October 2023 Page 1

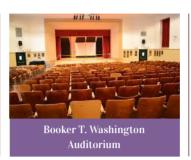
The Washington Word

Written by class 704

Schoolwide evacuation special edition



Booker T. Washington Middle School Flagpole







Students on field outside of Booker T. Washington on 10/25/23



Students studying in Booker T.



Dr. Elster, the school principal

On October 25th, 2023, at 9:43am, Booker school evacuated campus after a fire in their temporary manhole. Students and staff members stayed outside in a nearby yard from 9:43 AM to 3:00 PM. In this article, you will hear about what students and staff have to say on this very heart wrenching situation. Be ready for some interviews, news, opinions, yard games, science, culture, evacuation charts, comic strips, and maps of the yard everyone evacuated to.





Ms.Lynch, the assistant principal

NEWS

Booker T. Washington Students Evacuate Building After Manhole Fire





Students and staff members gather in the field outside the building for safety

We interviewed various students and staff about their experience in events that took place Wednesday, October 23 from 9:43 AM to 3:00 PM. Alara, an eighth grade student claimed she was frightened when she found out there was a fire in the building, and says "I regret not bringing a water bottle since everyone was outside all day and it was very warm". Alara found out about what was really happening when she was standing outside and heard a security guard's walkie talkie saying that this wasn't a drill. She also shares her feelings on the situation, "I was sort of neutral, kind of freaking out but I am glad that no one got hurt". Orcher, the dean, said the kids were surprisingly easy to manage and that they were all easy to deal with, mature, and she was very happy with everyone's cooperation. Orcher replies to the question on how she found out by saying, "When the security guards told me manhole caught fire. immediately contacted Dr.Elster and Ms.Lynch". We also asked her why students weren't allowed to go

home and have early dismissal since we were in the yard all day. responded with Orcher wouldn't have enough support staff to help monitor who leaves and who stays. It would be too chaotic, so we had to make the difficult decision of choosing for everyone". We also interviewed one of the head chef of the school kitchen. Ruth Torres, who claims that she started smelling gas right away. Torrez says "five minutes after the fire started, we could smell the gas and see the it. I immediately knew this was not a drill". She then called her supervisor and contacted Dr. Elster. "I'm glad that everyone got out safe and no one got hurt". Someone else we interviewed was the school nurse, Kaitlyn Hansen. She said that she found out this wasn't a drill, but rather serious when students and staff were told to move back from the building. She shares her feelings saying, "I was concerned because I'm not used to having evacuations, but I knew the administrators in charge would make sure we were all safe, so I



Outside Booker T. Washington Junior High Flagpole entrance



Principal Dr. Elana Elster

wasn't as worried". She also told us that she felt as if she didn't pack enough supplies, since she's used to having a full clinic. "I find the school community adaptable, understanding, and positive," Katlyn shares. The last person we interviewed was school safety. "Lights kept flickering on and off, and I first told a custodian and my partner (other officer). I'm grateful for students and staff handling it well".

NEWS

Interviews with new students and staff of M.S. 54



By Natalie Karloff and Jade Daniel

We interviewed various students and staff about their experience in the events that took place Wednesday, October 25. According to Rhea, a sixth grade student, "I was very when happy we were outside! Even though I was confused and a little worried. I got to see friends I wouldn't have otherwise seen if the fire hadn't had happened. I had heard many rumors, like the school was going to blow teachers but mν up, reassured me and helped me stay calm."

Marcus, a sixth grade student claimed "I was in band class when it happened. which is in the basement where the fire was. We were the first to smell the smoke and see the fire, and we were all terrified. I actually even cried because I was scared. But my teacher (Mr. Fagen) helped me and calmed me down. After that, I felt safe and protected and I knew everyone was okay."

Mr. Fagen, the first teacher in the basement to smell the smoke, stated he was "relieved that all the students were safe and he felt proud that everyone, for the most part, knew what to do and cooperated in the emergency. I was alerted by my students that they smelled smoke and I was incredibly concerned for all of their safety. I was also very concerned for the building and band room, as we've been waiting for years for it to be rebuilt and i did not want it to be for nothing.. My view on the school drastically improved when I found out that everyone could put aside the iokes and focus at the task at hand when we were in a time of need.

Emma, a student in 601 said "I didn't mind going outside, the weather was nice and I had lots of fun! I mostly slept during the day, but Mr. Fagen made the time in the yard super enjoyable. Once everyone calmed down, he downloaded a trivia app and played with us."

