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Union High School District

Superintendent
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Office of the Superintendent

February 23, 2018

Dear San Dieguito Union High School District Staff and Families,

Tragic events such as the one in Parkland and threats made to our local schools impact our entire community, create a sense of unease among our students and staff, and cause us all to consider how we can ensure the safety of everyone at our schools. The most important thing we can do is care for and support each other.

Whenever threats are reported against our schools, administrators respond quickly with the utmost seriousness. We have established relationships with local law enforcement and work together to resolve all threats as quickly as possible to preserve safety and order on campus. The response by the schools and law enforcement and the consequences for kids are the same whether the threats appear credible or are social media hoaxes.

When our principals notify families of an incident or concern on campus, we report factual information. If there is a delay in sending a message to you, it is because we are working to confirm details. We recognize that rumors or conjecture do nothing to assure the community and can only spread more fear and confusion.

We must also balance student privacy with the need to inform and assure our community without compromising or interfering with ongoing law enforcement investigations.

Unfortunately, that is rarely the case with social media you and your children will read and sometimes with the traditional media. In fact, many media outlets reported on the threat at Torrey Pines High School yesterday before or without contacting the school or district. I am sorry some of you learned of the news via local television, but we have no control over what they report--or when--particularly when they have not reached out to us first.

Last week, I sent families a message with a long list of social, emotional, and academic supports we have available for students. I'd like to talk this week about our efforts to keep our campuses safe.

As I mentioned earlier, our school administrators work closely and cooperatively with our local law enforcement agencies. You will likely see police cars on or near our campuses every day as they maintain a regular, visible presence. I also routinely meet with our police captains and juvenile service officers, along with the elementary school district superintendents, to strengthen our inter-agency communication and safety protocols. This collaboration gives us instant access to law enforcement whenever we need it and allows our team to quickly resolve issues when they arise. I want to recognize and thank the SDPD, Sheriff's Department, and Carlsbad Police for their responsiveness and dedication to protect our students.

Each of our schools has an emergency response plan. We work with police and fire departments in the development of those plans and share information with them which will help them respond in a crisis.

Our Board of Trustees authorized the issuance and use of bond funds for the purpose of improving the physical safety of our schools. We have hired experts to conduct thorough risk assessments of each school to evaluate the needs and priorities at each of our unique campuses. Through this, we will be upgrading physical security features such as fencing, door hardware, and surveillance.

Even with these resources, we are reminded that our efforts in providing safe and supportive schools are ongoing and must remain our top priority.

“See something, say something,” works. Please talk with your kids and encourage them to share their concerns with a caring adult--especially if when they are concerned that other students are a threat to themselves or others. Through your cooperation, our staff can intervene, address problems, and handle them quickly and appropriately to protect students.

Please know that we will continue to foster awareness, review our protocols and training, and implement best practices and systems which create a safe and secure environment in which our students continue to learn and grow and in which our staff can operate at their optimal level. In addition, we must all work together as a community to develop resources to increase protective factors, cultivate resilience, and encourage vigilance.

Thank you for your attention. Please enjoy your weekend.

Sincerely,



Eric Dill
Superintendent