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District Board Talking Points March 2018

After the tragic Florida shooting, school security reemerged as a topic of great concern. Americans across the country are asking, “How do we keep our kids safe?”

In Eastern Oregon, school and community leaders have been collaborating on this issue for decades. By developing proactive policies and procedures, our schools are the safest place for children to be. In recent years, our regional districts expanded their efforts to include the following:

- Building security audits conducted by Pendleton Police Chief Stuart Roberts
- Adoption of common vocabulary and training through the “I Love U Guys” foundation
- Facility upgrades through bonding and grants
- Expansion of School Resource Officer programs
- Pilot and implementation of “SafeOregon” state tip line
- Creation of Wraparound Program with an emphasis on mental health and direct services to the home

I applaud the effort and commitment of our regional school districts. However, safety is not just the responsibility of school personnel. It is time to stop thinking of our children’s safety simply as a school problem; rather, it is a community and cultural problem. We have to look holistically at our community mental health and support systems, as well as connecting with our children, neighborhood by neighborhood.