

Westside Elementary School Burglarized; Security Questioned

Friday, January 30, 2009



On Monday, January 19th, the Macon County Sheriffs Department was notified of a break-in at Westside Elementary School, located at 8025 Old Hwy 52, that occurred sometime over the weekend.

Officer Larry West arrived on the scene and met with Westside principal David Flynn, who stated that the break-in was discovered by a school janitor reporting to work early Monday morning.

As that Monday was Martin Luther King Day, Westside students and teachers were off for the holiday.

According to West's offense report, entry was obtained through a side door leading into a kindergarten classroom, where suspect(s) took a digital camera and a small amount of money from a desk.

After leaving the classroom, it appeared that the suspect(s) entered the gymnasium by cutting the lock from a chain used to secure the double doors.

Entry was then made into the kitchen area by removing the louvers (i.e windows, shutters) from the door. Two other doors in the kitchen area were also damaged and \$20 was stolen.

The suspect(s) also gained entry into the school's office area where doorknobs were removed from a total of six doors. Cabinets and closets located in the office and the secretary's office also appeared to be ransacked.

At the time West's report was written, the only item that was reported stolen from the office area was a flat screen television monitor valued at \$199.

The break-in at Westside is the second burglary the school has endured, following a robbery two years ago that involved computer thefts from several Macon County elementary schools.

According to Flynn, Westside is one of two elementary schools in Macon County without a security system, making it more vulnerable to break-ins and vandalism.

"This is an issue we'll probably be taking to the board of education," Flynn remarked. "It's time to do something about it."

While Flynn estimates a total loss of \$1,500 for the stolen items and structural damage to the school, it's the loss experienced by the students that haunts him.

"It's very hard for schools to get the equipment they have," he said somberly. "We work hard to get the equipment for our students to use, and something like this is frustrating when we want to do things for students that we know they'll enjoy and their parents will appreciate. I hope that anyone who knows anything about the break-in will let us know. We're thankful that our loss wasn't any worse . . . it could've been a lot worse. My hope is that whoever did do this, is someone who was in a very desperate situation to steal from an elementary school."

Anyone with further information on the burglary at Westside Elementary School, is urged to contact the Macon County Sheriffs Department.