

November 29, 2007

To: Smitty

From: Monty Aldrich

THOUGHTS FROM THE UNIT OFFICE...

I hope everyone had a safe and peaceful Thanksgiving. There are many things that I try not to take for granted that deserve "thanks". I know that I've said it before but we have a relatively young group of people serving our community on a volunteer basis that are more valuable to my family than anyone can understand. That's the First Responders group associated with the North Clay Fire Protection District. We've called at midnight, 2:00 a.m., 6:00 a.m., etc., and they've always responded quickly with a positive attitude. Same goes to the NCFPD. I cannot imagine having a fire and suffering such a loss, and these people are quick to respond. The Clay County Ambulance service has been a wonderful service to us as well. We now have medical clinics and resources in town that many can benefit from, and it's important that we give them a shot (no pun intended) when we can. I am most thankful that we have a school district that is relatively safe for kids. When I say "relatively" safe, I emphasize that because small rural areas are vulnerable to particular issues that affect kids.

I am thankful for the people in the community who are taking over to assure that new businesses and new ideas are created in the attempt to help Louisville progress and maintain. It's valuable to our district because people have to have a reason to continue to live here and raise families. Enrollment is the fuel that keeps this entire school district running.

We have an issue within our district that is not new, but I would like to provide some information to emphasize how dangerous and urgent this situation actually is. The "drug of choice" lately seems be *prescription pills*. By prescription pills, I do not necessarily mean that the user has an authorized prescription to take the meds being abused. Some students have now chosen pills to "get high" because the pills are easily accessible. Pills are also easy to hide, and it is most likely that K-9 dogs would not detect odor from these like they would with other illegal substances. Some ways that pills are easily accessible is through the home. Many parents or other family members have prescription medications that they are no longer taking and those supplies have been raided, brought to schools, sold, taken, etc. At other times, a prescription is obtained for a child and is not monitored closely. Another easily accessible method of obtaining pills is to buy or trade for them "on the street". There have even been reports that some students have purchased pills from adults. That is a very difficult concept for me to grasp. Selling harmful substances to school-age children is perhaps one of the lowest forms of life that I could imagine. I consider the fact that the younger and smaller children can be exposed to this in many ways. If pills are dropped, lost, left, or offered, young kids could mistake it for candy, experiment with it, pass it on, etc. You and I could also meet one of the abusers on the road. Your child might also be riding along with someone driving in this condition. It's not just the "strongest" or worst pills that are being abused. You'd be surprised at what is being taken.

What can you do as a parent? Keep the medicines in the original container. This will help identify the contents if they are accidentally ingested. Mark out your name and prescription number for safety. For pills, add some water or soda to start dissolving them. For liquids, add something inedible like cat litter, dirt or cayenne pepper. Close the lid and secure with duct or packing tape. Place the bottle(s) inside an opaque (non see-through) container like a coffee can

or plastic laundry bottle. Tape that container closed. Hide the container in the trash. Do not put drugs in the trash without disguising them. Do not give the drugs to anyone else to use. Do NOT flush drugs down the toilet. Traces of all sorts of drugs have been found in water. As a parent, I believe you still have the right to look around in your own house and find out what is going on. Remember, most of these kids have been educated by others in the techniques of where and how to hide any evidence. Obviously the drug problem is worldly and we cannot stop it. There's a tremendous amount of money involved along with powerful people. We can do battle around here by doing everything possible to identify sources in order to keep our kids safe.

It's getting close to that time where ice and snow become factors in determining whether to have school or dismiss early. With that, I would like to address my reasoning behind dismissing early when necessary. We make judgment upon whether it is safe to have kids on buses. Those older students who choose to drive when bad weather is possible make that decision based from parental direction at home. We cannot always guarantee that it is safe for a student to drive to school even if our decision is that it is safe for buses. The adult bus drivers have more experience, and are more protected with the larger bus in this situation. Drivers also have FM radios to communicate in the event of an emergency. It is sometimes a tough call, and one cannot always depend on the forecast. On rare occasions, it may be safer to keep the kids at the school throughout the storm until conditions are better.

The other situation that I would like for you to follow is to listen to the variety of media sources we have when we release a statement for early dismissal, school closing, or cancellations. Continuous calls to our offices make it difficult to get necessary information out to media sources. Our secretaries are extremely busy arranging for student transportation issues and other situations when preparing for a dismissal. I am listing the media sources that we will immediately use when making an announcement. **Please utilize these resources and do not call the schools for information regarding closings or early dismissals.** This causes our phone lines to be maximized and we cannot get other information out that is needed. I appreciate your cooperation in this. This will make us more efficient in getting information out for everyone's benefit.

(CLIP AND SAVE)

Weather-Related Information/Media Releases:

WNOI Radio – Flora 103.9 FM

WCRC Radio – Effingham 95.7 FM

WXEF Radio – Effingham 97.9 FM

WKJT Radio – Effingham 102.3 FM

WSEI Radio – Olney 92.9 FM

WTHI Television – Terre Haute (*Radio stations will be contacted before television*)

WTWO Television – Terre Haute (*Radio stations will be contacted before television*)

KSDK Television – St. Louis (*Radio stations will be contacted before television*)

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