

planned to spend the day marking 150 tests.

"My students are happy," she joked.

Borough President Guy V. Molinari, who visited the scene with Councilman John Fusco (R-Mid-Island), said he was "deeply relieved" by the outcome and lauded the emergency coordination.

"We have houses nearby, children nearby, a temple nearby," he said.

The PS 54 students spent the day in the auditorium of Susan Wagner High School.

PS 54 Principal Paul Choset said he consulted with police and District Schools Superintendent Christy Cugini before making his final decision.

This is the second time in the last 10 years that PS 54 has been evacuated due to a potential gas explosion, Cugini said.

Members of PS 54's PTA and school staffers notified parents of yesterday's evacuation by telephone. Children were dismissed to legal guardians throughout the day.

Students who remained at school were entertained by members of a Wagner high school chorus for a good part of the morning, before being served lunch and starting in on silent reading assignments later in the day.

Afternoon dismissal took place from Susan Wagner, and the after-school Latchkey program was set up at the high school as well.



ADVANCE PHOTO ■ FRANK J. JOHNS

"I was scared and I didn't even know what was going on," says Melissa Kripaitis, who was told to leave her home.



ADVANCE PHOTO ■ ROB SOLLETT

More than 900 students at PS 54 were ushered out of the Willowbrook Road school and bused to Susan Wagner High School for the day. Young Israel and the Elizabeth Connelly SIDDSO center were closed.

According to Michael Tobin, principal of Susan Wagner, the high school's instructional day was not disrupted.

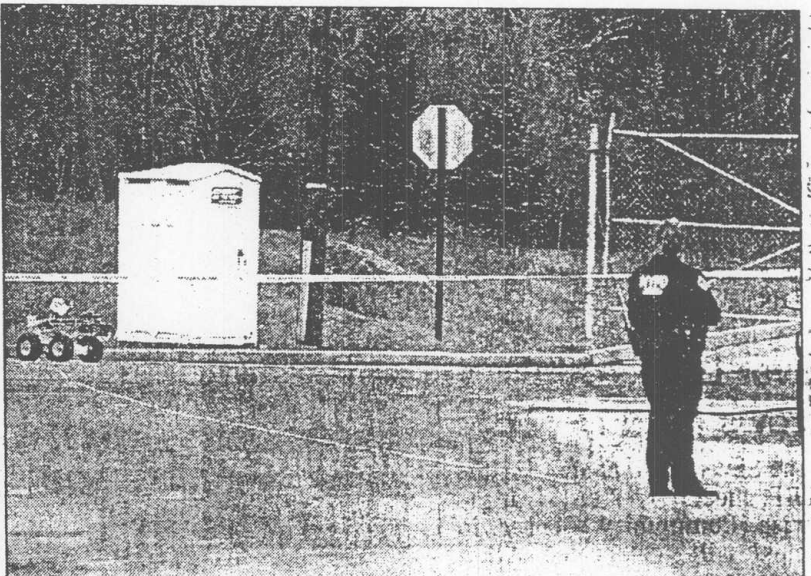
"Everything is going on as usual," he said. "This is not a major problem because we have the space."

Tobin reported that Susan Wagner High School received a phoned-in bomb threat from what sounded like a young man late yesterday morning. School safe-

ty officers and members of the school's staff searched the school and declared an all-clear within an hour. Students in the school were not affected.

"It's not unusual that under the circumstances some prankster might want to capitalize on the situation," Tobin said.

Advance staff writers Reginald Patrick and Marjorie Hack contributed to this report.



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A robot, left, is dispatched to get an up-close view of a bomb placed on a pipeline.