

## Statement Regarding February 27th CVHS Incident - By Superintendent Lance Hatch

The events and circumstances of February 27th were not handled perfectly. There were several instances where our response could have been better. **The responsibility for these shortcomings rests squarely on the Superintendent of Schools.** It is the responsibility of the superintendent to ensure that two critical elements of the school district are in place; CLARITY and COMPETENCE.

First, the Superintendent is to work with stakeholders to provide CLARITY. We must be clear about the outcomes we are looking for and crystal clear regarding expectations. Although we have made huge strides in the last two years in providing clarity for learning outcomes, educator collaboration and district mission, vision, values and goals, I have not led the district to the necessary clarity regarding school safety and security. **I accept responsibility for this and I have already begun to work to correct this lapse.**

Second, the Superintendent is responsible to ensure that everyone in the organization (all 1,600 employees) have the competence to meet the expectations. This means that I must ensure they have the knowledge and skills that are required. Again, there has been great progress in developing competence in the last two years as we have addressed other areas. However, I do not believe we have provided enough training and support to ensure that each individual has the necessary knowledge and skills to expertly apply best practices in all situations. Instead, I have fostered a philosophy and culture that, in hindsight, was overly deferential toward local law enforcement. I wanted to know that our administrators were working with local law enforcement and that they were following their lead in emergency situations. This has, inadvertently, led to some abdication of authority for decision making in emergency situations. **I accept responsibility for this and we are taking steps to improve in this area.**

In order to correct these shortcomings, I plan to work with the Iron County Board of Education, District Administration, School Administrators, Teachers, Support Staff and Local Law Enforcement (including Iron County Sheriff's Department, Cedar City Police Department, Enoch City Police Department and Parowan City Police Department) to accomplish the following tasks. This is not a comprehensive list and I expect we will add to it as we move forward.

### Priority Items

1. **New Position:** District Safety and Security Specialist - This would be a person with experience in safety and security, perhaps with experience as a police officer. Duties will include:
  - a. Exterior security checks
  - b. Interior security checks
  - c. Assist schools with planning and executing drills and making adjustments after the drills
  - d. Training of staff on security protocols
  - e. Collaboration with SROs
  - f. Ensure compliance with all security and safety expectations and policies
  - g. Maintenance of access control system
  - h. Safe UT app investigator and responder
  - i. More....
2. **Single Point of Entry:** We have been working toward this, but little to no progress has been made in almost two years. The scenario we hope for would require all traffic to come through the main entrance and that traffic would be forced to go through the office by constructed vestibules that funnel people to the office before gaining entry into the rest of the school:
  - a. Include Vestibules in the 2023 bond. It is almost impossible to have a truly secured entry at some schools without work being done to address the vestibules and office areas. The schools in need of a change to their front office and/or entry are E-Valley, Iron Springs, Three Peaks, Enoch, Fiddlers, Parowan Elementary, South, CMS, CHS, CVHS, PHS.
  - b. Complete fencing around all elementary schools requiring people to come to the single point of entry.