NEWS

Interviews
with
Students
and Staff
Around the
School

interview completed by: Anouk Roffe

Т

This is an interview with Dr. Elster, principal of Booker T. Washington about the manhole fire and the process of keeping people safe. Question 1: how/when did you find out about the fire? According to Dr. Elster, "I was observing Ms. Zilker and her class when i heard the fire alarm, I thought it was a real fire because i was not informed that there was going to be a fire drill.Question 2: what were you feeling in the moment of evacuation? Dr. Elster says, "i just wanted to make sure that no one was missing, hurt or in need of medical attention." Question 3:who did you first tell about the situation? the answer that DR. Elster gave was "I called Con Edison hoping that they coil fix the fire soon, i also called Upper west side Manhattan Sewage." Question 4: Why weren't people allowed to leave the school? According to Dr. Elster, "i asked the superintendent and he said no because there was no plan. When its parent-teacher conferences the parents are aware that the students are dismissed early, so they can plan ahead of time."

Hear What Happened From Primary Sources!!!

Here are two interviews with witnesses from the Booker T. evacuation on October 25, 2023.



Written and Interviewed by Nicolas Navas

<u>Interview With Liam Welker,</u> <u>Age 12</u>

"What is your opinion on what happened yesterday?"

"It was very boring at times, but also fun at others because we could hang out with friends instead of doing work."

"How did you feel when you found out how serious the situation was?"

"Pretty happy because there was practically no school."

"Did this experience bring you any fear of the danger possible?"

"No, not really."

"Is there anything else you would like to add?"

"I made a tinfoil ball."

<u>Interview with Daniel Fagen,</u> Teacher at Booker T.

"What is your opinion on the evacuation yesterday?"

"I was very proud that all the students and staff remained calm."

"Did you learn or realize anything from this experience?"

"I realized I should bring a hat wherever I go."

"Is there anything else you would like to add?"

"I am glad that everyone is safe and that no one was harmed during this incident."



OPINIONS

Fact-checking Fox News

By, Nina Bachteler

On October 25, students and faculty of middle school Booker T. Washington were rushed out of the building due to dangerously high carbon monoxide levels around 9:40 am. We were then held outside in the yard had to stay there for the entire day, only receiving water around 2:30 pm.

Fox News wrote an article about what had happened, and a part of the information had been incorrect. They article says, "All students relocated to a nearby school." No students had been moved to a nearby school, all had stayed in the yard for the day, which the picture Fox News took clearly shows.



Picture taken from Fox News

First-Hand Account From the Fire of Oct. 25

by Jason Rico

October On 25. Wednesday, my class and I were in our first period science class in Booker T. Washington when the lights started to flicker, and the fire alarm went off soon after. Once I saw the fire trucks outside I knew this wasn't just a drill, it was a real electrical fire. Because of this fire there were dangerous amounts of carbon monoxide so we would only be able to enter to get our stuff. Once we finished getting our stuff we all went to the recess yard. I was super excited since school was cancelled.

I found ways to pass the time. Trying to nap (see August's previous tutorial to learn how) was a good way to pass the time. Afterwards loved talking to my friends. Once I stopped talking to others I played a bunch of games, like Jackpot, Tag, and Mafia. Once all of these games were finished I roamed around the park sitting in shady spots. All in all a pretty great day, no school, fun games, and tons of my friends.

YARD GAME NEWS

MS54 CATCHES FIRE

In a surprising event, at 9:43 AM Ms54 Middle School in NYC catches fire. Students are forced to leave the school in order to escape the fire. Many students came up with clever yard games in order to entertain themselves. Students including: August Gahwyler, Charlie Hutson, and Casey Cohan will be giving their opinion on the best yard games during an evacuation.

Liam Hilborn Interviews Students at Evacuation

August Gahwyler's review on the best activity in an evacuation:

"In my opinion the best activity for an evacuation is stealing. Now don't take this out of context, if you are out in the yard and have nothing to do and you see a ball, you're going to want it. Not only is playing with the item with you found fun, the thrill of stealing or scavenging the ball in the first place is quite exciting. I give this activity a 96 out of 100. For me this is also great for getting to move around. Most activities surround sitting down but this allows you to get the blood pumping through your legs."

