



November 11, 2008

Dear Parents and Family Members,

I know you are concerned about recent events in the community involving our students and other youth. Everyone at Seattle Public Schools shares your concerns. Let me assure you that we have a zero tolerance policy for violence done to — or by — our students. I am writing to let you know we are taking steps to help ensure your student's safety at school.

Our students need to be able to count on all of us to work together to promote a safe community. We need your help to make sure that students know how important it is for them to report a potential or actual incident. Students may choose not to report situations or potential incidents because they are concerned about retaliation or being labeled a "snitch." We must empower our youth to let us know what is happening so that we can act together to keep our children safe.

There are many ways students, families, and community members can report situations. These reports allow us to respond quickly and put preventive measures in place. We can also evaluate the potential threat to safety and involve other authorities as appropriate.

Options for reporting incidents include:

- Calling 911 for emergencies or immediate assistance, including for Metro Transit
- Calling Seattle Public Schools Safety and Security Department: (206) 252-0707
- Calling Metro Transit Police for non-emergency dispatch: (206) 296-3311

Please talk to your student about reporting all violent incidents or rumors about situations that could become violent. Here are ways they can make reports without anyone identifying them:

- **Anonymous Safe Schools Hotline: (206) 252-0510**
- **Anonymous Crime Stoppers Tip Line: 1-800-222-TIPS (8477) or (206) 343-2020**
- **Anonymous Crime Stoppers text message to Seattle Police Department:**  
**1) Type in the keyword "TIP486"; 2) Write your message; 3) Send text to "CRIMES" or "274637." When the text message is received, the sender will receive a confirmation number within 10 seconds or less confirming receipt of the information.**

Parents, family members and others in the community can also use these reporting options.

While we are working to ensure that our students are safe at school, the issue goes beyond school property. In fact, students have told us that they feel safe while at school, but not when they leave. Many of the recent problems have occurred off of school grounds. Events often involve youth who are not enrolled in school. We are working closely with the Seattle Police department, the Parks department, Metro, parent organizations, and our valued community partners to respond appropriately once an incident comes to our attention. Working together, we are taking proactive preventive steps to keep our young people safe.

This year our Safety and Security Department has re-organized to provide more support services to our schools. Additionally, we have been awarded a Department of Education "Readiness and Emergency Response for School Safety" grant for \$500,000. This funding will provide additional training, equipment and support to schools. At the same time, we have restructured our Support and Intervention Services Department to deliver targeted academic programs and more coordinated intervention services for students needing alternative learning supports. We are also actively working with the City of Seattle on the youth violence prevention initiatives.

The bottom line is that all of our children deserve to be safe. As your superintendent, I am committed to keeping you informed of the steps we are taking to ensure the safety of your children. If you have specific concerns or questions, please contact the principal at your student's school. Updates and more information about specific efforts will be posted on our Web site at:

[http://www.seattleschools.org/area/m\\_news/index.dxml](http://www.seattleschools.org/area/m_news/index.dxml).

Sincerely,

Maria L. Goodloe-Johnson, Ph.D.  
Superintendent