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May 23, 2018

Dear Parents & Families:

I am writing to inform you about two unrelated incidents that occurred yesterday afternoon.

During the transition to last period, a student made a verbal threat to "blow up the school." Because we take any threat seriously, a staff member immediately escorted the student to the main office. In accordance with our Code of Conduct, Menands police were called to investigate the situation. Ultimately, the police determined that the threat was not credible.

Separate from this but around the same time, at approximately 2:55 p.m., the fire alarm sounded. Staff and students followed established procedures to evacuate the building. Because this was not a scheduled drill, Menands police and fire department responded. They determined the source of the alarm to be burnt food being prepared for the Y-Time afterschool program. Given the time at which the alarm occurred and the need to ensure the building was safe for re-entry, students were dismissed about 30 minutes late.

I wish to commend our staff and students for following our safety procedures and remaining calm during this situation which, for some, may have been unsettling. Kudos to our local emergency responders for their quick response and diligence upon arrival. Finally, thank you to our parents for your patience and understanding during our delayed dismissal.

I want to assure you that, despite the events that occurred yesterday afternoon, at no time were students in danger. Yesterday was a testament to the effectiveness of the safety protocols we have in place and the importance of the drills we practice. Please know that we will continue to practice fire and other required drills during the remaining weeks of school.

I recognize that yesterday's events may generate some questions or perhaps anxiety among some students. Our staff has and will continue to reassure them, and we ask your help in doing the same at home. To that end, I am including a brochure distributed by our PTA and law enforcement officials at the May 10 safety forum. It includes an overview of our safety procedures and developmentally appropriate guidance on how to speak with your children about topics of this nature.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Dr. Maureen A. Long
Superintendent