

MPD

Memphis Police Department
Director of Police Services, Toney Armstrong



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

DIRECTOR ARMSTRONG'S RESPONSE TO SHELBY COUNTY SCHOOL INCIDENT

MEMPHIS, August 23, 2013- On Thursday, August 22, 2013, Memphis Police Communications Department received a call from the Board of Education at 7:51 am, advising a five-year-old student brought a handgun to Westside Elementary, 3347 Dawn.

At 7:53 am, the BOE employee, Williams, advised that a five-year-old student had been detained in the office due to the fact that he brought a handgun to school. The employee further advised that the child was currently detained in the principal's office and he was unsure if the gun was a BB gun or a Cap gun.

At the time of this call, all officers were on the scene of other calls and could not clear to make the scene. A broadcast was aired for all officers within the precinct advising them of the holding call. Due to the fact that this call was not a high "priority call" at that time, additional cars from other precincts were not dispatched. *"If MPD would have received information that a shot had been fired inside of the school by an armed child, I can assure you that all available officers from surrounding precincts would have responded swiftly,"* said Director Armstrong.

At 8:19 am, an officer cleared his call and was dispatched to Westside Elementary with the understanding that a 5-year-old was detained in the principal's office with either a BB gun or Cap gun.

At 8:21 am, MPD Communications received a second call from a different employee from the Board of Education. This employee advised that officers were needed at Westside Elementary due to the fact a child had a loaded pistol at the

school which discharged in the cafeteria. Dispatch inquired if there were any injuries and if this was the same child referenced in the previous call. This caller advised there were no injuries, however because he was reporting secondhand information from his supervisor, he could not answer whether this was the same child.

Responding officers were updated with information pertaining to the shots fired and was also advised that the child was currently detained in the principal's office and the gun was secured.

At 8:33 am, MPD Officers arrived on the scene at Westside Elementary.

Let me be emphatically clear, the Board of Education clearly failed to properly report this call to the Memphis Police Department. For whatever reason, school officials failed to notify MPD dispatchers of what actually transpired in the school that morning. As a result, our response was not what it could have been. Had this incident been reported properly, all resources in the area would have responded in emergency mode and would have arrived much sooner than we did.

About the Memphis Police Department

The Memphis Police Department is a premiere law enforcement agency that serves and protects the citizens of Memphis, Tennessee. Our purpose is to create and maintain public safety in the city of Memphis. We do so with focused attention on preventing and reducing crime, enforcing the law, and apprehending criminals.

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