



Loudoun County, Virginia

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Phyllis J. Randall

Chairwoman At Large

Loudoun County Board of Supervisors

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 14, 2021



CHAIR RANDALL ISSUES STATEMENT ON ALLEGED LCPS INCIDENTS

LEESBURG, VA – Chair Phyllis Randall provided the following statement regarding newly circulating news coverage of alleged incidents of sexual assault Loudoun County Public Schools.

“Loudoun, this is one of the hardest, in fact painful messages that I've written to you. Of course, I'm speaking of the alleged sexual assaults that happened in Loudoun County Public School (LCPS) facilities (Legally, until a person is found guilty in a court of law, the proper term is alleged).

Let me start by saying that as a parent and the County Chair, I'm praying for the victims and their families. No matter the relationships, sexual assault is a heinous crime, and one that can take a victim years to work through. There will never be a time when I don't stand with victims.

Loudoun, the Board of Supervisors (BOS) learned of these alleged incidents at the same time and in the same manner as you. It's reasonable for you to ask, “how is that possible?” The truth is, neither the County Administrator nor the BOS have authority over Loudoun's Constitutional Officers (Sheriff, Commonwealth Attorney, etc.) or the Loudoun County School Board. This means they are not required to, and in this case did not share any information with the BOS or County staff.

Upon learning of these alleged incidents, the BOS immediately asked for information and clarification. We received the same statements at the same time and in the same manner as you. Below are statements on this issue from the Sheriff, the Commonwealth Attorney and LCPS.

Please know that my colleagues and I continue to press for additional information. Of course, we are not requesting identifying information, but simply greater clarity regarding what is factual vs. fallacious reporting. When and if I receive greater clarification, I will let you know.

Because I don't wish to share speculation or misinformation about the alleged perpetrator, I won't comment on anything else at this time.

What I know for a fact is that every child deserves to feel safe in their schools, and every parent needs to know their children are not at risk when they drop them off at school. Again, please join me in praying for the families and all survivors of sexual assault.”

INCLUDED BELOW:

1. LCSO Full Statement (with hyperlink to online statement)
2. LCPS Full Statement (not posted on the LCPS website)

Statement from the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office:

<https://sheriff.loudoun.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=7037>

There has been misinformation circulating regarding an investigation into a reported sexual assault that occurred on May 28, 2021, at Stone Bridge High School in Ashburn, VA. Due to exclusions under the Virginia Code regarding disclosure of juvenile reports and the fact the case is pending court proceedings, the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office (LCSO) is limited as to what information can be released.

On May 28, 2021, an LCSO School Resource Officer was notified by Stone Bridge High School staff of a possible sexual assault. A thorough investigation and evidentiary analysis was conducted over the course of several weeks by the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office Special Victims Unit.

Once the elements of a crime were determined, on July 8, 2021, a 14-year-old male was arrested in the case with two counts of forcible sodomy.

Following the arrest on July 8, 2021, the judicial process was turned over to the Loudoun County Commonwealth's Attorney's Office to determine bail, or in the case of a juvenile, the continuance of detention or other legal restrictions set forth as part of court proceedings in the Loudoun County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court.

As stated in both the current and former Memorandum of Understanding between the LCSO and Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS), the Loudoun Sheriff's Office is not involved in school discipline (nor the placement of students). Nevertheless, the LCSO works closely with school officials throughout all criminal investigations.

The October 6, 2021 incident at Broad Run High School did not involve complex circumstances, the arrest was immediate, and the arrest was reported to the community as information released was unlikely to disclose the identity of the victim. However, the May 28, 2021 investigation was different in that the suspect and victim were familiar with each other, the investigation was complex, and a public announcement had the potential to identify a juvenile victim.

The Loudoun County Sheriff's Office remains committed to the safety of all students and will investigate all incidents reported by Loudoun County Public Schools to the fullest extent of the law.

Further information regarding the identity of a juvenile suspect is excluded from disclosure pursuant to Virginia Code §16.1-301 and criminal history information is exempt under Virginia Code §19.2-389.

Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) Statement:

Loudoun County Public Schools is aware of the media and social media reports concerning alleged sexual assaults at two of our high school campuses. While LCPS takes student privacy seriously and cannot reveal details concerning the actions of any specific student, we do want to clarify our investigative process. Principals are legally required to report to the local law enforcement agency any act, including sexual assault, that may constitute a felony offense under Va. Code § 22.1-279.3:1. That process was followed with respect to these allegations. Loudoun County Sheriff's Office was contacted within minutes of receiving the initial report on May 28. Once a matter has been reported to law enforcement, LCPS does not begin its investigation until law enforcement advises LCPS that it has completed the criminal investigation. To maintain the integrity of the criminal investigation, law enforcement requested that LCPS not interview students until their investigation is concluded. LCPS has cooperated and continues to cooperate with law enforcement.

Furthermore, LCPS is prohibited from disciplining any student without following the Title IX grievance process, which includes investigating complaints of sexual harassment and sexual assault. LCPS does impose interim measures to protect the safety of students involved in the original incident, deter retaliation, and preserve the integrity of the investigation and resolution process. LCPS has complied and continues to comply with its obligations under Title IX.

School Board members are typically not given details of disciplinary matters. The board may be obligated to consider long-term suspensions or expulsions and must ensure that students have not been deprived of due process. Consequently, members of the Loudoun County School Board were not aware of the specific details of this incident until it was reported in media outlets earlier this week. We are unable to locate any records that indicate that Scott Smith had registered in advance to speak at the June 22, 2021 board meeting.

From Commonwealth Attorney Buta Biberaj

After checking social media pages and her website I did not see a statement from the Office of the Commonwealth Attorney. Pending an update from the Commonwealth Attorney's Office this statement will be amended.

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