



September 30, 2021

Bernard J. Bauer

VIA EMAIL – bb3799@gmail.com

Re: FOIA request dated 9/22/2021

Subject: request the following information related to the "hold in place" "lockdown" or "secure the building and teach" which occurred between approximately 3pm and 3:20pm on 9/16/21 at Murphy Jr. High. Emails sent by and to the Principal, Vice Principal, District Superintendent and school board members regarding this incident; Meeting minutes of any meetings or conference calls resulting from this incident; Memos issued in relation to this incident; Any incident reports in relation to this incident; Any policy or procedure updates resulting from this incident.

Dear Mr. Bauer:

This letter will serve as Oswego Community Unit School District 308's response to your FOIA request received on September 22, 2021 under the Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 140/1 et seq.), in which you asked for the above referenced information. Redactions were made due to the following exemption under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act as follows:

Section 7(1)(c) - Personal information contained within public records, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, unless the disclosure is consented to in writing by the individual subjects of the information.

To promote district transparency and assist others who may have a similar question, this responsive document will be posted online on the district's website. To access it, go to www.sd308.org and select *Our District > Freedom of Information Act Request > FOIA Request Responses>FOIA Requests Responses -2021>then select FOIA ID #21-65*.

Please be advised that to comply with your FOIA request, the district incurred an expense that comprised of the cost of labor and resources used to search for records responsive to your request. Let me know if you have additional questions. Thank you.

John Petzke

John Petzke, CFO
Freedom of Information Officer

SUBJECT: MU "Secure the Building and Teach"
FROM: Laura Bingham <noreply@sd308.org>
TO: Murphy Junior High School Recipients <recipients@sd308.parentlink.net>
DATE: 09/16/2021 16:35

Good afternoon families,

At approximately 3:00pm today, we needed to secure the building and hold students in place while teachers continued to teach, as a precautionary measure. Students and staff are safe. The faculty and students were released at approximately 3:20pm from school. We contacted the Plainfield Police Department for support at dismissal.

Students who ride buses may have been a little late coming home.

Thank you for your patience as we ensured student and staff safety and confidentiality.

Thank you,
Laura Bingham

#LegendaryMAVS

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SUBJECT: Re: Lock down today
FROM: Laura Bingham <lbingham@sd308.org>
TO: Jennifer Bartos <jenniferbartos@hotmail.com>
DATE: 09/16/2021 16:39

Good afternoon,

We had a "Secure the Building" hold today as a precautionary measure. I just sent a message to all families...everyone is okay. I can definitely understand that today was a hard day to process...

-Laura Bingham

Laura Bingham

Principal
Murphy Junior High
26923 West Grande Park Boulevard
Plainfield, Illinois 60585
phone: 630.608.5110
fax: 630.608.5191
main office: 630.608.5100
lbingham@sd308.org

On Thu, Sep 16, 2021 at 4:23 PM [REDACTED] wrote:

Good Afternoon Ms. Bingham,

I was just wondering if you give any clarification regarding this afternoon's lockdown.

With what happened at [REDACTED] today, where our [REDACTED] is a senior, and the lockdown it's a lot for our girls to process.

[REDACTED]
Sent from my iPhone

SUBJECT: RE: MU "Secure the Building and Teach"
FROM: bb3799 <bb3799@gmail.com>
TO: Laura Bingham <lbingham@sd308.org>
CC: John Sparlin <jsparlin@sd308.org>, [REDACTED]
DATE: 09/16/2021 16:45

What was the nature of the threat that required lockdown? The lack of information and transparency is unacceptable.

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

----- Original message -----

From: Laura Bingham <noreply@sd308.org>
Date: 9/16/21 4:35 PM (GMT-06:00)
To: Murphy Junior High School Recipients <recipients@sd308.parentlink.net>
Subject: MU "Secure the Building and Teach"

Good afternoon families,

At approximately 3:00pm today, we needed to secure the building and hold students in place while teachers continued to teach, as a precautionary measure. Students and staff are safe. The faculty and students were released at approximately 3:20pm from school. We contacted the Plainfield Police Department for support at dismissal.