Top 10 best activities in a evacuation by Charlie Hutson & Casey Cohan:

#10: Card Games. Reporter Charlie Hutson noted a few groups of people playing various card games. It received a rating of 6/10 by fellow students. *

#9: Playing Mafia. Reporters Casey Cohan and Charlie Hutson were playing this along with other 704 students in the first few hours. Rated 6/10.*

#8: Hand games. Reporter Charlie noticed quite a few people playing various hand games, which seemed quite fun. Received a rating of 6.5/10.*

#7: Talking to people. This was a great way to pass time before phones were handed out. 7/10. *

#6: Singing. Casey Cohan, August Gahwyler, Charlie Hutson, and Alex Sirotkin were in a chorus. It received a solid 7.5/10.*

#5: Dealing candy. This was a way of students to have a nice treat while being able to communicate to others. This was also illegal and was a punishable offense. This was given a 8/10. *

#4: Doing homework and/or reading. This was a great way to get your work done and take up time. This was given a 8/10. *

#3: Sleeping. This was a great way to get some rest while being able to spend your time. This received a rating of 9/10. *

#2: Eating lunch. This was something each and every student was waiting for. This filled our stomachs and gave us the energy to keep going. 10/10. *

#1: Using a phone. Almost everyone was doing this when phones were handed out, and continued to until the end of the day. It was a huge hit among the grade. It received a rating of 12.2/10. *

*Ratings were given by various students who experienced the full evacuation, and took part in these activities.

STEP BY STEP GUIDE ON HOW TO MAKE A PILLOW

By August Gahwyler



Lay your sweatshirt down on the ground.



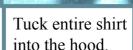
Fold the sleeves of the sweatshirt into the middle of the chest.



Fold left and right side of shirt into middle



Roll the bottom of the shirt up to the shoulders.





YARD GAMES NEWS

How to keep busy during a school evacuation!



Photo of Booker T. Washington yard taken by Hermione Heckrich on the day of the evacuation

On October 25th, 2023 Booker T. Washington had an evacuation. Many students had to wait a long period of time but were very bored. During a school evacuation you may be bored or have no clue what to do.



A group of students are sitting in a circle and books on the grass by dreamstime

There are many things you can do to stay entertained during an evacuation. For instance, you could play circle games, like "Mafia" and "Duck Duck Goose". You could also simply chat with friends and even teachers, to catch up and get to know people more. Also, you can make handshakes with friends for fun or play hand games! We interviewed a few students and one said, "Me and my friends played mini soccer with a pen we found on the floor and made a mini ball out of a piece of paper." We also interviewed a few teachers and our fellow social studies teacher. Mr. Behar said, "I saw lots of kids socializing with each other and their teachers. I also saw kids making videos with each other and their teachers." So remember if you are ever in a situation where your having an evacuation and need something to do read this article and you will never be bored!

By: Margalit Wallach

Teachers perspectives

Mr. Beauvais, a gym teacher at Booker T. Washington Middle school says he saw kids playing circle games with each other, reading, texting and more. Something else he wanted to say was that the school and kids handled the situation really well even though it was a scary time. Mr. Behar says he loved seeing the kids doing whatever they want, yelling at the helicopters, making videos. He loved seeing everyone at the end when we finally got to leave relaxed and happy, when at the start of the evacuation, everyone was tight and worried. Mr. Behar hopes there's more days in the yard.



Photo of Booker T. Washington yard by Margi Wallach, of everyone sitting

Kids perspectives

A boy named Marcus in the 6th grade says he was "so bored and done with the day", he tried to escape. Marcus and his friends got caught but they just wanted to leave and they were only 2 hours in. After, they just "chilled and played on their phones."



Photo by SKYE on youtube

A boy named Charlie in the 6th grade of Booker T. Washington Middle school says there was a lot of "crazy things that happened at the evacuation.". Charlie and his friends got so bored they played soccer with a pen!

SCIENCE

What is Carbon Monoxide?

By Elijah and Anay

Carbon monoxide is an odorless and colorless gas. Therefore it is almost impossible to identify, leading to why it's one of the most dangerous gases in the world. Carbon monoxide is made up of one carbon molecule and one oxygen molecule (it is also known as CO). According to the CDC, (Center of Disease Control) CO is produced in "flames anytimes you burn fuel in cars or trucks, small engines, stoves, lanterns, grills, fireplaces, gas ranges, or furnaces."

