

# NORTH MAC COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 34

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News Release – North Mac School District; September 15, 2014

At approximately 8:45 a.m. today, September 15, 2014, North Mac Intermediate and Middle Schools were evacuated due to a suspected carbon monoxide poisoning. Following evacuation, approximately 150 intermediate students (grades 6-8) and several staff members were exhibiting symptoms consistent with carbon monoxide poisoning; no elementary students have been affected. Emergency response was immediate from local and surrounding communities. Children were evaluated for symptoms and if none were exhibited, students were transported by district busses to First Christian Church and St. Patrick's Hall in Girard in accordance with the district's emergency plan. Students who were symptomatic were held on school grounds until released by medical personnel. Superintendent Cullen initiated a Sky Alert at approximately 9:50 a.m. to notify parents after ensuring the safety of students which was the immediate priority.

Approximately 50 students and 12 staff members have been transported by ambulance to area hospitals including St. John's and Memorial in Springfield, and Carlinville Area Hospital.

Evaluations of student health conditions continue at the churches and action is taken as needed. An additional Sky Alert has been sent with information for parents of physical signs and symptoms of carbon monoxide exposure which include shortness of breath, headache, nausea, blurred vision or complaints of not being able to see, dizziness, and blue fingernails. If any of these symptoms are observed, please go to an emergency room right away.

Liberty Utilities responded to the call and immediately turned off the gas although no gas leak was identified. Liberty personnel remain on site and are evaluating the buildings. It is believed the leak was confined to the north section of the middle school. The life health safety inspector from the regional office of education has been on site for initial investigation. The source of the leak has been identified and repairs are already in progress. We will have a full life health safety inspection tomorrow morning.

At this time no students remain on the South Campus; the majority of students have been picked up from churches by parents.

All North Mac School District schools will be closed on Tuesday, September 16.