- c. Keyless entry systems on timers for secondary schools. This will allow for students to be able to transition between class periods. All entries monitored during passing time.
  - d. **If we get this right, we will basically always be in a level 1 lockdown**
3. **Communication:** We always walk a fine line of giving enough information without giving too much. There are police investigation considerations along with student privacy restrictions.
  - a. Schools will work with the ICSD Communications Coordinator to communicate regarding situations.
  - b. A standard set of communications will be developed for situations schools are likely to have. These will be placed in the Principal Meeting shared drive to be accessed any time.
  - c. Guidelines will be developed for principals to follow.
  - d. Three different information/communications will be considered. All will be discussed and addressed separately for each incident.
    - i. Parents and general public
    - ii. Staff members
    - iii. Students
4. **Use of Level 1 Lockdown:** A level 1 lockdown has very little impact on the operation of the school, student learning and classroom work. There should be very little hesitation to go to a level 1 lockdown.
  - a. SROs and School Administration will be trained on the support they have to enter a level 1 lockdown.
  - b. Communication will be ongoing about level 1 lockdowns and it will be very simple for schools to use already vetted and approved templates for their communications.
5. **SRO and School Administration Communication:** It should be very rare that there is a situation where the SRO is making a decision about school safety that doesn't get communicated immediately to school administration.
  - a. Whenever possible, it is expected that the SRO and School Administration will make decisions jointly. However, it is understood that there may be instances where immediate action does not allow for consultation with one or the other.
  - b. It is also expected that school administration will consult with district administration on decision making when possible and inform the district administration as soon as possible after action has been taken.
  - c. NOTE: Chief Adams and District Administration are working on improving language in our Agreement that will clarify the responsibilities of SROs in the communication of information to school administrators.
6. **Safety and Security Policies:** There are only three policies dealing with safety and security of schools. These are vague and refer to individual school safety plans.
  - a. A review of the Iron County School District Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) will take place. District administration will review the plan and make recommendations to the school board as to the items that would be beneficial to put in official policy.
  - b. The School Board will review current policies (EBCC-R, EBCA, and EBC) in light of the recommendations from district administration and the needs of the district.
7. **Public Information Officers:** Our PIO (Shauna Lund) and the PIOs for the local law enforcement agencies will collaborate on communication with the public including templates that will be used and shared between the agencies.
8. **Faculty and Staff Involvement:** We will work with principals to ensure that faculty and staff members are active participants in the planning and development of school-specific elements of school safety and security plans.
9. **Calendar of Safety Drills and Training:** We are developing a calendar/schedule that will include all of the requirements and expectations regarding drills and training. These will be spread out through the school year and will guarantee that we are doing all that is required and expected in these two areas.
10. **Emergency Response Communication Tool:** We are working with our local law enforcement partners to select a tool that will integrate with our intercom systems and provide instant communication regarding emergency situations to all local law enforcement, district administration and others. We are considering options currently and we hope to implement a proper solution very soon.

# CVHS Timeline - Updated March 22

## Monday, February 27th

- At approximately 12:20 pm as a car pulled away from the CVHS parking lot, the driver pointed a gun at a group of students (this was not reported at this time)
- At approximately 1:30 pm a male student came to Officer Carpenter with a vague report that he may or may not have seen a juvenile point a gun as he drove out of the parking lot. The student was uncooperative and refused to answer any other questions.
- Officer Carpenter went immediately to the parking lot to see if the suspect was still in the parking lot. No one was in the parking lot. He then began reviewing school surveillance video to see if he could fill in the gaps of what the student was not saying.
- The video surveillance system is located in the office of Assistant Principal Julie King. While searching the video footage, Officer Carpenter spoke to Mrs. King about what was reported to him and that he was looking for the incident on the camera.
- At approximately 2:30 pm (as Officer Carpenter was still examining the video surveillance) two female students came to Officer Carpenter and reported that there was a fight in the parking lot. When Officer Carpenter arrived on the scene, the fight was over and the suspect(s) had already fled. He found the victim and began his investigation of the incident. The suspect was identified. At this time none of the witnesses of the fight who were interviewed by administration and the SRO reported seeing a weapon. The fight lasted approximately 15 seconds. The victim said that he was not injured and a visual inspection confirmed that there appeared to be no obvious injury. There was a phone conversation at this point between Mr. Heaton and Officer Carpenter where the report made at 1:30 pm and the fight in the parking lot were reported to him. By this time school was getting out.
- The mother of the victim of the fight could not come to the school and therefore the interview of this boy had to be scheduled for the following morning.

## Tuesday, February 28th

- At approximately 12:15 am, the mother of the witness of the gun brandishing incident called dispatch and reported that someone had pointed a gun at her son and was going to shoot up the school.
- At approximately 6:00 am Officer Carpenter was briefed on the drive-by shootings that occurred the previous night. At this time Officer Carpenter also received a notification of the dispatch call from the witness' mother.
- Between 6:50 am and 7:30 am Officer Carpenter asked 3 SROs and 3 patrol officers to be in and around CVHS for the morning while he was interviewing witnesses. There were 5 officers at CVHS prior to school starting.
- Unmarked police officers were stationed around the suspect's home and they received intelligence that he was in the residence. They maintained surveillance on the location.
- At approximately 7:15 am - Mr. Heaton called Superintendent Hatch and informed him about a fight that occurred the previous day and a vague report about seeing a gun. He shared that there was an increased police presence at the school just as a precaution and a deterrent. He said that he would come by the office later in the morning when he had more information.
- At approximately 8:15 am the victim of the parking lot fight was interviewed and Officer Carpenter and Principal Heaton conducted that interview with assistance from Detective Topham.
- At approximately 9:45am (after receiving word that the first witness was now willing to answer questions), Officer Carpenter interviewed the original first witness. The witness verified that the suspect was driving away in his vehicle and that no words were exchanged. The information resulting from the

