



School Safety and Emergency Management

Monthly Minute: Reunification

March 2026

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



An unexpected disaster could require a school to relocate students to a reunification site. Flooding, wildfires and threats of active violence are just a few common threats and hazards that Oregon schools face. Any of those could make school grounds unsafe for a controlled release of students. Schools are typically very good at bringing kids in at the beginning of the day and sending them home safely 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 (SRM)** developed by the I Love U Guys Foundation is the

recommended process. This newsletter will not detail the procedures outlined in the SRM, but it will provide additional considerations that will help guide planning and exercise efforts. 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—not individual schools. District staff can manage the response, direct traffic and coordinate efforts with first responders and other community partners. 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. Any disaster large enough to require relocation and reunification of a school could be large enough to impact a primary reunification site. The primary site could be compromised by the same

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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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disaster or roads could be blocked. Either situation will require the selection of an alternate site. It is better to plan for that contingency now than to have to go searching for an alternate site during an incident.

District staff should routinely review and exercise the reunification plan with all schools to ensure familiarity with the plan and to mitigate confusion under stress. Set up times throughout the year to deliberately review the plan from the beginning. Consider what happens when calling up transportation, choosing the pre-determined 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 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.

Resources

The Standard Reunification Method by the I Love U Guys foundation.

SSEM Training and TA session on reunification (YouTube).

CDC resources on community and youth violence prevention.

Oregon Emergency Management **local contacts list**.