

Opinion

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O&E Monday, October 15, 1984

Opinions vary on Wood Creek school closing

This week, Oral Quarrel asked readers: How should the Farmington school district handle the unexpected closing of a school? What could have been done differently in the Wood Creek closing?

Following are the responses:

More time should have been allowed to call parents. Only one hour was allowed and any child whose parents could not be contacted should have been kept after school until the regular closing time. That's what is done in the Detroit schools.

I think they handled it the way they always have which is fine. My daughter was in school for 13 years and I always had an alternate place for her to go. It is about time the people in Farmington stopped expecting the schools to be babysitters and live up to their responsibilities.

The students whose parents were contacted could have been sent home. The other students should have been taken to another school. This is my opinion.

Mr. Schulman himself mentions that parents are not home during the day. This has not happened overnight and the school system should have responded long ago.

It was handled perfectly.

I am a Wood Creek parent. I feel

oral quarrel

It is my responsibility to make sure that my children know where to go in case of any emergency such as my not being home when they come home from school. My children knew exactly, even though I wasn't home on that day, where to go. Since I was not home they not only had one choice but two or three choices. I feel it is the parents responsibility.

I think all the children should know where to go. I think their parents should have taught them an emergency place and sometime things happen and schools have to send kids home. I think the parents should have taught their children to know where to go.

I personally don't feel that the school district should be responsible for these children. Children should be instructed as to a home in the neighborhood that they can go to in case of an emergency where the parent does not work and will assume responsibility. Things unforeseen, such as a power failure, cannot be predicted at any given time.

The school should have called the emergency numbers on the children's cards. It happened last year at St. Fabian and I was furious. It should not be allowed to happen.

I am a Wood Creek teacher. I speak for all the Wood Creek teachers in saying we believe everything possible was done to insure the safety of our Wood Creek children. Some children who indicated to the teacher that they did not know where to go, if their parents were not home, were kept in school for some time. Other families were contacted either directly or by another parent.

If that superintendent had kept those students in the dark, so to speak, or something had happened to them, they would be the first ones to complain about that decision also. There are some things you just can't help and emergencies are one of them.

I think, at the minimum, elementary school children should never be released without at least an attempt to call the emergency number. In Wood Creek any improvement on the situation of having someone competent dealing with it, would have helped.

The bottom line is that parents have the responsibility to the children. Some of them think their only responsibility is to name the child.

I do think that the school board did the right thing by closing Wood Creek School. Have you ever tried to run a school that is poorly designed, has no lights and has 475 students and run that school in the dark. Think about the times you lost your power.

I think this whole problem would not have come about if these women had been in their home fulfilling the duties of a wife and mother. Let them be home. Let them be mothers. Let them be wives. Let them take care of their homes and they should know where their children are at all times. Let them make a home so that their children have something to come home to.

Could it be that some of the parents didn't want to be bothered baby-sitting their own kids? Much ado about nothing.

I feel they did the right thing by closing the schools. Yet, however, they should have taken precautionary measures to see that the children have been taken care of after the dismissal. It is unfortunate that it takes an incident like this to predict future things. They should plan these things out before they happen so that if something like this happens again they would know the way to handle it.

No child should be released from Wood Creek or any other school until someone on that child's emergency card has been contacted and made arrangements.

I think if the closing is necessary and I think if they can't cope, they are somewhat deranged.

Parents should prepare their students as to what to do in case of just such an emergency from day one.

Larry Freedman should have had his paid personnel watch these children outside if necessary or at another building until the regular bus time. If one child had been missing or in serious trouble, the whole community would have been devastated. I was flabbergasted to find my child home alone unbeknown to me.

I think maybe some of these women ought to be home taking care of their families instead of out taking a job that some man needs to support his family.

I believe it is the parent's responsibility to make sure that the parents can be contacted or have some surrogate number to tell what to do in an emergency. I used to teach in the Farmington schools and every child had a card with a number where an emergency situation could be taken care of. I don't think it is all the school's fault.

Parents of school children or persons whom they identify as those to be reached by telephone in an emergency have no right to complain against the school. If for

safety reasons a child has to be sent home, the school should have not relied on other parents to call parents but the parental protest in the Wood Creek case sends a message about them. They are self-centered.

I am a homemaker who stays home with our children and if the school finds it necessary to close, they have no trouble knowing what to do. It is not the school's job to baby-sit for working mothers.

I just want to say that the article was completely wrong and I am very upset about it. I know that one child was kept until 1 o'clock because the parent was not notified. They couldn't get a hold of her. She stayed here until 1 o'clock until her parents were notified and then she was picked up. I thought Mr. Prince (Wood Creek principal) and his staff did a very good job.

The Farmington School District is handling the unexpected closing of schools by sending out parent-teacher booklets weeks before this incident happened that could have been read by parents who were interested in that. Parents could also have informed their children if they were not home, what they should do about it. This is the parent's responsibility. The closing was necessary and handled well.

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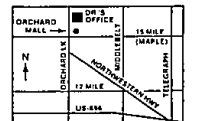
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