

**SOUTHERN WESTCHESTER
BOCES
TEACHERS ASSOCIATION**

Eileen McGarvey, President
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February 5, 2022

Dear Fellow BTA member,

Frustration and anger among membership is overflowing because of today's untimely communication of a two-hour delay and then closure. Students and members were put in harm's way, without question.

I sent two requests today to upper administration, formally requesting communication to all staff as to why the announcements were made so late in the morning. My first email read, in part: People's lives and property were put at risk this morning. People simply do not believe the language of "Please be assured that your safety and that of our students is our greatest priority," because of actions such as the timing of today's communication.

This morning, I contacted two state elected officials that represent the geography of our sites. I informed them of the administration's actions and the impact it had on the students and families we serve, as well as our members.

At 4:09 pm, I sent the following email to all members of the Board of Education, as well as Mrs. O'Donnell, Mr. Grotto, and Mr. Tibbetts.

Good afternoon,

This morning, SW BOCES staff was informed at 7:34 a.m. of a two-hour delay, and then at 8:52 a.m. informed the delay would be changed to a closure.

Weather reports provided on Tuesday evening warned of hazardous road and weather conditions Wednesday morning, including the likelihood of ice.

Students and staff were placed in harm's way this morning because of untimely communication. Our Special Services and Career and Technical Education programs begin at either 7:50 a.m. or 8:00 a.m. By the time the first notification was sent (7:34 a.m.) essentially all students and staff were well on their way to school. Some had already arrived at their sites. Many faced treacherous road conditions and extraordinary travel times. Several were involved in accidents. Some arrived at sites that were

not physically opened. Buses had already arrived at sites, only to be sent back to return students to their homes. Students and staff were placed in a position of having to repeat extraordinary travel times to get home in equally treacherous road conditions.

Staff is frequently reminded in words of the value and importance of our safety. Today's actions, combined with numerous actions and policies related to Covid since mid-December, have sent a message that our safety is far, far from a priority. With regret, I write to inform you that my members have lost faith in any commitment to our safety and well-being.

Commitment to values is better demonstrated and appreciated in actions that support those values in every way at every opportunity on every day.

Sincerely,

Eileen McGarvey
President, BTA

Many of you have been in touch with Interim Vice President Mairead Schuelein and me throughout the day. You have written excellent accounts of your experiences. I encourage all members to share exactly what you have shared with Mairead and me with our Board of Education. They deserve to hear from you and to understand the impact of the administration's decisions. Their email addresses are:

Catherine Draper	cdraper@swboces.org
John Filbertti	jfilberti@swboces.org
Sheryl Brady	sbrady@swboces.org
Lyn McBride	lmcbride@swboces.org
Robert Johnson	rojohanson@swboces.org
Valerie Williams	vdwilliams@swboces.org

For my own part, if I had been able to send this letter to you earlier in the day, I would have. It simply was not possible.

Thank you,

Eileen