



East Greenbush Central School District

Administration Center

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Jeffrey P. Simons

Superintendent of Schools

March 30, 2023

Dear EGCSO Community:

Given the events of this morning, I want to provide as much information to you regarding the East Greenbush Central School District's response as well as our ongoing [school safety](#) and communication protocols.

Shortly before 9:00 a.m. this morning, I was directly notified by the East Greenbush Police Department of a report that a neighboring school district was experiencing an active shooter situation. I immediately initiated a district-wide lockdown in all school buildings as we continued to communicate with law enforcement regarding the nature of that incident.

Within minutes of that first phone call, additional information was provided by the East Greenbush Police Department that they and other emergency centers received similar notifications that there were active shooters at other local schools. I was also informed that a direct call to the East Greenbush Police Department named Columbia High School as the site of an active shooter incident.

Multiple law enforcement agencies led by the East Greenbush Police Department mobilized and responded to our school district including sending several police officers to Columbia High School, which had been directly named in one of the notifications.

In coordination with police, the schools remained in lockdown as law enforcement in coordination with school administration implemented a full sweep of all areas in Columbia High School. Throughout the incident, I utilized the district-wide public address system to keep our students, faculty and staff informed as to what was occurring. The district also sent notifications to employees and parents via ParentSquare and posted [updates on our website](#) and social media.

We recognize that the timing of the lockdown occurring, as elementary students were being dropped off by school buses and parents, created some hardships and worries for students and families. However, in accordance with our safety protocols and in consultation with police, we felt students were safer on the buses and in their vehicles in the event that the threat was credible. Communication was maintained with bus drivers to keep them informed of the situation.

Once Columbia was completely searched and the lockdown was lifted, law enforcement agencies continued to respond to each of the district's other schools and worked with principals to complete sweeps of each building. During our standard protocol for a lockdown drill students and staff are not permitted to resume any normal activities throughout the school until such time as their rooms, offices and other locations are cleared directly by police.

As police departments responded to schools and conducted sweeps, they authorized principals to permit students who were on buses and in their vehicles to enter the school and police officers supervised students to an assigned location inside the schools. Once the sweeps of the schools were completed, each school transitioned from a lockdown to a lockout. During a lockout, the school day resumes but there are no outdoor activities permitted and restricted and enhanced visitor protocols are put in place. Our final school was cleared and that lockdown was lifted at approximately 10:50 a.m.

After the incident, law enforcement and the Questar III BOCES Health and Safety department indicated that the emergency was believed to be related to "swatting" in which multiple schools across the state and within our region received notifications of threats with the intent of activating an armed response by law enforcement to schools.

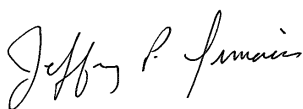
The district recognizes that these types of emergencies cause fears, worries and concern among students, staff, parents and caregivers. Please be assured that our district maintains emergency response protocols, provides significant training to staff and maintains instantaneous automated systems which secure our buildings. I want to express my appreciation for everyone's quick and responsive actions including our law enforcement agencies, district personnel and our students.

I also want you to know that I understand that many of you were scared by the circumstances we faced this morning. Should there be a need for counseling services for children or adults, please contact your building principal should your children need services or in the case of employees our Director of Human Resources. We can help you make provisions as needed.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the district's emergency response from today, please contact me.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding this morning. We will continue to do everything we can to keep students, employees and visitors safe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeffrey P. Simons".

Jeffrey Simons

Superintendent of Schools