FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(AUGUSTA, GEORGIA) – Over the past several days, school officials and elected Board members have received various inquiries and comments from members of the public and media relating to a recent occurrence at McBean Elementary School. Most of the inquiries were welcomed and appropriate. A few, however, were asinine, raised irrational points and are not factually consistent with the actual circumstances.

When the School System responds to public inquiries, it must be mindful of the privacy rights of parents and students. Often, the School System is aware of facts that provide substantial justification for the decision of the school official, but, cannot comment on the specific facts or circumstances of the incident or facts learned during the School System’s investigation.

In this instance, a parent, who was also a volunteer on occasion at McBean Elementary School, was observed several times wandering the halls of the school, making unauthorized visits and being in unauthorized places. To ensure a wholesome and safe school as well as address security concerns, the board has written guidelines for visitors. While the School System values and welcomes parents and visitors to the campus, it is a routine requirement that visitors sign in, abide by the general rules of the school, and refrain from disrupting the educational environment.

When the principal addressed these concerns with the parent, the parent made several inappropriate comments. Later, it was learned that the parent had posted online a copy of her permit to carry a concealed weapon.

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To be proactive, the Systems Public Safety officials met with the parent. Following the meeting, including the receipt of additional information received from the parent, Public Safety advised the school and notified the parent that, going forward, she would follow a protocol in which she would receive advance permission from the school principal to be inside the school building and that the access points and destinations should be defined in advance.

The parent concurred with this revised process and stated that a zone exception would eliminate the need to return to McBean Elementary School; in any event, she agreed to comply with the protocol.

The parent did request and received a zone variance to allow her child to attend another school.

The principal was rightfully concerned about some comments made by the parent and by a posting on the internet. However, from the parent’s perspective, the transfer fully resolved the matter.

The System has received several emails, mainly from out of state addresses, concerning the Second Amendment and the right to bear arms; however, such concerns are not relevant to the facts of this case.

The actions by the School principal were consistent with the position of the System to assure that children are protected, to monitor access to school sites, and to predetermine visitor destinations.

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