police squads rushed to MES without weapons drawn, police were unaware of the drill partially due to an email sent to the wrong address. Mark said he talked with Rachel, Heather Sullivan, and "several teachers" and all were upset but understanding and we will address angry parents if they come forward.

The notice that went out to the families stated this was the planned annual drill, a call to 911 was made, there was no emergency, all points that made it sound like all went as planned. There was no further explanation or suggestions on how to talk to your children, etc. I'll pause here and say **how does this put the kids first?** Actually, not only the kids, but our staff as well?

I questioned the veracity of the notice when I spoke with Mark and suggested we apologize to our teachers and staff, and consider another message to parents. At that time, he disagreed saying he was aware of a few kids got upset but that is a typical part of the lock down process. I subsequently sent an email asking several questions about the event to each Board Member individually copying Mark. Later that night I sent a text to Mark asking another question. Clearly frustrated at the time I sent the text, he replied it's 1030 on a Friday night; I will respond on Monday. I will address his response below.

I also called and texted you suggesting the same. We were not able to connect, but you did, however, say you disagreed with me despite us never having the opportunity to talk. *I am curious if all other Board members agreed that the response was fine and let's wait to see if parents come forward.*

Over the weekend, I was approached by a member of the law enforcement community that asked me if I knew "what really happened". Puzzled, I asked what he meant. He said this was not a planned drill, the notice in his opinion was a flagrant lie, he and his wife never got a notice of lock down drills or the option to opt out, and someone should be held accountable. I was also approached by another

parent that said there were many crying upset teachers and students.

At bottom, I would like the following to happen:

(1) a closed session meeting asap to include Rachel, Heather, Mark, and law enforcement. Stop daisy-chaining the information and let's sit down and talk this through for the safety of our schools. Mark should then be excused from the meeting so we can have a discussion about his handling of the communication.

(2) respect and truth - I know I can't command it, but Mark's behavior was inappropriate and unprofessional, and was not the whole truth. Scolding me like a child in a text (even if that text was ill-timed) was inappropriate. Further, despite this being a safety incident, he treated it as if it could wait until Monday. So safety concerns can wait until Monday, but he was able to get back to PTA on Saturday on a survey question. This is unacceptable. Again, you may not like me, but you have behave professionally. Set boundaries if you need to, but those boundaries must be applied consistently.

(3) Board members need to respond to how we can communicate. We need to act professionally and be reasonably available. No surprises? Then we need to establish lines of communication, especially if you don't want to use email. It's that simple.

Thank you,

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Julie Oost

Board Member

Mokena School District 159

