



Maria V. Navarro, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

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November 17, 2024

Dear CCPS community:

Over the weekend, there has been a lot of information circulating regarding an incident that took place Friday at C. Paul Barnhart Elementary School. As with any incident in any of our schools, Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) cannot legally release personally identifiable information about students. This includes specific details about incidents. However, we are thankful to report that the student who was taken to the hospital is now home.

I have seen comments online stating that the school and CCPS are covering up what happened. This is not true. The principal nor the school system are hiding anything. Rather, we are sharing what information we can while we conduct a full investigation. The investigation is ongoing; speculation about what did or did not happen as well as the circulation of misinformation impedes the investigation process. Some comments online have alluded to threats toward staff. While the information circulating is alarming and involves heavy emotions, it does not warrant threats against staff or toward others involved.

We continue to work with Barnhart school administrators to investigate. Our investigation includes support from the Charles County Sheriff's Office. On Friday afternoon before dismissal, the school resource officer for Barnhart (SRO) started the police investigation and filed a preliminary report. The letter shared by Mrs. Burke Friday afternoon included details based on information obtained through our initial investigation.

It is important to note that any student who is found to violate the CCPS *Code of Student Conduct* faces discipline consequences and it is imperative that we have all the information so that we can adequately address consequences. Police are working with us to confirm details of the investigation.

Administrators are supporting both families and students involved in this incident, and the school system is supporting its staff. Our support includes providing mental health resources. The safety of all students is a priority, and we take reports of alleged bullying or assault very seriously. CCPS will not release any additional information about this incident until the investigation concludes.

Thank you for your support of Charles County Public Schools.

Sincerely,

Maria V. Navarro, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools