

Back to School Safety Message:

Safety has and continues to be Walla Walla School District's top priority. As we approach the start of the 2018-19 school year I felt it important to relay the significant steps we have taken to ensure a safe environment for our students, staff, and visitors.

The foundation of our district's safety plan focuses on three pillars; prevention, response, and recovery. As part of our prevention efforts, Walla Walla Public Schools works closely with local law enforcement and regional agencies, regularly conducts emergency drills, employs six campus safety officers, and maintains a full time Sheriff's Deputy on staff. In addition, we have implemented a Safe School's Tip Line (<http://1057.alert1.us>), a Hear Something Say Something campaign, and support various student-led groups and initiatives in order to foster a safe and inclusive environment. As a result of these efforts, many technological and procedural improvements have already been implemented. In addition, facility safety enhancements have been prioritized in the proposed bond measure that include best-practice recommendations from national school safety experts as well as our local safety leaders, Chief Bieber and Sheriff Turner.

Our district's response measures, should a threat or actual safety event occur, are supported by a number of personnel and procedural safeguards. Walla Walla Public Schools regularly participates in exercises and advanced training to ensure staff are able to respond swiftly and appropriately if such a situation occurs. Table-top simulations with local first responders, reunification drills, unified threat action plans, and CRASE (Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events) and ALICE (Active Shooter Civilian Response) trained experts on staff help ensure our response efforts are sound.

Finally, the district has made great strides in its recovery and coordination plans. Our pledge to our parents and community is that we will always err on the side of communication if a situation occurs on any of our campuses involving a threat or safety event. In such emergency situations we will communicate information to families as soon as possible via our School Messenger phone system in addition to the district's social media and other communication venues.

If you have any questions about our processes, preventive safety measures, or response plans, please do not hesitate to contact the appropriate school administrator or the district office. My colleagues and I welcome your input and ideas as we continue to refine our practices to ensure the safest environment possible for students and staff. Additional information is also available on the district's Safe School's Plan webpage at: <http://www.wwps.org/programs/safe-schools-program>

Sincerely,

Wade Smith, Superintendent of Schools