



PORT TOWNSEND

School District

LEARNING THROUGH A SENSE OF PLACE

Superintendent
Dr. John A. Polm, Jr.

Board of Directors
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February 20, 2018

Dear Students, Families and Community Partners,

Our thoughts and prayers go out to all of the students, staff, families and community who are suffering in the aftermath of the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. This incident is a tragedy and gives us all pause as we are reminded of our call to keep students and staff safe at school.

When it comes to safety, we have a strong partnership with the Port Townsend Police Department and the Jefferson County Fire Department. We seek their advice often and implement their recommendations. We are fortunate to have a police officer assigned to the District serving as a School Resource Officer (SRO). He works cooperatively with all schools in the District. We also coordinate with local emergency responders to ensure our procedures for fire, earthquake, lockdowns and all other safety drills are current and reflect best practices for student, staff and visitor safety. We are also working with our Educational Service District (ESD) regarding safety and threat assessment.

Safety is about more than immediate physical needs. It is also about maintaining a strong safety net for those who need extra supports. We have counselors in each of our schools. We also have an additional grant-funded partnership to offer mental health support to students. Efforts continue to ensure all of our students have trusted adults to talk with when they are hurting and our staff have the skills to reach out to help when they see someone struggling. Some children may have difficulty processing tragic events like these, and one resource that may be helpful is the following article from *Child Trends*: <https://www.childtrends.org/resources-help-children-wake-school-shooting/>.

Finally, we maintain a safety tip line. If students, parents or community members have information, tips or concerns regarding a safety issue in our schools, they are encouraged to visit <https://ptsd-wa.safeschoolsalert.com> for confidential, anonymous communication with our safety staff. This includes concerns a student may hear at school or see on social media, which can be reported via text, email, web and phone.

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Ensuring that our schools are safe and welcoming places is a collective commitment between us all. We work every day to reach out to children who are most in need of extra love and support. We know that no amount of work in school safety will provide 100% assurance that all safety issues will be resolved, but please be assured that we take our responsibility seriously. If you have specific concerns or feedback, please share them with any school principal, district administrator or myself.

Thank you for your continued support in helping us provide meaningful and relevant education in a safe and secure environment here in Port Townsend.

Sincerely,

John A. Polm, Jr., Ed.D.
Superintendent
Port Townsend Public Schools