

Parent/Community Safety Meeting  
November 10, 2013  
OFHS Auditorium 3:00 p.m.

**Overview & Commonly Asked Questions**

*This document includes the information presented by Olmsted Falls School District Superintendent Dr. Jim Lloyd at the Parent/Community Safety Meeting held November 19, 2013 to address the recent string of bomb hoaxes and evacuations that have impacted Olmsted Falls High School, Middle School and Intermediate School. Please note that this document is not a transcript of the meeting, but rather the information that was covered by Dr. Lloyd during the meeting. Also in attendance/participating at the meeting were Olmsted Township Police Chief John Minek, Olmsted Township Fire Chief John Rice, Olmsted Falls Fire Chief Cornel Munteanu, CERT member Marty Palicka, OFHS Principal Holly Schafer, OFMS Principal Mark Kurz, OFIS Principal Don Svec and District Communications Director Kim Petrina. Approximately 200 parents and residents were in attendance. The meeting included a question and answer session at the end. Anyone with questions regarding the information in this document, questions about the Nov. 10<sup>th</sup> meeting, and/or questions about any of the bomb hoax incidents is encouraged to contact the Board of Education office at 427-6000.*

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**General Statements**

- Student and staff safety are our first priority.
  - Everyone needs to recognize that the safety threats that have been posed thus far have been FABRICATED and the first incident has led to 4 copy cats.
  - At no point was anyone ever in danger.
  - What we have lost is one of the most valuable resources that we have...time. Instructional time and time from our safety forces to handle false threats that could have been used to help other people.
  - Each incident has happened in a bathroom and has been produced by a student; not an adult.
  - We have not formally released photos of each threat, although the first one leaked out through Twitter. Had people been able to see what the 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> threats looked like, opinions on how safe our schools are would likely change. The 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> threats were much more minor in their presentation.
  - We have taken each threat on its face and have chosen to evacuate. We recognize that this has been overly cautious. Due to the continuation of these false alarms, we are now considering a different approach.
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**Q: As a parent, I'm concerned that I haven't been getting all of the information the district is sending out regarding these incidents. Why can't people just call us?**

A: Through each incident, we've learned a great deal about our communication systems. Prior to all of these incidences taking place, we were in the process of upgrading our parent communication systems to a more efficient, rapid and automated system called Power Announcement. This new system will be in place within the next few weeks, and we will have the ability to send messages (text, voice and email) directly to the number that parents provide us with. The District will be sending out directions to ensure we have the most up-to-date phone numbers for parents.

**Q: Why can't you tell us where the students are being taken to?**

A: This may change depending on the type of threat, the time and the location. We do not pass our evacuation plans out to people and the secondary safe locations are a component of that plan.

**Q: Evacuating students back and forth to the schools that are having these threats isn't smart or safe, is it?**

A: We disagree. We coordinate with our safety forces and go to the evacuation sites. If those evacuation sites weren't safe, we wouldn't evacuate to them. Like your kids, my kids go back and forth between the schools as well. If I didn't think it was safe, I wouldn't do it.

**Q: How do you coordinate communication between the Falls and Township Police and Fire?**

A: The school district does not do this. Depending on where the incident occurs (Falls or Township), we contact the safety forces there and they determine what supports they need.

**Q: Has the district considered having students make up the lost instructional time as a deterrent?**

A: Yes. Enacting such a provision across the district is more complicated than it probably appears. Extending the school day or year has financial repercussions for the school district. There are also 2 collective bargaining agreements that we are required to operate within. At this point, unless a threat has been determined to be viable, students will remain at school and will not get the day off.

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***Q: I'm concerned. My children don't feel safe at school. What do I tell them?***

- A: They are safe at school. What we've witnessed is poor behavioral choices by a few select students (5 exactly) who are seeking attention.
- A: Parents should let their children know that our schools are safe and the students in our schools are mad that their days have been disrupted.
- A: Parents should remind their students that the behavior that these few students have demonstrated is absolutely inappropriate and the adults are doing everything they can to find out who is engaging in this behavior.
- A: Those found guilty will face very significant consequences such as expulsion from school, felony charges and financial responsibilities.

***Q: During an evacuation I was told that I am not permitted to pick up my child. Why?***

- A: Whenever there is a potential risk to our students or staff, we close the campus. The Board of Education has granted the superintendent the statutory authority to keep students safe and that is how we do it. In addition, we coordinate with law enforcement as well and this decision is made collaboratively.
- A: Our intention now is to clear the building and send students back to class after we've been given the all clear. There isn't a reason for parents to pick up their children because they are going back to class.

***Q: Can students call their parents to let them know they are ok?***

- A: There are 954 students at the middle school, and 599 at the intermediate school. Students can't call their parents to let them know they are ok for several reasons: we don't have the capacity to do that and students are already missing too much class as a result of these hoaxes.

***Q: I only keep hearing of bomb threat after bomb threat, but I am not hearing much about the efforts to find out who is doing this. What's being done? I believe these kids think it's funny, and they will not stop until they start seeing someone punished, or even hearing that they are close to finding the responsible parties!***

- A: I do believe that a well-publicized punishment would help to deter any further activity. I try to remind myself that there are a handful of kids doing this and they are all separate incidences. 99.9% of our kids do not think this is funny.

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**Q: Are they investigating who is responsible...and are they at all close to finding who is responsible for any of this?**

A: Yes. It is an on-going investigation by the Olmsted Township Police Department. I believe that they might be close on the first incident. We've been able to narrow the number of suspects at the middle school down to a few, but we do not have enough information to apply any school consequences at this point. All investigations are ongoing and any student or parent with information is encouraged to contact the Olmsted Township Police Department or the school administration.

**Q: I know they had an assembly or something at the high school to discuss the effects of a bomb threat...are there plans to have a similar assembly for the other schools as well?**

A: In addition to speaking to students at our high school, Chief Minek and Chief Rice also spoke to all students at the Middle School. We've had no threats at any other building and do not have plans to hold assemblies on this topic for our younger students at this time.

**Q: What prevention measures are being taken?**

A: Students are being monitored more closely. Each message was written by a student, in a student bathroom. As a result, certain bathrooms have been locked at both buildings and student usage has been limited to certain parts of the building. In addition, all students need to sign in and out so that we can account for each person who has used the restrooms. Building administrators are making regular inspections of the restrooms open for use.

A: While the district does not currently have internal cameras and the bond issue would have provided those at the high school, we are looking at our budget and are considering purchasing some cameras in order to monitor activity around certain areas of our middle and high schools.