

September 19, 2012

Honorable Chief Shastany, Town Manager Feaster, and Stoughton Selectmen:

I know you were all shaken by the horrible accident resulting in the death of an innocent 3-year-old child in front of the Hansen School on September 14, 2012. Now that we all have heightened awareness of the dangerous conditions in front of the Hansen School, it is incumbent upon us to implement appropriate protection measures in a timely manner.

I appreciate, deciding what the appropriate measures are, and then implementing them properly will take time. In the mean time, we must create interim stopgap measures, in order to protect our residents and our precious children.

I tried very hard to get the School Committee to have an emergency meeting to discuss the accident and interim protections. Unfortunately, I was unable to get support from any of my esteemed colleagues to schedule an emergency meeting.

In response, our esteemed chairperson disclosed the administration's position in her email dated 9/17/2012: **"I want to stress that this is not a school issue, it is a public safety issue ..."** In the same email, she also stated **"we have yet to determine whether a crossing guard would have made any difference, how many students walk to school from that direction, whether a crossing guard would even be safe in that location."** As you know, the chain of emails on this matter are public records, and are provided as an attachment to this letter.

In view of these developments, and as a minimal interim safety measure, I strongly urge you to place a police officer and a cruiser on the Central Street front of the Hansen School, at least during the times of assembly and dismissal of the Hansen School students.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Erdem Ural". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Erdem A. Ural

cc. Superintendent Rizzi, and Stoughton School Committee members

9/18/2012

From: <erdem.ural@lpsti.com>

To: "Deborah Sovinee" <d_sovinee@stoughtonschools.org>, "Thomas Colburn" <T_Colburn@stoughtonschools.org>, "Marguerite Rizzi" <m_rizzi@stoughtonschools.org>, "George Dolinsky" <g_dolinsky@stoughtonschools.org>

Maggie and Deborah:

My issue is not to determine who to blame.

My first issue is the failure of both of you to properly inform the school committee. I have been reading your statements to the press. I asked a simple question as to where exactly the crossing guard was. As an elected member of the school committee, I deserve an answer. It is inappropriate for you to block our access to information by not scheduling a meeting.

My second issue is to make sure that we take all conceivable precautions, until the situation is carefully analyzed. Until we know all the facts, we need to be extra vigilant. The crossing guard issue has been brought up by many, and therefore both of you are on the notice for it. I urge you to put a crossing guard in front of the school.

Since you are not bothering to answer my questions, I have no choice but to conduct my own investigation into the matter. I am also not sure I can honor your gag request.

Sincerely Yours,

Erdem

9/17/2012

From: "Deborah Sovinee" <d_sovinee@stoughtonschools.org>

To: erdem.ural@lpsti.com, "Thomas Colburn" <T_Colburn@stoughtonschools.org>, "Marguerite Rizzi" <m_rizzi@stoughtonschools.org>, "George Dolinsky" <g_dolinsky@stoughtonschools.org>

Greetings everyone,

We will not have an emergency meeting this week. In fact, given that next Tuesday at sundown Yom Kippur begins, I would like to ask that we re-schedule the meeting planned for Tuesday and move it to Wednesday. The BOS has done the same. Please respond to me about this.

Meanwhile, police will be at the Hansen School on Wednesday to maintain privacy for the students, staff and parents, should any news media attempt to come onto school grounds. We are getting an opinion from Gini Tate so we are secure in our authority to keep media off school property.

Counselors and a trauma team are already arranged, and in fact, are already at work. Given that the circumstances surrounding how and why the accident occurred are still being determined by school, state and local public officials, I ask you not to comment publicly until we have all the facts.

Our meeting next week must address the accident but only in general terms - neither accepting blame, nor assigning blame because it is not appropriate. This is a highly emotional issue of course, but cool heads must prevail. Please be measured in our discussion and your questions.

There will be no public safety officials at our meeting but a comprehensive meeting where we can all look at things like existing traffic studies, sidewalks, student egress, planned traffic signals, etc. is planned for the near future and I will let you all know when that is.

I am still working out exactly what the agenda will be and who will be at our meeting.