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Thank you,
Laura Bingham

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SUBJECT: Re: this afternoon
FROM: Laura Bingham <lbingham@sd308.org>
TO: [REDACTED]
CC: Julianna Karvelius <jkarvelius@sd308.org>, Shanell Lawson <slawson@sd308.org>
DATE: 09/16/2021 17:54

Mrs. [REDACTED]

Thank you so much for sending this thoughtful email. I know our emails can be vague sometimes. The hold in place/secure the building would happen anytime we want to ensure staff and student safety, as well as confidentiality. For example, if a student needed to leave in an ambulance, we would hold classes so the halls were clear for our team to assist a student. If there were a threat to the building, the communication would have been much different.

Thank you so much,

Laura Bingham

Laura Bingham

Principal

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lbingham@sd308.org

On Thu, Sep 16, 2021 at 5:17 PM [REDACTED] wrote:

Mrs. Bingham and Ms. Karvelius,

In light of what happened today, I want to say thank you for keeping all kids safe. While as a parent, I feel like I shaved 10 years off my life in the span of 20 minutes with my mind creating worse case scenarios, I reminded myself that your focus needs to be on the situation at hand even if that means I am kept in the dark for the time being. And you all are trained for this and the number one priority is and always be to keep the kids safe. Naturally, I am seeing a lot of parents criticize the school for lack of notification but again, the staff's focus needs to be on the situation as it is unfolding. In the event of an actual serious threat, we would have been notified but we need to trust the process.

Thank you and have a good evening.

[REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Re: MU "Secure the Building and Teach"
FROM: Laura Bingham <lbingham@sd308.org>
TO: bb3799 <bb3799@gmail.com>
CC: John Sparlin <jsparlin@sd308.org>, [REDACTED]
BCC: Valerie Patterson <vpatterson@sd308.org>, Shanell Lawson <slawson@sd308.org>, Theresa Komitas <tkomitas@sd308.org>
DATE: 09/16/2021 18:01

Good evening,

The hold in place/secure the building we utilized at school today was not a lockdown or fear of harm to any occupants of the building. It was reported that one of our doors had not engaged properly this afternoon and, out of an abundance of caution, we had all classroom teachers lock their doors and continue teaching while we did a full security sweep throughout the building. We understand your concern and hope this additional explanation provides greater understanding.

If you would like to talk further tomorrow, please let me know.

Have a good evening,
Laura Bingham

Laura Bingham

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phone: 630.608.5110
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lbingham@sd308.org

On Thu, Sep 16, 2021 at 4:46 PM [REDACTED] wrote:

What was the nature of the threat that required lockdown? The lack of information and transparency is unacceptable.

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

----- Original message -----

From: Laura Bingham <noreply@sd308.org>
Date: 9/16/21 4:35 PM (GMT-06:00)
To: Murphy Junior High School Recipients <recipients@sd308.parentlink.net>
Subject: MU "Secure the Building and Teach"

Good afternoon families,

At approximately 3:00pm today, we needed to secure the building and hold students in place while teachers continued to teach, as a precautionary measure. Students and staff are safe. The faculty and students were released at approximately 3:20pm from school. We contacted the Plainfield Police Department for support at dismissal.

Students who ride buses may have been a little late coming home.

Thank you for your patience as we ensured student and staff safety and confidentiality.

Thank you,
Laura Bingham

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SUBJECT: Re: Today's "Secure the Building"
FROM: Laura Bingham <lbingham@sd308.org>
TO: MUStaff <mustaff@sd308.org>
DATE: 09/16/2021 18:31

Good evening,

I know today was a bit stressful and alarming...I wanted to send something earlier to keep you in the loop, but also needed to work with our district office to review what happened. Here is some clarification...