interview was sufficient to obtain a warrant for arrest. Officer Carpenter and Detective Topham met with County investigators and attorneys and were able to obtain a warrant for arrest.

- At approximately 11:00 am - Mr. Heaton and Officer Bergstrom met with Superintendent Hatch, Roy Mathews and Shauna Lund. They informed the district that the suspect would soon be arrested and the investigation into the situation was ongoing. They also informed the district that a lockdown may be necessary when the arrest took place.
- Approximately 12:15 pm the district was notified that CCPD was placing Fiddlers Elementary on lockdown because the arrest was going to take place near that school.
- Between 12:30 pm and 12:50 pm - As officers were mobilizing to execute the warrant for arrest, social media posts were discovered that were threatening and mentioned the school. These were reported to Officer Carpenter who then called the principals at CVHS and CVMS to advise them to enter into a lockdown.
- At approximately 12:52pm - a lockdown was called at CVHS, CVMS and Fiddlers. A remind message went to parents informing them of the lock-down due to police activity in the area.
- The suspect was arrested by 1:05 pm.
- At approximately 1:08 pm - The lockdown was cleared and a Remind message went out to parents informing them that the lockdown had been lifted.
- At approximately 4:20 pm - The superintendent was sent an email from Chief Adams containing a press release. Superintendent Hatch informed Chief Adams that they had failed to include in their Press Release that CVMS went into lockdown too. He said he would add that.
- At 5:30 pm - Board Meeting began
- At approximately 5:06pm - CCPD released the Press Release
- At approximately 8:00 pm - District administration worked to put together a statement. The statement was sent to media outlets inquiring about the lockdown. The following statement was developed and sent out at approximately 9:10 pm.

The altercations did not come to the school's attention until the end of the school day on Monday when students reported them to the School Resource Officer. A police investigation began at that time. Through subsequent interviews, the timeline and report of a weapon came to light mid-day Tuesday. Under a precautionary measure, the school had an additional police presence on the campus on Tuesday. Once the law enforcement agencies working on the situation had the information and were able to obtain a warrant. Nearby schools were placed in a level 1 lockdown while the police took a male juvenile into custody. A level 1 lockdown means all outside doors of the school are locked and school continues inside. Every action taken by the school was in collaboration with local law enforcement. District administrators appreciate the relationship we have with our law enforcement community and the work that school resource officers do every day in keeping students safe.

### **Wednesday, March 1st**

- At approximately 2:30 pm - A meeting was held with Chief Adams, Officer Carpenter, Roy Mathews, Ben Johnson, Lauren Lewis, Lance Hatch and Denny Heaton - A review of the events took place which clarified many of the points in this timeline. Chief Adams took responsibility for the confusion that the CCPD statement caused and shared a revised statement with much more detail that he hoped would help with the concern from community members that our two statements didn't match.
- At approximately 5:40 pm - A new press release was sent out by CCPD and it was read at Cedar City Council Meeting and Enoch City Council Meeting.

### **Thursday, March 2nd**

- A student, who wanted to remain anonymous, reported to Officer Carpenter that they had seen a light wood colored pistol on the seat of the suspect's car on Monday.

- At approximately 5:21pm - Chief Adams confirmed that a dispatch call had been placed and information regarding a threat was received. He also informed me that on Tuesday morning the first witness verified that no threat was shared because the suspect was in a car driving away at the time of the incident and there was no conversation between the suspect and the witness. Chief Adams also shared that a GRAMA request had been made for that record.