Sources

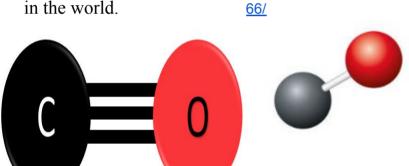
-https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/carbon-monoxide/symptoms-causes/syc-20370642#:~:text=Carbon%20monoxide%20poisoning%20occurs%20when,tissue%20damage%2C%20or%20even%20death.

-https://www.cdc.gov/co/faqs.htm

-https://www.lung.org/clean-air/at-home/indoor-air-pollutants/carbon-monoxide

-https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/resources/carbon-monoxid e-and-health#:~:text=Carbon%20monoxide%20is %20harmful%20because,oxygen%20delivery%20t o%20the%20brain.

-https://www.cdc.gov/co/fags.htm



Health Risk & What To Do If You Have CO Poisoning

-https://www.abe.iastate.e

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CO

By Danae Ntella Breitling

Carbon monoxide is dangerous, and there are many health risks associated with it. The main danger of carbon monoxide is that it binds to hemoglobin in the blood, which hinders the body's ability to carry oxygen to vital organs and parts of the body. Short term effects of inhaling carbon monoxide (or CO for short, as carbon monoxide is composed of one carbon atom and one oxygen atom) include fatigue (exhaustion/tiredness), headaches, confusion, vomiting, chest pain and weakness or dizziness [1, 2]. CO poisoning symptoms are akin to flu symptoms [2]. People that are especially susceptible to CO poisoning are unborn babies, elderly people or those with anemia or a history of heart or respiratory disease [2, 3]. Long term effects (if someone survives a concentrated amount of carbon monoxide) include personality changes, impairments in memory, concentration and speech, and increased depression [4]. There might be CO in a house if an entire family/group of people get sick at the same time, flu-like symptoms disappear when away from home, people get ill when gas applications are present, and there is excessive moisture on the interior of windows/glass [4]. If you think/know that you or someone you know is poisoned with CO you should call the local emergency number (911), or the local poison control center (1-800-222-1222) [3]. However, the best way to cure CO poisoning is to not get sick in the first place; evacuate any structure suspected to have CO quickly and in a safe manner as it can kill within five minutes and always make sure there is a way for smoke to escape when lighting fires.

SCIENCE

Carbon Monoxide: How dangerous is it?

By Alexandre de Sampigny and Sasha Sirotkin



Here is a **QUOTE** from 8th grade science teacher Mr. Carboni on what to do during a Carbon Monoxide leak! "Get rid of the source and ventilate the area." You heard it from the expert himself!



This is a Carbon Monoxide detector..

Symptoms and what to do when you are exposed to Carbon Monoxide by Alexandre de Sampigny

When there is a Carbon Monoxide leak in your home that affects you follow these steps. 1: If it is safe to, stop the source of where the carbon monoxide is coming from. 2: Ventilate the area, open windows. 3: Call 911. Some <u>mild</u> symptoms of Carbon Monoxide are slight headache. nausea, vomiting, and fatigue. If you are exposed to **higher** levels of Carbon Monoxide, you may experience severe headaches, confusion, drowsiness and fast heart rate. **Extreme exposure to** Carbon Monoxide can lead to death, unconsciousness. convulsions and Cardio Respiratory failure. In order to prevent extreme exposure to Carbon Monoxide you should install 1 Carbon Monoxide detector on every floor of your

Sources of information:

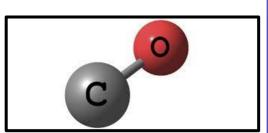
https://www.mayoclinic.org/ diseases-conditions/carbon monoxide/symptoms-cause s/syc-20370642

According to

www.osha.gov "carbon monoxide is harmful when breathed because it displaces oxygen in the blood and deprives the heart, brain, and other and other vital organs of oxygen."

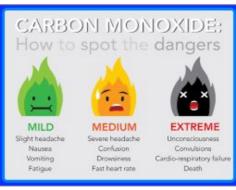
Additionally the source states, "Large amounts of CO can overcome you in minutes without warning- Causing you to lose consciousness and suffocate."

