

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Haywood County Schools – Notes for 1:00 a.m. Media Update Meeting

Haywood County, North Carolina – April 30, 2015

We want to begin by thanking a number of people for assisting in the response to the threatening email message that prompted the lockdown and evacuation of Tuscola High School earlier today.

- Our students were calm and cooperative as we asked them to lock down and throughout the evacuation process.
- Our staff members were quick to respond in guiding students through the process, supervising students and arranging/conducting the evacuation to the Haywood County Fairgrounds.
- We thank the Haywood County Fairgrounds for allowing us to use their location for the evacuation. We have a number of community partners who are poised to assist in this manner if necessary.
- We are especially thankful for the rapid response from Sheriff Christopher and his department as well as members of the Waynesville PD, Asheville PD and Buncombe County Sheriff's Department for their assistance in clearing the campus from the alleged threat.

On Thursday, April 30, 2015 at approximately 9:00 a.m. Tuscola High School received a threatening email message that was allegedly from a student on campus. Students were locked in place and an evacuation to an undisclosed location was implemented.

The evacuation took 32 minutes from inception to completion for approximately 1000 students and staff.

Thus far, we have identified NO actual threatening actions and there are NO injuries to students or staff. The evacuation was a precautionary measure.

Parents were sent two rapid notification voice messages. The first voice message informed parents about the lockdown and evacuation. The second voice message provided parents with directions for picking up students beginning at approximately 11:00 a.m.

Students who are not picked up will be dismissed from the Fairgrounds on buses. The bus dismissal occurred at 1:00 p.m. Special arrangements will be made for students who are not picked up and do not normally ride a bus.

Law enforcement officials from the agencies listed above were able to clear the campus of the alleged threat at approximately 12:35 p.m. Another (3rd) rapid notification voice message will be sent to let students and parents know it is safe to return to campus and collect personal items and vehicles. We anticipate this to occur at approximately 2:00 p.m. The delay between clearing the campus and informing people they could return to campus was to allow time to return staff members to campus to supervise the campus.

School is dismissed for the day and a regular schedule of activities will return on Friday, May 1, 2015.

The cost for the unscheduled evacuation is approximately \$1,800 in transportation cost and loss of school food service revenues.

At this time Principal Collins and other school district staff members are engaged in assisting in the ongoing investigation and release of students. We are so thankful that this threat did not result in any injuries.

We will be happy to answer any questions that are not connected to the ongoing investigation.

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Contact: Dr. Bill Nolte, Associate Superintendent

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