



BUFFALO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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To: Building Principals and Assistant Principals

CC: Cabinet Members

From: Dr. Tonja M. Williams, Superintendent of Schools

Subject: Notification to be aware of SWATTING INCIDENTS

Date: April 14, 2023

I am writing to you this afternoon to express my deep concern about the recent increase in swatting incidents targeting schools across this country, including in New York State. The FBI defines “swatting” as an incident in which a 911 caller fakes an emergency to generate a response from law enforcement, typically a police tactical team commonly referred to as a SWAT team. Recently on March 30, 2023 one of our BPS Schools, South Park High School, was the victim to a swatting incident. The Buffalo Public School District will remain on a heightened alert due to this unfortunate and disturbing trend.

The safety of all our students and staff is always our top priority and we will continue to work closely with our school security team, the City of Buffalo Police Department, and all other local law enforcement partners to maintain a secure school environment. These incidents pose a serious threat to the safety of our school communities. When a school is targeted in a swatting incident, it triggers a significant police response with heavily armed officers and tactical teams swarming the area. It results in a significant disruption to the school and is likely to create panic and uncertainty. In the event of your school being involved in a Swatting Incident, please know that you may not receive a courtesy notification prior to having police enter your school; thus, it will be critically important that:

- All staff in the building know to follow the safety protocols which will be directed by the law enforcement staff on the scene.
- Lockdown procedures be instituted and followed (if your school has not reviewed and practiced these protocols, I encourage you to plan to do so in the coming weeks).
- Parents be notified as quickly as possible that their children are safe from harm.
- If support from the BPS Crisis Team is needed that, the Chief of Student Support Services, Dr. Sharon E. Brown be contacted as the events of an incident such as this can be traumatizing, as innocent people, including students, teachers, and staff, are made to believe that they are at risk of life-threatening harm.

All members of the Buffalo Public School community are encouraged to remain vigilant. If you hear or see something, please say something. Please contact local law enforcement and notify a staff member if you observe suspicious activity or concerning behavior. We appreciate everyone’s cooperation in ensuring the safety of all our school communities. Thank you.

“Putting Children and Families First to Ensure High Academic Achievement for All”