



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr.. L.K. Payne, City Manager
FROM: Colonel P.H. Snead, Chief of Police
DATE: May 14, 2010
RE: Requested Information

You advised me that you have received inquiries from members of the public regarding actions taken by the Police Department to address school safety concerns that came to light during investigation of a March 27, 2010 burglary at E.C. Glass High School. You therefore requested additional information on that situation. An overview is provided below. Please advise if you need any further information.

On Saturday March 27, 2010 at approximately 12:53 a.m., Sonitrol Alarm Systems notified E.G. Glass principal Kevin Latham that Sonitrol was receiving an alarm from the weight room door at the rear of EC Glass high school. While Mr. Latham was enroute to check the school, he requested that Lynchburg Police Officers also be notified to respond.

At approximately 01:03, Sonitrol Alarm notified the Lynchburg Emergency Communications Center to report motion detected in the Jimmy Bryant Lobby of the Athletic Wing of E. C. Glass High School. The alarm company representative advised the Telecommunicator that a banging noise was heard in the area of the detected motion. Police officers began arriving on-scene at EC Glass at 01:07. The officers found the exterior doors secure: on Mr. Latham's arrival, officers entered the school and searched the interior, beginning in the area from which the alarm was received. The officers did not encounter anyone inside the school, and did not locate any signs of criminal activity at this time. Officers cleared from the school at 01:45.

On Monday March 29, 2010 at approximately 08:00 a.m., Mr.. Latham contacted the School Resource Officer at E C. Glass High School and asked the SRO to review the school's surveillance camera recordings for the early morning hours of March 27, to see if anyone was visible within the school at the time of the alarm activation. In reviewing the surveillance video, the SRO observed five people wearing hoods, gloves, and backpacks in the hallway in the area of the auxiliary gym at approximately 01:02 hours on Saturday, March 27. At approximately 01:11, the video shows these five people quickly leaving the auxiliary gym and exiting the school. At 01:12, the video police officers entered the auxiliary gym as part of their building search. It appears that the intruders fled the scene on becoming aware that the police officers were approaching. Two of the five intruders shown on the video appear to be carrying handguns.

Overview: 3-27-2010 Burglary Investigation

The SRO reported this information in detail, and shared the information (through the medium of a roll call training advisory) with all LPD operational components. The SRO's interpretation of this video did not extend beyond the presence of masked and possibly armed burglars within the school after-hours. This was the information the SRO shared with LPD patrol officers.

On Wednesday March 31, 2010, an LPD Criminal Investigations Detective met with the School Resource Officer at E. C. Glass High School to discuss two separate burglaries at the school that occurred between March 20 and March 21, 2010 -- candy and baseball equipment were stolen in these incidents from the E.C. Glass football concession stand and the baseball equipment storage building. During this meeting, the SRO advised the Detective of the incident that occurred during the early morning hour of March 27 and advised the Detective to review the video. The Detective notified his supervisor about the video on April 1. The CID supervisor notified the LPD's upper command staff. Command staff members immediately began meeting to assess the available information.

On viewing the video, command staff members agreed that it would be prudent to increase officer presence at all City schools, beginning immediately. These measures were in addition to LPD protocols already in place for rapid response to any report of an "active threat" emergency situation at any location within the City. These rapid response procedures, supported by regular officer training, have been operational within the LPD officer workforce for years.

On April 1, 2010 and April 2, 2010 additional officers were assigned to each of the schools as a precautionary measure. The Lynchburg City Schools were on Spring break the following week – significantly increased officer presence at all City schools was continued when classes resumed on Monday, April 12. In consulting with the City School System Superintendent on April 1, it was determined that officer presence would be increased in a low profile manner, so as to reduce the possibility of causing student or public panic in the face of the limited information available. I briefed you on April 1 with regard to the available information and the Police Department/School Administration response plans.

Increased officer presence in and around City schools and school events has remained an operational priority since April 1, and will remain so throughout the remainder of the school year. As most members of the public are aware, school-based police officers are regularly assigned to the City high schools and middle schools as standard Police Department and School System procedure. Officers also make a regular practice of monitoring City elementary schools. The Lynchburg Police Department and the City School System staff share a common commitment to ensuring that our community's children are safe within their schools.

After reviewing how the incidents of March 27 came to the attention of Police Department personnel, the LPD command staff re-emphasized to all agency employees the need to recognize significant information when it becomes available, and to quickly disseminate significant information throughout our operational structure. Every LPD employee is committed to working as effectively as possible in providing public safety services.

Overview: 3-27-2010 Burglary Investigation

During the week of Spring break, Detectives and the School Resource Officer investigated this incident in an attempt to identify the involved subjects. On April 9, we released still photographs of the suspects to WSET in an attempt to generate identifying information on any or all of them. This case is still under investigation and at this time we have not determined the suspects' motive in this incident.

The LPD is continuing to request that anyone who has any information related to this incident please contact Detective R.G. Miller at 434-455-6054, or contact the Central Virginia Crime Stoppers tip line at 1-888-798-5900.