Regarding Erdem's other issues, we have yet to determine whether a crossing guard would have made any difference, how many students walk to school from that direction, **whether a crossing guard would even be safe in that location.** None of us are traffic engineers nor public safety officials, but we are looking at every option and reviewing plans to see if anything more could have, or can be, done. **I want to stress that this is not a school issue, it is a public safety issue** and we are seeking more information. To have a public meeting at this juncture would not only be premature, it would be ill-advised. We would be doing a disservice to all of the people that we serve by letting our emotions cloud clear thinking and sound planning. Please call me if you have any further questions. I expect I may see you at the wake tomorrow.

Deborah

9/17/2012

From: <erdem.ural@lpsti.com>

To/CC: "Deborah Sovinee" <d_sovinee@stoughtonschools.org>, "Marguerite Rizzi"

<m_rizzi@stoughtonschools.org>, g_dolinsky@stoughtonschools.org, T_Colburn@stoughtonschools.org, j_husseini@stoughtonschools.org, m_rizzi@stoughtonschools.org

Maggie and Deborah:

You have not answered my demand for an emergency meeting of the School Committee this week, to review the accident, and to immediately implement or recommend any necessary interim safety measures around the Hansen School and other Stoughton Schools.

What you are suggesting is good. However, we must do all we can until said review is conducted and implemented.

You also have not answered my question which stated: In press, Rizzi is reported as saying that "there was a school crossing guard on duty at the time of the accident Friday, But the guard is stationed farther down Central Street toward the Stone Ends apartment complex. Stone Ends is approximately 1/2 miles away from the Hansen School." Will you let me know where exactly the crossing guard is posted on Central Street near the Hansen School?

Are you going to post a crossing guard in front of the Hansen School mornings and afternoons, until the next week's meeting?

Sincerely Yours,

Erdem

9/16/2012

From: "Deborah Sovinee" <d_sovinee@stoughtonschools.org>

To/CC: erdem.ural@lpsti.com, g_dolinsky@stoughtonschools.org, T_Colburn@stoughtonschools.org, j_husseini@stoughtonschools.org, m_rizzi@stoughtonschools.org

Hello everyone,

We are planning a substantial review/discussion/plan of action at our next meeting, and planning on inviting public safety officials as well as others.

It is important that emotions calm a little, but meanwhile this is being attended to in no uncertain terms. I will fill everyone in when we firm up plans.

Thank you.

Deborah

Sent from FirstClass with my iPhone

9/15/2012

From: <erdem.ural@lpsti.com>

To/CC: "Deborah Sovinee" <d_sovinee@stoughtonschools.org>, "George Dolinsky" <g_dolinsky@stoughtonschools.org>, "Thomas Colburn" <T_Colburn@stoughtonschools.org>, "J Husseini" <j_husseini@stoughtonschools.org>, "Marguerite Rizzi" <m_rizzi@stoughtonschools.org>

Maggie/Deborah:

I got the horrible news while at the Atlanta airport Friday afternoon. I still cannot get them out of my head.

I am sending this note to demand an emergency meeting of the School Committee this week, to review the accident, and to immediately implement or recommend any necessary interim safety measures around the Hansen School and other Stoughton Schools.

Having "School officials, in conjunction with Public Safety officials, [...] carefully review all of the areas around the Stoughton Schools," as you wrote in the statement you released on behalf of the School Committee, makes a lot of sense. However, we must do all we can until said review is conducted and implemented.

In press, Rizzi is reported as saying that there was a school crossing guard on duty at the time of the accident Friday, But the guard is stationed farther down Central Street toward the Stone Ends apartment complex.

Stone Ends is approximately 1/2 miles away from the Hansen School. Will you let me know where exactly the crossing guard is posted on Central Street near the Hansen School?

Sincerely Yours,

Erdem

9/15/2012

Subject: statement on Hansen school tragedy

From: "Deborah Sovinee" <d_sovinee@stoughtonschools.org>

To: erdem.ural@lpsti.com, "George Dolinsky" <g_dolinsky@stoughtonschools.org>, , "Thomas Colburn" <T_Colburn@stoughtonschools.org>

Greetings,

Attached is the statement Maggie and I crafted and sent out this afternoon. Please forward all questions to Maggie or myself.

Thank you,

Deborah

Sent from FirstClass with my iPhone