



# Three Rivers School District

*Quality Education Runs Deep*

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*Dave Valenzuela ~ Superintendent*

March 1, 2021

Dear Senator Robinson:

I am writing to you to unequivocally express my personal and professional opposition to SB 238 along with the unanimous support of the Three Rivers School Board. At the February 17th board meeting of the Three Rivers School District, our board voted 5-0 in favor of expressing our adamant opposition to this bill. I want to share some of the many ways our school district works in collaboration with our local law enforcement agencies in order for you to appreciate the damage such a bill would do to our community.

The Three Rivers School District has an incredibly valuable relationship with our local law enforcement agencies. We have an arrangement with Josephine County Juvenile Justice that provides each of our three attendance areas with an Outreach Officer. These individuals are vital in our effort to fully serve the students of our rural communities. They completely fulfill the requirement of SB 238 to provide mental and behavioral health support to our students. In addition, they connect our neediest families with resources throughout the community. Our outreach officers deliver food to families in need, provide wifi enabled hotspots to students without access to digital learning and simply make wellness checks on a regular basis.

Our relationship with the Josephine County Sheriff's Office is equally powerful and meaningful to our district. Several years ago, Sheriff Dave Daniel created a "Resident Deputy" program to ensure that there would be patrol officers in each of our rurally situated attendance areas. This made it so that there were officers close to our schools should there be a need. A byproduct of this was that these officers would visit our schools during lunch and breaks to interact with our students. Our students care deeply about the relationships they have formed with our resident deputies and have fostered positive perceptions regarding law enforcement.

As school districts continually work to determine if resources are allocated to address the needs of our students, the school resource officer has provided a key piece of support to our students in the area of drug prevention. Three Rivers School District is located in Southwestern Oregon, a hotbed for marijuana and drug use. According to the Oregon Healthy Teen Survey in 2017 and 2019, Three Rivers School District has seen a decrease in drug use amongst surveyed 8th and 11th graders, but are still using drugs at a rate higher than the rest of the state of Oregon. This decrease has coincided with the start of the school resource officer program that we have started with the Josephine County Sheriff's Department. Eliminating this program would stop the momentum we have made with our students and drug prevention and would have a long term negative effect on our county, economically

and socially.

We also have the privilege of having a dedicated School Resource Officer. Deputy Konieczny is a welcome and regular addition to each staff and school site in TRSD. He not only provides valuable resources that only comes from law enforcement, but he also plays basketball with students on the playground, eats lunch with our students, knows them by name and can quickly identify their struggles. Because he knows them. For some of our most at risk students, Deputy Konieczny is the reason they show up and stay in school.

There are just a few of the many positive impacts our local law enforcement agencies have on our district and our students. The bottom line is that we rely on these partnerships to provide safe environments for our students and staff. We strongly encourage you to fight for our right to continue these partnerships and expand on them into the future. For our schools, for our students, and for our community.

Respectfully,

Dave Valenzuela - Superintendent

Jennifer Johnstun - TRSD Board Chair