In the words of www.osha.gov
"High concentrations of carbon monoxide kills in less than 5 minutes



Picture of CO, one carbon and one oxygen

n the article from mayoclinic.org it states that people who survive carbon monoxide poisoning will experience memory loss, movement problems, and even personality changes. Some of the mild symptoms in CO poisoning are slight headaches, vomiting, and fatigue. Medium symptoms are severe headaches, drowsiness, and a fast heart rate. The extreme symptoms include unconsciousness, cardiorespiratory failure, and death.



CULTURE

What to Bring in an Evacuation by Beatrice Drew and Colin Pepper

There are many things that are useful to have during a fire drill, evacuation, or an actual fire. This is a list of the most useful things to grab on your way out! Keep in mind that what you want/need to bring will vary from person to person.

1. Anything with pockets
First and foremost is
something that will help you carry
your things. Whether it's a hoodie,
windbreaker, or purse, anything
with pockets will be immensely
beneficial when you're trying to
take all your essentials. There's
also the added feature of bags and
jackets making great makeshift
hoodies (see August Gahwyler's
"Step-By-Step On How to Make a
Pillow" on page 5).

2. Water bottles and snacks You might be out there for a while, and trust us, you will get hungry and thirsty. Since the water fountains got turned off for the winter, that's a no-go. However, if you grab a water bottle or even a snack, you will be properly prepared for the inevitable onslaught of hunger.

What you absolutely NEED TO BRING

3. Pencil and paper/books
As we previously stated,
you might be outside for quite a
while, and you might end up bored
out of your mind. Luckily, drawing,
writing, and reading books are
some of the most fun things to
pass time (when you don't have
electronics), and they are much
better for your eyes than
electronics (plus, you can get a
head start on your independent
reading homework from
humanities)!

4. Cough drops
Let's say you forget your
water bottle, or come across
someone in distress who forgot
theirs. Cough drops to the rescue!
Even the most disgusting,
sickly-sweet cherry flavor will be
preferable to violent coughing.
Keep in mind that an excess of
cough drops can be
counterproductive! If you go
through them like candy, the sugar
will make your sore throat worse.

5. Hair ties

If you have short hair, skip this. But if you have long hair, don't! Even in freezing temperatures, hair ties are an asset. If it's hot out, you can put your hair up to reduce the heat. Or, if it's cold, you might run around to warm yourself up (or you might run around for other reasons, like to play tag or to get in the bathroom line before your rival). Running might seem entirely unrelated, but fun fact: running with your hair down is a surefire way to get it in your face. Tying your hair up remedies both of these! Plus, you can always use a hair tie to secure someone's braid!

While all of these are good to bring, what *shouldn't* you bring? Well... there's a lot.

1. Your backpack

When you have to rush out of the building, do you really want to be slugging a 10-20 pound backpack around your back? There are certain good things to bring, like pen and paper, or a book, but the whole heavy thing would just be way too much to slug around during a potential fire/health hazard.

2. Excessively large books

Long books are *great* to pass the time. If it's good enough, you'll get so caught up in the story that you'll scarcely notice the time flying by! Unfortunately, they are not practical in the slightest. Lightweight books are fair game, though!

3. Headphones

I get that your parents will be mad that you left behind your \$400 designer headphones to burn, but you do not need bulky headphones weighing you down! Besides, what would you even do with them? Pretend to listen to music? And on that note...

4. Your phone

This should be fairly self-explanatory. You shouldn't even *have* your phone in the first place.

5. Chewing gum

If you bring gum, everyone will want a piece and nobody will be afraid to harass you for some. And remember the water point from before? If your throat is sore because you didn't drink any water, gum will probably just make it worse.

6. Your calculator

We saw so many people with calculators. Why? It makes sense if you have games or something similar on there, but why do you need your ten-dollar second-hand calculator with no fancy features? I just don't get it.

CULTURE

Top Ten Ways to Stay Entertained in An Evacuation By Ellie & Bella

Intro:

Being outside during an evacuation can be hot, boring, and stressful. It's always great to have something to do. So, we created 10 of the best ways to stay entertained during an evacuation so you're always prepared.

10: Playing Catch With a Pebble

This fun and not-at-all-dangerous activity will keep you entertained for a few minutes while you dive for a one cm cubed pebble and get grass burns on your elbows. In all seriousness though, it is a very fun activity for about 15 minutes if you're not allowed to run around. (Stay safe kids and make sure that it's a small pebble.)



8: Karaoke:

When you FINALLY get your phone back feel free to yank it right out and blast some Taylor Swift music. Your friends and you will have a great time singing at the top of your lungs. Even if you don't have your phone, you can still try getting your class to sing .



