

PRESS RELEASE

SALEM PUBLIC SCHOOLS

February 2, 2012

Submitted by: Stephen Russell, Supt of Schools

Note; We have received multiple telephone inquiries requesting that we respond to an incident involving one of our students and another child's parent that took place earlier today. Further information is also available in the arrest report issued by the Salem Police Department earlier today. Our statement follows-

Today at approximately 7:15 am Alan Leclair, Transportation Supervisor for the Salem Public Schools received a school bus driver's radio report that a parent accompanied by her child, boarded her school bus without authorization and proceeded to approach and slap a female kindergarten student across the face several times. The school bus driver secured the bus and immediately directed the parent to leave. The parent involved threatened the child whom she slapped stating that "you will never hit my child again". This individual then left the bus and immediate area.

Mr. Leclair and I arrived on the scene shortly thereafter. An ambulance and two officers were present. One officer (assisted by the ambulance attendant) was consoling the child, the other officer was busy contacting the child's parent and obtaining a report from the bus driver. Shortly thereafter the bus continued on the route without further incident.

The child's (who was slapped) mother arrived on the scene at approximately 7:30 am. She reportedly took her child to the hospital as a precaution. The child returned to school later in the day. School staff and counselors have made themselves available to assist any students who were on the bus and/or worried about bus safety as the need arises. Letters have gone home to the parents of students in the schools affected and the district has taken steps to assign a monitor to the bus involved for the next several days.

An investigation started prior to this incident is underway concerning the allegations of bullying that were made by the parent whose actions contributed to today's events. The results of this investigation will be forthcoming once completed. Follow-up with the parent concerning her own son is planned.

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Steve Russell (*I'm writing this at 6 pm after the office staff has headed home*) was quite critical of this parent's actions in taking matters into her own hands, "We would not condone this type of behavior from any of our students and we surely do not and will not condone it in adults." Such behavior runs contrary to what we try to teach our students everyday as they work at resolving

problems among themselves. I understand that as parents we all become upset and frustrated from time to time, however as adults we also have a responsibility to set an example for our children on how to best handle these difficulties when they arise.