

FAITH IN HUMANITY

High school is meant to prepare for the outside world, and in reality, the outside world is dark. There is pain and we need to be given the opportunity to learn how to cope with pain in a safe and healthy environment such as our classrooms.

When students asked for more information about the medical emergency that occurred in the DAC parking lot Oct. 20, teachers told us what we already knew, which was very little. Law enforcement responded to a medical emergency involving a weapon outside the school. During a time when rumors were spreading across the school like wildfire, all we wanted was answers and reassurance. Was it a drill or the real deal? We were not officially told.

Being denied information by teachers and not having the chance to have a discussion in classes throughout that day left people anxious, upset and angry. Not only did we not receive any information from teachers, but we were excluded from an email sent to parents providing more detail about the situation. Being left out of the email made us feel ignored and confused. We wanted the truth—to make ourselves feel safer and to show we care during this horrific situation.

So, as a group, we sat down and spoke with each other since we were not going to be given any more information from school officials.

It started off timidly, with a soft-spoken comment about how we need to handle things with kindness. People started nodding along, and the mood of the room became serious but also calm. We discussed how frightened and stressed we felt in the moment; we all related to feeling shut out and ignored. It was mentioned that we needed more information about the situation to be able to come to terms with the reality of how dark the world can be. Blue Valley administration rightly

shields us from traumatic situations and has our best interests at heart, but it is unacceptable to keep us out of the loop entirely. Limiting what our teachers can do to help us is not healthy for students, it prompts us to shut down emotionally and not process complex feelings.

Our classroom had a conversation that was healthy, it promoted emotions to come through and break down the walls we had been told were in our best interests to keep up. We were real with one another. We were honest about how people are mean and can do horrible things, but also the aspects of good in people, like how people come together in times of joy, sadness and fear. Talking about how to handle things in a world of confusion and violence made us stronger as individuals and as students. We need to be directly given information sooner in order to process and deal with the aftermath.

Students need to be given the opportunities to speak to each other and have the facts after dealing with a traumatic event. Administration is doing their job to protect us, but protecting us is not necessarily what we need. Adults try to shield students to make sure they don't taint our innocence, but they are unintentionally making it almost impossible to come together in times of crisis. We must be allowed to have information that concerns us, like reasons as to why we are told we will be experiencing a lock-and-teach.

We ask you to have faith in humanity, that you trust us enough to inform us of emergencies happening in our own school. Teachers and administrative officials should be truthful and honest with us. We put all of our faith in the adults of our school, so do not let it be for nothing. In a world already full of confusion and pain, keep us informed and be honest.