

**School District of the City of Iron Mountain**

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Superintendent

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Dear Mountaineer families,

I would first like to express my gratitude for the response from our parent community this morning regarding our shelter in place incident we found ourselves in to start our school day. We had asked in our communications that parents do their best to not call the school or come to the school. The District understands this is a very hard request to make and very hard for parents to hear and comply with out of concern for your child(ren). However, the reason we make such a request is because the district and law enforcement believe it is the safest decision to make. As a result, our community responded extremely well and for that I am thankful. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Iron Mountain Police Department, for excellent communication and their help in trying to navigate these stressful times. Lastly, I would like to publicly thank the IMPS district employees. While student safety is always on the forefront of our minds, it is times like these where we see words being put into action. In just a moment’s notice our kids were safe, and staff went beyond what educators should have to be concerned about when it comes to educating children.

A few points I would like to reiterate to our families on the topic of school safety.

The District is very aware that parents may not agree with a districts policies and procedures as they pertain to matters of school safety. However, in matters such as these, the district works extremely close with law enforcement and decisions are made based on what is in the best interest of the children given the information we are working with at the time. Decisions are made based on law enforcement expertise in this area, and we will follow their guidance.

The District is managing a very stressful and serious situation in times like these. The District is very aware that regular and continual communication to parents is vital. We will communicate all we can when we can. Many times, law enforcement will ask us to only communicate certain details, so we do not hamper their investigation making matters more difficult. Also, please keep in mind different school districts will respond to their communities in different ways. Today’s incident was initiated by Iron Mountain PD with an Iron Mountain resident. Our handling of the situation between the school district and law enforcement will be different than neighboring communities not directly involved in the incident.

The “Soft lockdown” terminology used in today’s incident means that Law Enforcement and the District have reason to believe that it would be unsafe if children were outside of the buildings and that the safest place for kids is in the school with police officers on site or nearby. As communicated in our message to parents, there was not any specific threat to any of our buildings or children, however, out of an abundance of caution the District made the decision to keep students indoors until local Law Enforcement were able to locate and apprehend the individual. When we call for a “soft lockdown” we conduct business inside the school buildings as close to normal as we can. Also, the purpose of the “soft lockdown” is to keep students safe inside the building. Opening doors to address individuals who come to our buildings defeats the purpose of keeping kids safe by keeping the building locked. We will not open doors, let students leave, or allow anyone to enter.

For some further details on the incident please see the Iron Mountain Police Department’s press release on this matter.

Again, thank you for your patience, understanding, and willingness to entrust your children into our care. IMPS continues to work diligently on the matters of school safety, and it remains as the most important topic for us, as we try to work through difficult times in public education. If you would like to discuss matters of school safety, please do not hesitate to call my office.

Respectfully,



Jerry Sardina

Superintendent