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Salem schools handle alert well

By MATTHEW SCHOMER

Journal Staff Writer

SALEM — The school district's new phone system and a lot of community effort were two factors that helped locate a kindergartner who went missing after school Thursday.

A kindergartner at Buckeye Elementary reportedly missed her bus and took it upon herself to walk home from school Thursday, Superintendent Steve Larcomb said.

School officials received a call Thursday afternoon from a parent who said the girl never came home and Larcomb sent out a message to all Buckeye parents using the new Education Connection phone system, which can be used to make announcement calls to specific sets of parents or school employees.

He said he was able to call about 380 parents in 20 minutes using the system, and several parents as well as off-duty bus drivers, Larcomb and other school officials took to the streets searching for the kindergartner in her pink coat and blue-and-white hat.



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One Buckeye parent eventually found the girl at Walgreens and took her home to her parents, Larcomb reported. Walgreens is across town from Buckeye.

The girl was found about 30 minutes after she was reported missing, he said, and following her discovery, he was able to use the phone system to call off the search.

Larcomb thanked all the parents and school employees who helped search for the girl. "I'm very pleased with the search effort," Larcomb said. "I don't know what we would have done differently to secure the safety of this child."

School officials originally thought the girl got on the wrong bus, but Larcomb reported they later discovered she never got on a bus at all Thursday afternoon.

Yesterday, students at Buckeye Elementary received instruction on what to do and who to come to if they miss a bus or get put into another confusing circumstance.

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