### **Friday, March 3rd**

- A student was called to the office for an unrelated matter. The student stated that they were a witness to the fight on Monday and saw an imprint of what appeared to be a pistol in the pants pocket of the suspect briefly because the suspect's long shirt was covering it.
- At approximately 4:00 pm - ICSD released a new Press Release.

## **DISTRICT CLARIFIES ITS KNOWLEDGE OF EVENTS AT CVHS**

The report of a possible gun presence in the parking lot at Canyon View High School was not brought to the high school administration's attention until school ended on Monday. School administrators also learned at that time about the fight in the parking lot and that the two incidents were suspected to be connected. Law enforcement advised that the suspect was no longer on school grounds and that the report of a presence of a gun was not verified.

Early Tuesday morning, law enforcement informed district and school administrators the suspect involved in both incidents was under surveillance and advised an increased police presence at the school as a response to the situation.

Late Wednesday evening at about 9 p.m., district administration was informed that there may have been a dispatch call received early Tuesday related to the incident. Late Thursday, at about 5:20 p.m., Cedar City Police contacted district and school administrators to report that they had confirmed a dispatch call was received from a community member early Tuesday morning at 12:14 a.m., warning about a possible threat made by the suspect to shoot up the school. The suspect had been in custody for two days when school and district administrators learned of the dispatch call.

"Iron County School District administrators and Board of Education members have been meeting and will continue to meet with law enforcement to review and adjust current practices and procedures to ensure student safety at our schools," Superintendent Dr. Lance Hatch said.

### **Monday, March 6th**

- At 10:00 am - A meeting was held to discuss what had been learned from this situation and make plans for improvements in our processes and procedures. Those in attendance were Chief Adams, Sergeant Ludlow, Board President Johnson, Board Vice President Lewis, Board Member Stephanie Hill, Superintendent Hatch, Todd Hess, Janette Stubbs, Kevin Garrett, Roy Mathews, Steve Burton, and Shauna Lund. This resulted in a Joint Press Release. The contents of the release are below:

#### **ICSD AND CCPD ISSUE JOINT RELEASE FOLLOWING MEETING**

On March 6, district and school administrators and three Board of Education members met with Cedar City Police administrators to discuss ways to better ensure the increased security and safety of students in Iron County School District.

While the meeting was instigated by the incidents that occurred on Feb. 27 and 28 at Canyon View High School, the focus was on identifying policies or procedures that could increase school

safety and better communication with parents. During the meeting, both sides agreed law enforcement and schools walk a fine line in determining how much information can be shared during an ongoing investigation. School officials agreed they must rely on the expertise of police when dealing with these types of investigations. Law enforcement officials agreed that coordination is imperative, but cannot impede the important work they are doing.

“The reality is that our schools are safer places today than they were a week ago because of the work our local law enforcement did to swiftly identify and take action against a gang presence in our community,” said Superintendent Dr. Lance Hatch. “We are pleased to support and assist those efforts as they continually support and assist us with school safety and Security.”

Those in attendance also concurred there were areas where improvements could be made on both sides. Steps that will be taken moving forward, include:

- Better two-way communication between School Resource Officers (SROs) and school and district administrators.
- Clearer and earlier communication with parents during real and drilled security procedures.
- Education of parents on different types of security measures in schools and expectations for them, including the different types of lockdowns and when they are used.
- A review of safety and security policies at the district level with recommendations made to the school board for additions to official policy which would govern all schools.
- A review of coordination agreements between SROs and school administrators.
- Fencing at elementary schools to solidify a single point of entry. The fences will be built using capital funding.
- Installation of keyless entry on all school doors. At this point, the equipment has been ordered, but supply chain issues have delayed installation significantly.

Additionally, other future improvements may include:

- The addition of a district safety and security specialist to coordinate drills, protocols, access control in schools, etc.
- Installation of secure vestibules in all schools to facilitate a single point of entry. The cost of renovations in at least 11 schools would necessitate the expense being placed on an upcoming bond.
- A community event where parents are educated about the formation of gangs and steps they can take to protect their children.

“Our relationship with Iron County School District has never been stronger,” said Cedar City Police Chief Darin Adams. “We are committed to continuing that strong relationship.”