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Dr. Karen Fischer Gray,  
*Superintendent*

November 10, 2014

Senator Michael Dembrow  
Representative Barbara Smith Warner

Senator Dembrow and Representative Smith-Warner:

The shooting event at Reynolds High School last year was a frightening harbinger to us all that violence in our schools driven by students who need mental health support is a new reality. This new reality is right here in Oregon, Portland and in the Parkrose School District. We're writing to you with a request to help us protect our children from violence.

We are fortunate that our school bond has allowed us to improve security at every student facility. Infrastructure changes such as enhanced security systems, new cameras, door locking systems and increased visibility and control of entrance and egresses from our schools can help protect students. In addition, we provide quality training to teachers to help them recognize and assist children with depression, anti-social behavior and prevent suicide. We have also incorporated anti-bullying policies and practices across the district while incorporating mental health education into standard health curriculum's at both the high school and middle school levels.

We are doing everything we can at the school board level and yet it is not enough to protect our precious children.

Our school district is very diverse with many unique needs created by a majority student population with socio-economic issues, multiple languages, a large racial mix of students and dwindling support of qualified staff. Our classroom sizes range from 30 to 45 students. Our primary defense against school violence is qualified staff that know the children, have relationships with children and spend quality time with kids to help them. For some of our kids, the relationships with the staff at Parkrose may be some of the best adult role models in their lives.

We recommend the following steps to help us protect our kids and kids across the state:

1. Increase funding for staffing at schools across the state. The Parkrose student population has remained unchanged since 2005 yet we have lost \$8M in funding and over 30 staff members which we have never recovered.
2. Increase funding for mental health services for children and adults across the state. In our view, mental health is at the root of these tragic school shootings.



3. Improve gun safety across the state and make it more difficult for criminals and those with mental health issues to obtain weapons.

We are committed to supporting you in these efforts and we are willing to offer our public support both locally and in Salem.

Let's work together to prevent any more children from dying violently from guns at the hands of individuals with mental health problems in Oregon.

Respectfully yours,

The Parkrose School Board and Superintendent

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Ed Grassel, Board Chair

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Mary Lu Baetkey, Board Vice Chair

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James Trujillo, Board Member position # 2

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Dr. Thuy Tran, Board Member position #3

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Erick Flores, Board Member position #5

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Dr. Karen Fischer Gray, Superintendent