



In the heart of the Redwoods

Southern Humboldt Unified School District

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December 14, 2016

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Yesterday afternoon, we received word of a shooting in the Redway area. All students are safe, and we are currently working with the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office to improve communication between law enforcement and the school district so we can provide more timely information to you, our student families.

Our students' safety always comes first. The moment we learned of a potential shooting, we allowed students who were boarding school busses to be transported away from the area, and we kept students who planned to walk home at school until parents could pick them up.

Here is the timeline of events:

1:56 p.m. According to the Redwood Times, the Sheriff responded to a shooting in Redway. Neither our schools nor our district office receives any communication from the Sheriff's Office.

2:27 p.m. A community member contacts the Redway School Secretary to report hearing news of a shooting close to school over the scanner.

2:29 p.m. A second community member contacts Redway School to report the shooting.

2:30 p.m. The Redway secretary calls the Garberville Substation to inquire about the accuracy of the reports. Our secretary is told that there has been a shooting and that a sheriff's deputy will call the school back with instructions.

2:30 p.m. Principal Panfilio contacts the district office.

2:31 p.m. Principal Panfilio contacts the Sheriff's Garberville Substation and is given a number to talk to a deputy, but the call is routed to a recording. She calls the Substation back and leaves message requesting that a deputy call the school.

2:33 p.m. I contact Redway Elementary to determine what is going on. I am told they are waiting for a call back from the Sheriff. For students who live outside the Redway area, I decide it is best to transport them from the area as quickly as possible (especially given that they are already in the process of boarding school busses at this time). For students

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www.humboldt.k12.ca.us/sohumb_usd/school/index.html

"all students can learn and succeed, but not on the same day in the same way." William G Spady

planning to walk home in Redway, we decide to keep them at school in a safe location and contact parents to come pick them up.

2:40 p.m. The Redway Principal and Office Assistant tell teachers to have students load the buses, go home with their parents, or go to the office if they usually walk home. She walks several students to the office and returns outside in front of the school.

2:45 p.m. We cancel basketball practice.

2:45-3:30 p.m. The Redway Secretary contacts all parents who need to come pick up their children (students who typically walk home.)

2:46 p.m. I contact the Garberville Substation and receive the recording. I hang up and call the Eureka Sheriff's office; there is no answer. I call 911 and am put through to the Sheriff's office. I am told someone will call me back.

2:50 p.m. The Redway Afterschool Program is put on lockdown and instructed to call all parents to have them pick up their children early.

2:50 p.m. Teachers who are staying after school are instructed to lock their classroom door. Custodian is instructed to lock gym and Student Services Building, and outside bathrooms. After school students will be escorted to the school office if they need to use a restroom. The school office is locked.

2:50 p.m. I receive a phone call from a lieutenant at the Eureka Sheriff's Office. This officer indicates that the people responsible for the shooting had fled the area. He tells me he has spoken to the secretary at Redway and is aware of our plan to have students who usually walk home to be picked up. I inquire about the safety of the junior high and high school students who are scheduled to arrive in Redway in less than an hour. He agrees that it is a good plan to prevent kids from walking around the area, and says having students picked up is a good plan.

2:53 p.m. I contact Vice Principal Radcliffe to inform him that students riding to Redway need to stay in the multipurpose room until picked up by a parent.

2:54 p.m. I contact Colleen O'Sullivan who is already at Redway and ask her to stay there to receive and supervise the students until they are picked up.

5:27 p.m. I contact Sheriff Mike Downy on his cell phone to ask if the suspects have been located, and whether it will be safe to have students walking in Redway the next morning.

5:35 p.m. I receive a call back from Sheriff Downy indicating the suspects have not been located, and that the Sheriff's department will have additional units in the area near the school the next morning. Sheriff Downy also indicates that this appears to be an isolated incident that should not have any impact on the school. I remind him that we have children walking to school.

5:45 p.m. The last student is picked up from Redway School.

6:18 p.m. Redway staff and district office staff broadcast the information via an electronic call to Redway and Miranda campuses student families.

I want to assure you that as soon as school staff became aware of the situation, we immediately took action to safeguard students.

I apologize if our efforts to contact you were not adequate. We were focused on the students who were on lockdown at Redway. We are disappointed that we did not know more about the incident more quickly. By the time we became aware of the situation, the immediate threat had passed, so we decided to run the buses as scheduled to remove students who did not need to be in Redway from the area and any possible threat as quickly as possible.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me directly. Situations such as these are stressful and scary for everyone. We will always do everything in our power to make sure our students are safe. To that end, I will be contacting Sheriff Downy to discuss improved communication between the Sheriff's office and the school district in the future.

Sincerely,



Catherine Scott
Superintendent

Cc: Board of Trustees