6. Finishing Homework

Homework might be a bit boring sometimes, but if you have 5 hours to spare, you might as well make the most out of it instead of saving all your homework for when you get home.

9: Playing Baseball with a water bottle and piece of paper:

This is more of a unique activity however, it will distract you from all the other stress and allow you to have some fun and bond with friends. All you need is a water bottle to act as a bat and a crumpled up piece of paper for a ball. Divide into teams and enjoy yourself!



7: Saying "Hi" to Old Teachers

You don't get to do this much! What is a better time to reconnect with your previous teachers than during 5 hours of free time? This way you can catch up with them on how your summer was, or how your doing this current year.

CULTURE

Top Ten Ways to Stay Entertained in An Evacuation (pt.2) by Ellie & Bella

5. Braiding Classmates Hair/Having Your Hair Braided By a Teacher

As the day went on, we couldn't help but notice how many braids magically appeared across the school. It turns out braiding hair is a great pastime that will not only add some fun designs in your hair, but also helps you connect with your teachers/classmates.



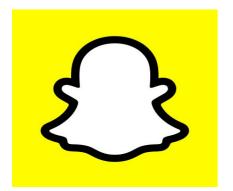
4: Playing Hand Games

Playing hand games such as Avocado, Concentration, Finally you get your phone back! A great way to spend Mafia, and Quack Diddly Oso are such fun games to entertain you.



2: Posting On Snapchat

Posting on Snapchat was a great way to relate to others who were in the same situation as you. It relieved some stress and allowed you to share all the events happening.



3: Watching TV Shows

time on your phone is to sit down and watch some TV in the shade. It's entertaining, fun, and distracting.



1: Hanging Out With Friends

This is a great way to get to know each other more. It builds you and your community together. It also always cheers you up during this kind of stressful moment.



OPINIONS

My experience in Booker T. Washington Carbon Monoxide leak by Sebastian Sampedro

My experience during the carbon monoxide leak was rather confusing but also boring because every teacher and student did nothing in the yard for three hours. But it was also very confusing because this has never happened in all the years In Booker T. Washington and it was unprecedented. As I was walking out of the building I saw a fire truck that's when I knew it was serious, after waiting around on the street for about 5 minutes the teachers told us to go into the yard and we had to stay in the yard for about 3 hours but the entire time nobody was allowed into the building and a lot students including my had to have their parents pick them up. Staying in the yard for so long also caused major problems.

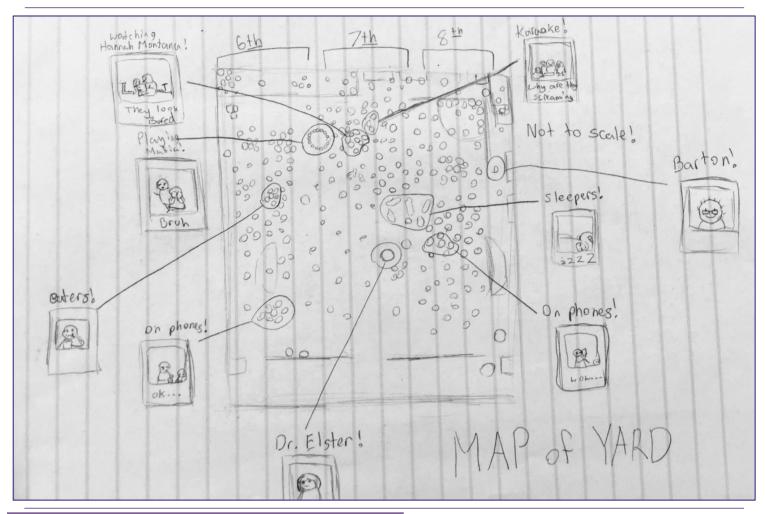






Photos from Fox News 5

MAP OF YARD



The diagram above shows children from Booker T. Middle School in the Upper West Side, evacuated from the building. This is a map of some of the activities the kids participated in. There are also some teachers/staff there that had a big role in the evacuation.