The hold in place/secure the building we utilized at school today was not a lockdown or fear of harm to any occupants of the building. A hold like this would happen anytime we want to ensure staff and student safety, as well as confidentiality. For example, if we had a medical emergency and a student needed to leave in an ambulance, we would hold/secure classes so hallways are clear for the team to assist the student. If there were a threat to the building, or if we had an ALICE event, our communication would have been much different, much clearer, and with details to ensure you know your best option to stay safe. Today, it was reported that one of our doors had not engaged properly and a visitor **may** have entered the building. Out of an abundance of caution, we had all classroom teachers lock their doors and continue teaching while we did a full security sweep throughout the building. We looked closely at video footage to make sure that all visitors followed our check-in procedures by stopping in the office. I will be working with the Operations department to look at options to ensure that doors close and lock upon our exit. [REDACTED] been a problem for a while...the wind gusts keep the door ajar or prevent it from latching. As stated in the previous email and other emails, please be sure to check the doors upon your exit to make sure they close and latch all the way.

I hope this helps clarify and provide some relief...I want to reiterate that there was no known threat to the staff or students. This hold was precautionary, and we did contact the Plainfield PD to help support dismissal.

Everyone followed the direction, and we thank you for that. As I was out of the building at a meeting while this happened and my communication with the team at school, DAC, and to the PD was all by phone, I am thankful that Shanell made this call to ensure the safety of our students and staff. She, along with our Students Services team, Dave and the maintenance staff, and Sue/Kim/Patti all assisted with focusing on the safety and security of the building.

Great job everyone.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

-Laura

Laura Bingham

Principal

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fax: 630.608.5191

main office: 630.608.5100

lbingham@sd308.org

On Thu, Sep 16, 2021 at 4:06 PM Laura Bingham <lbingham@sd308.org> wrote:

Hi all,

We had to secure the building today as a precautionary measure. Thank you for your patience. A Blackboard message will be sent to families informing them of the "Secure the Building" hold. We had police on scene to support dismissal.

I have to stress the extreme importance of ensuring doors are latched and locked behind you when you exit the building. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] We cannot risk having a visitor enter the building and roam the building. **PLEASE** make sure that doors are latched and locked when you exit. This is for the safety of **ALL** staff and students.

Thank you,
Laura

Laura Bingham

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main office: 630.608.5100

lbingham@sd308.org

SUBJECT: Regarding lockdown in the school building
FROM: [REDACTED]
TO: Laura Bingham <lbingham@sd308.org>
DATE: 09/16/2021 22:16

Dear Ms. Bingham ,

Thank you for the email. Kids said an unauthorized person entered the building. Who was it? Was he/ she of any danger to anyone in the building?

Hoping and praying for the safety of every kid and staff in the building.

Regards

SUBJECT: Re: Regarding lockdown in the school building
FROM: Laura Bingham <lbingham@sd308.org>
TO: [REDACTED]
DATE: 09/17/2021 09:41

Good morning,

The hold in place/secure the building we utilized at school yesterday was not a lockdown or fear of harm to any occupants of the building. It was reported that one of our doors had not engaged properly in the afternoon and, out of an abundance of caution, we had all classroom teachers lock their doors and continue teaching while we did a full security sweep throughout the building. I believe that there is probably some misinformation going around with the students regarding yesterday...

We understand your concern and hope this additional explanation provides greater understanding.

-Laura Bingham

Laura Bingham

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On Thu, Sep 16, 2021 at 10:16 PM [REDACTED] wrote:

Dear Ms. Bingham ,

Thank you for the email. Kids said an unauthorized person entered the building. Who was it? Was he/ she of any danger to anyone in the building?

Hoping and praying for the safety of every kid and staff in the building.

Regards

SUBJECT: Fwd: MU "Secure the Building and Teach"
FROM: [REDACTED]
TO: Laura Bingham <lbingham@sd308.org>
DATE: 09/17/2021 12:19

Recognizing that you cannot (and should not) give out confidential information here, can you let parents know the general nature of the incident that prompted the "Secure and Teach" procedure yesterday?

Could you also point me to information that might generally describe the various lock-down levels and the types of precipitating events that lead to each?

Thanks much,
[REDACTED]

On Thu, Sep 16, 2021 at 4:35 PM Laura Bingham <noreply@sd308.org> wrote:

Good afternoon families,

At approximately 3:00pm today, we needed to secure the building and hold students in place while teachers continued to teach, as a precautionary measure. Students and staff are safe. The faculty and students were released at approximately 3:20pm from school. We contacted the Plainfield Police Department for support at dismissal.

