



October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024

Dear Livingston Public Schools community,

Livingston Public Schools (LPS) has not, at this moment, received any threat of a bombing, shooting, or crisis event. While it is never our intent to create confusion, after we sent out information on our website, social media, and via email regarding an anticipated potential swatting attempt, some members of our community became fearful that the schools had received a threat, and that Infinite Campus was hacked as a part of a plan to do harm. We wish to reassure everyone that this is not the case.

Yesterday, October 2, 2024, LPS received credible information from the Montana Department of Justice that we *might be included* in “swatting” calls that were expected across the state and nation. You may have read about similar incidents happening in schools around the state this fall. Some of the swatting calls were made by individuals or groups who may not have even been in the United States. However, in a handful of those cases, it was discovered that an individual in the community made the threats, and those individuals now face criminal charges.

Swatting calls appear to be attempts to disrupt systems by creating a threat of a crisis to trigger a response by emergency services. Individuals or groups who make swatting calls cause harm and are committing an illegal act. While the vast majority of threat calls turn out to be hoaxes, in schools, we must treat every threat or potential threat seriously. In cases where we receive a threat, until we know for certain who made the threat or that it is a hoax, we act on every threat immediately, following protocols we have developed and rehearsed with law enforcement.

Unfortunately, people who wish to do harm sometimes pay close attention to how schools and law enforcement respond, and then take advantage of that knowledge to do more harm. There are cases in which law enforcement expressly asks us *not* to share information to maximize safety and their ability to respond effectively. So, we work closely with law enforcement to determine carefully exactly what information to share, and when to share it.

In this case, we felt it prudent to share with parents, guardians, and staff that we had credible information that LPS might receive a swatting call, and that we were preparing in the event that we did receive one. Unfortunately, the system we rely on to communicate with families, Infinite Campus, suffered a statewide server crash -- no hacking suspected -- at exactly the time we needed to communicate! So, we went to social media and our website to put as much information out there as possible. We apologize for any inconvenience or confusion that the IC outage may



have caused. We were caught off guard by the IC crash, and have developed a backup plan for situations like this in the future, and will have alternate means to email in the event that Infinite Campus suffers an outage. Please be aware – had this been an actual crisis or threat, the schools and law enforcement would have had access to a variety of means, including the NIXLE alert system, to share necessary information with the entire community.

It is important to reiterate that up to the time of this communication, LPS has not received any threat; only information that we *might* receive a threat.

If you have any other questions, please contact the LPS District Office at (406) 222 – 0861.

Sincerely,

Eldon C. Johnson  
Superintendent of Schools  
Livingston School District