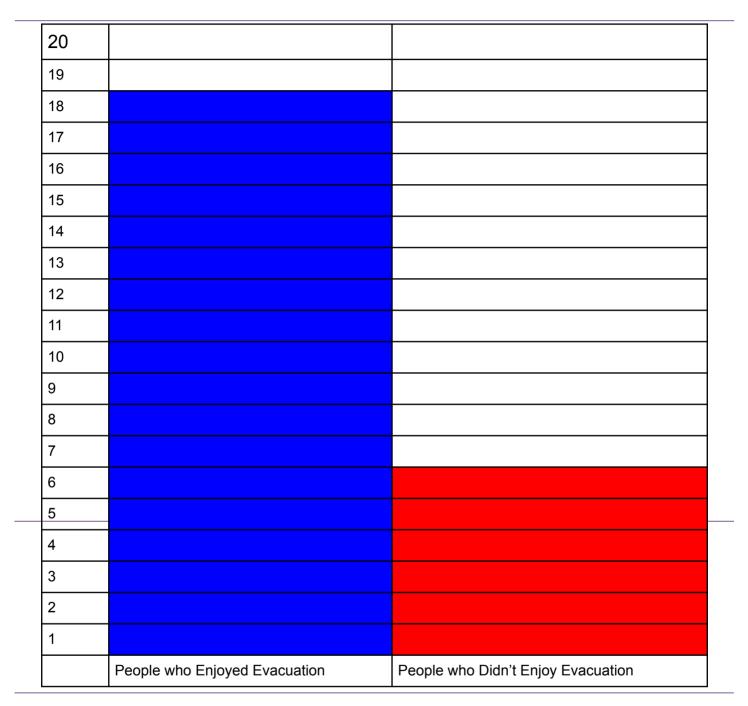
As the principal of Booker T. quotes during the evacuation, "Never in her 30 years of teaching has this ever happened before." These unprecedented carbon monoxide levels was caused by an electrical fire. There were no fatalities.

Students participated in leisure activities which consists of:

- -Taking pictures of our beloved Latin teacher, Mr. Barton
- -Eating delicious school prepared meals
- -Being on your phone
- -Playing mafia without knowing the rules
- -Watching Hannah Montana on a computer
- -Sleeping on piles of bags
- -Karaoke with friends
- -Running around like a maniac
- -And being on your phone!



Evacuation Chart

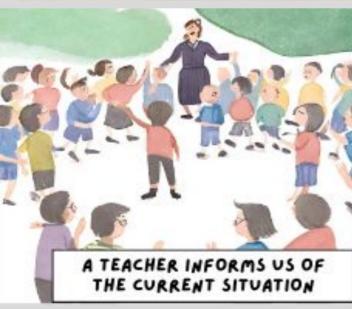


Despite the serious conditions during the Booker T. Evacuation data shows that over 78% of students enjoyed the evacuation or at least would have rather evacuated the school than had a normal school day, some 7th graders even saying "It was a nice change in pace."

Comic Strip









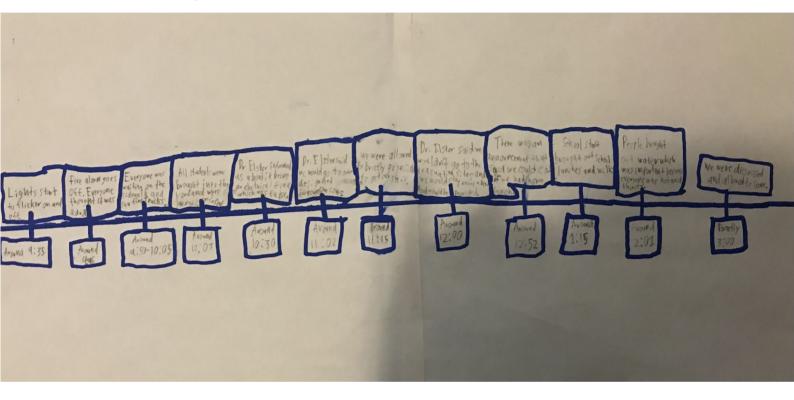




THERE WAS A FIRE IN A MANHOLE, CAUSING CARBON MONOXIDE TO BE RELEASED. STUDENTS ARE KEPT IN THE YARD UNTIL THE END OF THE SCHOOL DAY,

Timeline of What Happened on October 25, 2023

By: Liam Welker and Santos Guzman



This timeline, though it may be hard to see, shows the important events that occurred on Wednesday October 25, 2023 in Booker T Washington and its yard. Below shows the approximate times when everything occurred. Some things are more accurate than others, but everything is at least close to the real times. This info came from people who experienced these events inside of 704 including ourselves.