Students who ride buses may have been a little late coming home.

Thank you for your patience as we ensured student and staff safety and confidentiality.

Thank you,
Laura Bingham

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SUBJECT: Re: MU "Secure the Building and Teach"
FROM: Laura Bingham <lbingham@sd308.org>
TO: [REDACTED]
CC: John Sparlin <jsparlin@sd308.org>, [REDACTED]
DATE: 09/17/2021 16:08

Mr. Bauer,

Thank you for emailing your further concerns. We conduct after action meetings on these types of issues and decide on appropriate adjustments to our communication for the future. We always try to improve what we do whenever we can.

If you'd like to discuss further, I'm happy to call you next week.

Have a great weekend,
Laura Bingham

Laura Bingham

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On Fri, Sep 17, 2021 at 10:34 AM [REDACTED] wrote:
Ms. Bingham,

I do appreciate the response to my e-mail yesterday evening. However, I do have several issues with the manner in which this was communicated with the families of Murphy students.

The first issue I have is that we, as parents, first found out about the incident from our children as they returned home from school (later than normal). While I understand that extinguishing the potential threat and securing the students' safety is the #1 priority, the fact that students were being held in-place in locked classrooms should have been communicated to parents by you or someone in your office as soon as safely possible, disclosing the nature of the threat which required police presence. The first communication of the matter was not received until 1 ½ hours after the "Secure the Building and Teach" order was given. This is not acceptable. During that time, the rumor mill of what had happened was churning amongst your students. My daughter had heard at least the following 3 rumors about what had happened:

- 1) A special needs student was "going crazy" and threatening to hurt people.
- 2) Two unauthorized people entered the building.
- 3) Someone had a seizure in the building.

These are just the rumors that I am aware of and I am sure that there are many more, as that is what happens when clear, concise, and accurate information is not provided, particularly amongst Jr. high schoolers.

The second issue I have is that your original e-mail did nothing to quell the rumors it only stated, "we needed to secure the building and hold students in place while teachers continued to teach, as a precautionary measure". This lack of actual information only led to more speculation,

both among students and parents. I cannot be the only one that read this e-mail and was angered about not being given more information on an incident that required "police support at dismissal".

Another issue I have, which is the most bothersome to me, is that in your response e-mail yesterday evening, I don't feel as if you are being fully transparent in the reason for the "hold in place/secure the building". In that e-mail, you had stated that "It was reported that one of our doors had not engaged properly this afternoon and, out of an abundance of caution, we had all classroom teachers lock their doors and continue teaching while we did a full security sweep throughout the building." If this was the case, then why in your original e-mail did you state, "...ensured student and staff safety and **confidentiality**"? If it was just an unlocked door, why would there be a "**confidentiality**" issue? This leads me to speculate that there was likely an issue of some sort with an individual(s). I do understand the importance and responsibility of maintaining confidentiality in certain situations. However, in the event that this was one of those situations, it could have been presented as a "medical issue" or "altercation", without breaching confidentiality of the individual(s) involved.

Prompt, clear, concise, and complete communication of situations such as these are imperative. One should never read a communication from school about a potential threat, requiring a police response and come away with more questions. I hope that you, your staff, and SD 308 take this as a learning lesson and that you revisit your communication plans for a lockdown/hold-in-place (or the like).

Respectfully,



On Thu, Sep 16, 2021 at 6:01 PM Laura Bingham <lbingham@sd308.org> wrote:

Good evening,

The hold in place/secure the building we utilized at school today was not a lockdown or fear of harm to any occupants of the building. It was reported that one of our doors had not engaged properly this afternoon and, out of an abundance of caution, we had all classroom teachers lock their doors and continue teaching while we did a full security sweep throughout the building. We understand your concern and hope this additional explanation provides greater understanding.

If you would like to talk further tomorrow, please let me know.

Have a good evening,
Laura Bingham

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