



RICHARD A. GOLDINGER
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Mark A. Lope
First Assistant District Attorney

Butler County

124 W. DIAMOND STREET · P.O. BOX 1208 · BUTLER, PA 16003-1208
PHONE 724-284-5222 · FAX 724-284-5460 · TDD 724-284-5473
www.co.butler.pa.us

September 16, 2024

Moniteau Area School District
Mrs. Aubrie Schnelle, Superintendent
Administration Center
1810 West Sunbury Road
West Sunbury, PA 16061

Re. Social Media Threats

Dear Mrs. Schnelle:

In the last week, we have seen multiple threats to schools made on social media. Those threats caused the cancellation of classes in two school districts in Butler County. Other school districts in Butler County have been affected by social media threats in the same time frame. Sadly, these threats come on the heels of yet another tragic school shooting that recently occurred in Georgia. While the threats made turned out to not be credible, they caused the closing of the schools, which is an inconvenient, last-minute disruption for parents, students, teachers, school personnel, and others who may be affiliated in some way with the school.

Several years ago, we dealt with a similar situation where multiple bomb threats were made to the Butler Area School District. At that time, I implemented a policy that was meant to deter more bomb threats. The policy worked as the bomb threats stopped. Obviously, there is nothing we can do to stop someone from making a threat on social media. However, I feel that if I have a policy for how to treat those that make these threats on social media, it may act as a deterrent in the future.

Effective immediately, my office will advise the police department that has jurisdiction to file criminal charges against the person who made the threat as soon as possible. Once charges are filed, my office will pursue detention of the perpetrator. If the perpetrator is a juvenile (under the age of 18), the individual will be initially detained in a juvenile detention facility. If the perpetrator is over the age of 18, we will request a substantial bond be set and the individual will be incarcerated until they can post their bond, even if the individual is still a student. Further, if the individual is under the age of 18, but my office determines the juvenile is not amenable to treatment in Juvenile Court, we will seek to have the juvenile certified to Criminal Court, meaning they would face the same penalties as if they were over the age of 18. We have to take a "zero tolerance" position with this issue.

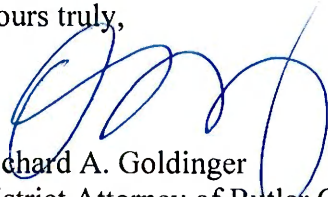
Mrs. Aubrie Schnelle, Superintendent
September 16, 2024
Page 2

Many students shared the threats when they became aware of them. Their intent was not to spread the threat, but rather to make people aware that a threat had been made against the Butler Area School District. I commend their intentions and cannot imagine what they must have been feeling knowing that a threat had been made against their school and they could possibly be in danger. However, sharing the threats only caused the threats to spread more.

Students, or anybody in general, should not share or repost any threat they may see on social media. They should notify a parent, a teacher or school personnel, the police, or call Safe2Say to report the threat. This will prevent unintended panic caused by the sharing of the threat.

I plan to share this letter with the police departments in the County as well as with Juvenile Probation. I would ask that you share this with families of students in your school district so they know that we, together, will not tolerate this any longer.

Yours truly,



Richard A. Goldinger
District Attorney of Butler County

RAG/mjd