



PETER C. BLAKE
Superintendent of Schools

Telephone: (315) 338-6521
Fax: (315) 338-6526

Email: pblake@romecsd.org

PRESS RELEASE – JUNE 20, 2018

Statement of Peter C. Blake

Superintendent of Schools

The District has been advised that, on June 20, 2018, the Oneida County Sheriff's Department arrested District staff members, Ashley Rasbach and Maria Fountain, as a result of an incident allegedly occurring at John E. Joy Elementary School. Ms. Rasbach was charged with two counts of Endangering the Welfare of a Child and Harassment in the Second Degree; while Ms. Fountain was charged with Endangering the Welfare of a Child and Harassment in the Second Degree. Both are expected to appear in Rome City Court at a date and time that is unknown to the District at this time. The District has cooperated with and will continue to cooperate with law enforcement and any other agencies that may become involved in the case.

As we understand it, the charges, while not condoned by the District and are serious in nature, are merely accusations at this point and both women, like all citizens, are presumed innocent of any criminal offense unless and until proven guilty in a court of law. We intend to take all steps necessary to respect Ms. Rasbach's and Ms. Fountain's rights while, at the same time, taking all prudent steps to ensure the welfare and safety of our students.

We understand that the criminal investigation is still ongoing and that the Oneida County Sheriff's department has taken the lead on the investigation. Both employees are currently on leave from their respective positions. Because this is a confidential personnel matter, we cannot comment further on the case.