



## North Branch Area Schools

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James D. Fish  
Superintendent

December 15, 2021

### Safety Update from Superintendent Jim Fish

On the morning of Thursday, December 9, 2021, a student in the Ruth Fox Middle School approached Principal Dane Terauds, informing him of an alleged social media threat this student received from another student in late November. Mr. Terauds immediately contacted the Lapeer County Sheriff's Department. An officer was already in the vicinity and responded within minutes. **The Ruth Fox Middle School Administration and local law enforcement collaborated to investigate the threat allegation and no evidence was found to substantiate the student's allegations.**

At approximately 5 p.m. that same afternoon, our school administration was notified of evidence originating from outside of school of an alleged threat specific to this student. This information came from the Tuscola County Sheriff's Department. The Ruth Fox Middle School Administration cooperated with the Tuscola County Sheriff's Department and the Michigan State Police to further investigate the threat allegation. Families of students involved in this investigation were contacted during the evening of Thursday, December 9 and informed of the situation. Students who were the focus of the investigation were required to stay home from school while law enforcement completed their investigation and have not been in school since the investigation began.

We were notified this afternoon of a Press Release from the Tuscola County Prosecutor's Office charging one of the students who was involved in the December 9 investigation. The press release states "she concocted an elaborate hoax to implicate the other student as the drafter/writer of the threats." According to the press release, the student has been charged with multiple criminal counts. The purpose of this communication is to provide additional clarity regarding the Tuscola County Prosecutor's Press Release sent out this afternoon, as well as assure our community, parents, staff, and students that North Branch Area Schools will take any alleged threat seriously, and to continue to remain transparent in informing all stakeholders when we are permitted by federal and state law to provide information that has been investigated and substantiated.

A special thank you to Lapeer County Prosecutor, John Miller, for spending time today addressing all students in grades 7-12, as well as our Quest students, on the importance of informing a parent, an adult, a teacher, or an administrator if they see or hear of any type of threat they become aware of on social media or otherwise. Mr. Miller also reminded students there are severe legal consequences for making false statements or spreading rumors. It is imperative that our students and stakeholders understand the significant consequences that exist with the misuse of social media.

Community members and parents are invited to attend a School Safety Forum scheduled for Monday, January 17, 2022 at 6 p.m. in the high school auditorium. Our School Safety Committee will meet in early January to discuss and review school safety policies and procedures. It is this type of collaboration with our community and law enforcement that will continue to assure our staff and students safety remains a top priority for our district.