

October 23, 2015 Timeline Incident Overview

Fairfield Public Schools



9:15 AM



- Holland Hill Elementary School receives a phone call – '*person coming to school with a gun*' .
- School goes into lockdown.
- Fairfield Police Department (FPD) notified by school.

9:20 – 9:30 AM



- Fairfield Ludlowe High School receives a phone call – *'explosives in building, person coming to school with a gun'*.
- School goes into lockdown, notifies Central Office.
- FPD notified by school.

9:20 – 9:30 AM



- Fairfield Warde High School receives a phone call–
'explosives in building, person coming to school with a gun'.
- School goes into lockdown, notifies Central Office of bomb threat.
- FPD notified by school.
- Text message goes out to Warde families re: bomb threat.

9:20 – 9:30 AM



- Walter Fitzgerald Campus (alternative high school) receives a phone call – '*person coming to school with a gun*'.
- School goes into lockdown.
- FPD notified by school.

9:30 AM



**FAIRFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT
RECOMMENDS
ALL SCHOOLS GO INTO LOCKDOWN**

Coordination with Police, Fire, Schools & Departments

October 23 Timeline



9:30 -10:00 AM



- Emergency Operations Center activated at PD
- Police confident incident is "swatting"
- Central Office command center activated

9:35 AM



- Central Office sends out the first Infinite Campus message to parents only.

"A bomb threat has been reported at FWHS at this time and all Fairfield Public Schools are in lockdown. More information to follow."

9:42 AM



- Central Office sends out the second Infinite Campus message to all staff and parents

"All Schools are currently in lockdown. There is a police presence at every school. The police have been unable to confirm the threat at this time. But they are taking them seriously. Please do not come to the schools. For updated information parents can report to the Fairfield Prep parking lot."

9:45 am - 10:30 AM



- Text sent to families directing them to the Quick Center (at Fairfield University) for information
- Field Trips are directed to the Pitt Center at Sacred Heart University
- Decision is made to do early dismissal
- First news conference held (10:30 A.M.)

Emergency Communications



October 23 Timeline

11:07 AM



- Central Office sends out the third Infinite Campus message to all staff and parents.

"Schools have been changed to a lockout mode as a precautionary measure. No one will be allowed to enter or leave any buildings. All schools will be following the normal early closing schedule. No parents should go to the school."

11:17 AM



- Central Office sends out the fourth Infinite Campus message to all staff and parents.

"On Friday, October 23 all afternoon and evening activities of the Fairfield Public Schools are cancelled."

11:19 AM



- Central Office sends out an e-mail message to the District Leadership Team (fifth message).

"Thank you for your patience as we deal with this difficult situation. Each of you should have 2 police officers in your school. Please work with them to create a dismissal plan. We will be following the normal early release schedule, but you may release students early to a parent, however no parent or other adult should enter the school. Please work with the on-site police officers to ensure a safe and orderly dismissal. Thank you."

11:30 AM



- Second news conference

12:00 noon



- Early dismissal begins at high schools (15 mins. late)

1:04 PM



- Central Office sends out e-mail message:

"Dear Secretaries:

All secretarial staff may be released from their assignments today 40 minutes after the last bus leaves the building. I know today was a tough day, especially in the buildings, and I want to thank you all for your work. Central Office secretaries are dismissed at 2:25 today."

1:30 PM



- Debriefing meeting held at Emergency Operations Center.

2:30 PM



- Debriefing meeting held at Central Office.

4:49 PM



- Superintendent emails a letter to all families and staff (final message).

Monday, October 26



- Debriefing meeting held with Police, Fire, First Selectman & District Leadership Team



FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*“By failing to prepare,
you are preparing to fail”
– Benjamin Franklin*



October 23, 2015 Fairfield Public Schools Threat

Lessons Learned



Performing lockdown drills
and receiving feedback from the police
after each lockdown practice
really does pay off.

Lessons learned from October 23, 2015

Preparedness

Preparedness

- Establish clear roles for Central Office Administrators during lockdown (including backups)
 - Identify who and how information will be communicated to the Board
- Establish a Central Office Command Post
 - Who is there?
 - Who is running it?
 - What are its responsibilities?
- Identify a good system for getting information out simultaneously to all schools (including non-public)

Preparedness

- Establish clear terminology (“lockdown” vs “lockout”, etc.)
- Prepare the Central Office staff on what to do during a lockdown
- Determine if the key card access system will be shut off during a lockdown
- Contractors, vendors, delivery persons may be in the schools during a lockdown; they need to know what to do.

Preparedness

- Principals may not be in their schools during a lockdown, be prepared for it
- Principals need a way to communicate with teachers during lockdown if they cannot use the intercom.
- Substitute teachers, itinerant staff & kitchen staff need to know what to do
- Practice lockdown when kids are at recess, or at lunch
- Establish a plan for students in portables

Preparedness

- Pre-establish a site to send returning field trips
- Pre-establish a different site for a parent information center
- Parents will go to the schools no matter what; if and when the police agree, an orderly system for release can be established
- Remind parents to update their emergency contact information regularly throughout the school year

Lessons learned from October 23, 2015

Response

Response

- Messages from the Superintendent to the principals need to be consistent with the messages sent to police & fire personnel on-site.
- Communication to the schools should run through one, and *only one*, source.
- Encourage Principals to use training and judgement to make “on the spot” decisions about individual matters, if no police are present; if police are present, discuss options with them.

Response

- Superintendent, Police Chief, Fire Chief, First Selectman/Mayor are the only ones who speak to the press, and at regularly set news conferences
- Town “code red” messages, and school district “emergency” messages, need to be consistent
- Send out consistent text/emergency messages to parents as frequently as possible. You cannot over-communicate!
- Messages to non-English speakers can be misinterpreted.

Response

- Teachers need age-appropriate statements to give to students in a real lockdown, or they will invent things.
- Access to toilets is a problem if lockdown goes beyond one hour
- Students with medical needs may need access to prescriptions
- People are going to get hungry, thirsty and really cranky
- You can't stop people (staff & students) from texting

Lessons learned from October 23, 2015

Recovery

Recovery

- Conduct multiple debriefings:
 - ✓ Immediately after the incident with Administrators
 - ✓ Next day with all Administrators & Town personnel
 - ✓ Within a few days, Principals debrief with their faculty and students when appropriate
 - ✓ Within 2 weeks, develop an action plan to remedy deficiencies

Recovery

- Multiple, physical infrastructure issues will be identified at the schools during the event; develop a list of improvements
 - (e.g. missing blinds & shades)
- Identify solutions
 - (e.g. how to cover windows on classroom doors)
- Budget appropriately to address critical issues
 - (e.g. The Fairfield school district is currently bidding for emergency toilets for each classroom)

Lessons learned from October 23, 2015

Mitigation

Mitigation

- Take care of the mental health needs of staff & students who may be very shaken up by the event
- Provide parents with information on how to speak with their children
- Utilize the State crisis counselors who can come on short notice to serve the needs of students or adults

Mitigation

- Schedule parent meetings with police and fire personnel to answer questions and alleviate concerns
- Evaluate, improve and update the district lockdown manual based on lessons learned

Summary

“Establishing a flexible and fine-tuned crisis management plan is important for any organization. If nothing else, it will enable the leaders of such organizations to lead more easily during the most difficult of times. The anxiety and fear that arise during a crisis can best be combated by clarity, calm, and a plan of action.”

<http://www.inc.com/encyclopedia/crisis-management.html>



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**FAIRFIELD
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**