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Dear Board Members,

Lorna Byrne Middle School has had some interesting things happen these past few weeks. We had an unplanned lockdown when Josephine County Sheriff's Office informed us of a "possible" threat to our school. The part of this story that makes me happy is not only that the threat was neutralized by the police quickly, but that our staff went into action so fast and appropriately. Within seconds, our building was secure and our kids were safe. We stayed in lockdown for about 40 minutes. This happened early in the day on a Wednesday, and our staff learned some key things that we were able to add to our procedures. The adults in our building had to think on their feet in a few instances, and in all cases, each made good decisions. We will add the things that we learned to our emergency protocol to complete the continuous improvement cycle.

Furthermore, our Studio to School program kicked in this week. This idea was started months ago by our schools in the Illinois Valley, in conjunction with non-profit partner Illinois River Valley Arts Council (IRVAC) and local art and dance professionals helping our school in a two pronged process. One having art educators help our core teachers infuse art into the classrooms in an engaging and interesting way for our students, then also providing drama and dance programs for our students in an after school setting. After the first class this week, we have a large group of students signed up and participating. This is all being provided by a grant from The Oregon Community Foundation (OCF) and is planned and provided for the next four years.

Speaking of grants, IVHS and Lorna Byrne are working on a plan to prepare our students grades 6-12 to be college ready. The "GEAR UP" grant will allow us to help our children become aware of and dream for higher education. The grant focuses on the "5 R's": Reaching Higher, Rigor, Relationships, Relevance, and Raising Awareness. A group of employees from TRSD attended a conference in Eugene to solidify our Action Team to help implement this wonderful opportunity. This grant is available to us for the next four-plus years.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Polen  
Principal