

School Safety and Emergency Management

Monthly Minute: Reunification

March 2025

Monthly Minute is a newsletter providing insight and tips on potential threats and hazards brought to you by the Oregon Department of Education.



Any number of disasters could require a school to relocate all students to a reunification site. A flood, wildfires and threats of active violence are just a few of the disasters that can make school grounds unsafe for even a controlled release of students. Schools are typically very good at bringing kids in at the beginning of the day and sending them home in the afternoon. However, reunification from an off-site location can be both complex and disruptive enough to bring chaos to even the most well-managed school.

When a school becomes unsafe to occupy, reunifying students with their families will require an off-site location. **The Standard Reunification Method** developed by the I Love U Guys Foundation is the recommended process.

This newsletter will not detail how a reunification is conducted but it will provide additional planning considerations. School EOP planners should download and review the Standard Reunification Method Operational Guidance for their school and district's reunification planning.

Reunification planning and preparation should be the primary responsibility of the school district and not individual schools. District staff can manage responses, direct traffic and coordinate efforts with greater flexibility. In a major regional disaster, multiple schools could be affected which will require enhanced coordination and control.

Site selection is another reason district leadership should take responsibility for reunification planning. Districts should identify **at least two viable sites** that can be used to reunify one or more schools if needed. Just like evacuation planning that requires primary and alternate routes, reunification planning should include at least one primary reunification site and an alternate one. If one site is compromised or otherwise impacted by the same disaster that requires a reunification, then the alternate site would be selected.

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This Month... Conduct an Evacuate drill this month. Review transportation plans for relocation to a reunification site.

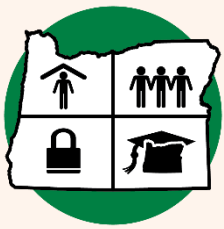


Evacuate! (A location may be specified)

Up Next... April's Monthly Minute will talk about violence prevention. Conduct a Hold drill next month.



**Hold! in your room or area.
Clear the halls.**



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Violence Prevention

Next month we will review the topic of violence prevention. But it's not too early to get a jump start on it now. It is everyone's job to say something if they see something. Check out the [First Observer Plus training](#) by the Transportation Security Agency. It will give your transportation staff the knowledge needed to identify suspicious activity.



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District staff should routinely review and exercise the reunification plan with all schools to ensure readiness and that no one is surprised. Set up times throughout the year to deliberately review the plan from the beginning. Consider what happens when calling up transportation, selecting and setting up the reunification site, and conducting the reunification itself. District staff should also build and maintain a **Reunification Operation Kit** (ROK Box) at the district office or other easily deployable location. The materials found in the ROK Box will aid in a controlled and organized reunification that will ensure the safety of all students and families.

Additional considerations for reunification planning:

- Download, review and incorporate the Standard Reunification Method.
- Routinely review and exercise the district reunification plan with all schools.
- Identify at least two reunification sites in case one is compromised or otherwise unsafe.
- Inform families about the reunification plan and the need to await instructions on which site is selected (and set up) before attempting to go to a site.

Contact us for assistance with this or any other school emergency preparedness topic.

Contact Information



Scan or click the QR code to visit the School Safety and Emergency Management website with additional school emergency preparedness resources, and to **sign up for the monthly training and technical assistance sessions.**

Additional Resources

[The Standard Reunification Method](#) by the I Love U Guys foundation.

[CDC resources](#) on community and youth violence prevention.

Oregon Emergency Management [local contacts list](#).