



Oregon Task Force on School Safety

2019 REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE



Oregon Task Force on School Safety 2019 REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	3
Introduction.....	4
Section 1: The State of Safety in Oregon Schools.....	5
Section 2: Introducing the <i>Oregon Safe to Learn Act</i>	7
A Deeper Look at the Statewide School Safety and Prevention System.....	8
Strong Support for a Statewide School Safety and Prevention System.....	11
Section 3: Celebrating the Success of Our SafeOregon Tip Line.....	12
The SafeOregon Tip Line Moving Forward.....	12
National Summit on Statewide School Safety Tip Lines.....	13
Section 4: Task Force on School Safety Recommendations.....	14
Task Force on School Safety Members.....	15
Conclusion.....	16





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Oregon legislators created the Task Force on School Safety in 2014, bringing together policy makers from the Governor’s office, Legislature, education, law enforcement, fire and rescue and public mental health to collectively focus on strengthening safety in Oregon schools. Since then, the Task Force has worked diligently and collaboratively to share collective expertise, perspective and resources and to identify effective, sustainable school safety strategies.

A significant step forward was establishing SafeOregon, the statewide tip line where students and parents can anonymously report threats to student safety. Reports to the tip line reveal that our students are struggling with significant challenges, such as bullying and harassment, suicide and self-harm and a variety of threats of violence - all in unacceptable numbers.

Critical work remains to build, strengthen and sustain healthy school climates where students can feel safe, learn and thrive. To move this work forward, the Task Force recommends that the Legislature authorize and fund the *Oregon Safe to Learn Act*. This act will establish a Statewide School Safety and Prevention System within the Oregon Department of Education (ODE). A biennial budget of \$3.87 million is needed to hire 15.1 FTE to implement this system, which will create an infrastructure for supporting all Oregon schools and education service districts in three critical areas:

- Bullying and harassment prevention
- Youth suicide prevention and wellness promotion
- Multidisciplinary safety assessment teams

This proposal has received broad bipartisan, bicameral legislative sponsorship and endorsement from Governor Brown, the Joint Interim Committee on Student Success and many other organizations, including the Oregon Department of Education, Oregon State Police, Oregon School Boards Association, Confederation of Oregon School Administrators, Oregon Association of Education Service Districts, Oregon Education Association, Oregon School Employees Association, Association of Community Mental Health Programs, Oregon Association of Chiefs of Police, Oregon State Sheriffs Association and Oregon Fire Chiefs Association.

Although the Task Force is scheduled to sunset on December 31, 2019, we are unanimous in requesting that the Legislature extend our term of service, so we can continue to bring people and resources together to advance school safety.

The Task Force is grateful to the Legislature for its vision, support and commitment to maintaining safe schools. We are passionate about our work and are proud of our collective efforts to propose and develop a Statewide School Safety and Prevention System to serve Oregon’s students and schools. Through a comprehensive, collaborative approach, we look forward to continuing this important work to make our schools safer.

INTRODUCTION

Oregon legislators understand the gravity and complexity of school safety and were early adopters of a vision to bring together policy makers from the Governor’s office, Legislature, education, law enforcement, fire and rescue and mental health to form a collaborative statewide team with the sole focus of school safety. In 2014, the Legislature created the Task Force on School Safety.

Since then, the Task Force on School Safety has played a critical role in moving school safety to the forefront in Oregon. While schools, mental health providers and first responders have always been concerned about school safety, they typically have worked independently to address these challenges.

During its four years together, the Task Force has worked diligently and collaboratively to research and seek informed school safety strategies, learn what is happening in other states, share collective expertise, perspective and resources, and work cohesively to identify effective, sustainable strategies for strengthening safety in Oregon schools.

Through this multidisciplinary, collaborative approach, two important pieces of school safety legislation were initiated:

- Through the passage of HB 2661 (2015), common terminology was identified for use in drills and by first responders and school districts during emergencies: lockdown, lockout, shelter-in-place and evacuate. This was a critical step to establish effective, streamlined communication during school emergencies. This bill also expanded the requirement that school safety drills and instruction be required from kindergarten through grade 12.
- Through the passage of HB 4075 (2016), SafeOregon (Oregon’s own school safety tip line) was born and subsequently implemented on January 31, 2017. Our SafeOregon school safety tip line gives students and parents an accessible tool they can use to anonymously report incidents of bullying or harassment and other threats to student safety. SafeOregon then alerts the school administration about these reported safety issues so that school personnel can intervene quickly. As of December 1, 2018, more than 2,300 tips have been received. Some tips have literally saved lives.

There is still significant work that must be done to strengthen safety in our schools. In this report you will learn about the current state of safety in Oregon schools and the significant and heartbreaking challenges our students face. Next, we will introduce you to the *Oregon Safe to Learn Act* and describe a proposed Statewide School Safety and Prevention System to address those challenges. Then, we will discuss the success of the SafeOregon school safety tip line and identify next steps for the tip line. And finally, we will share our vision for the Task Force moving forward.





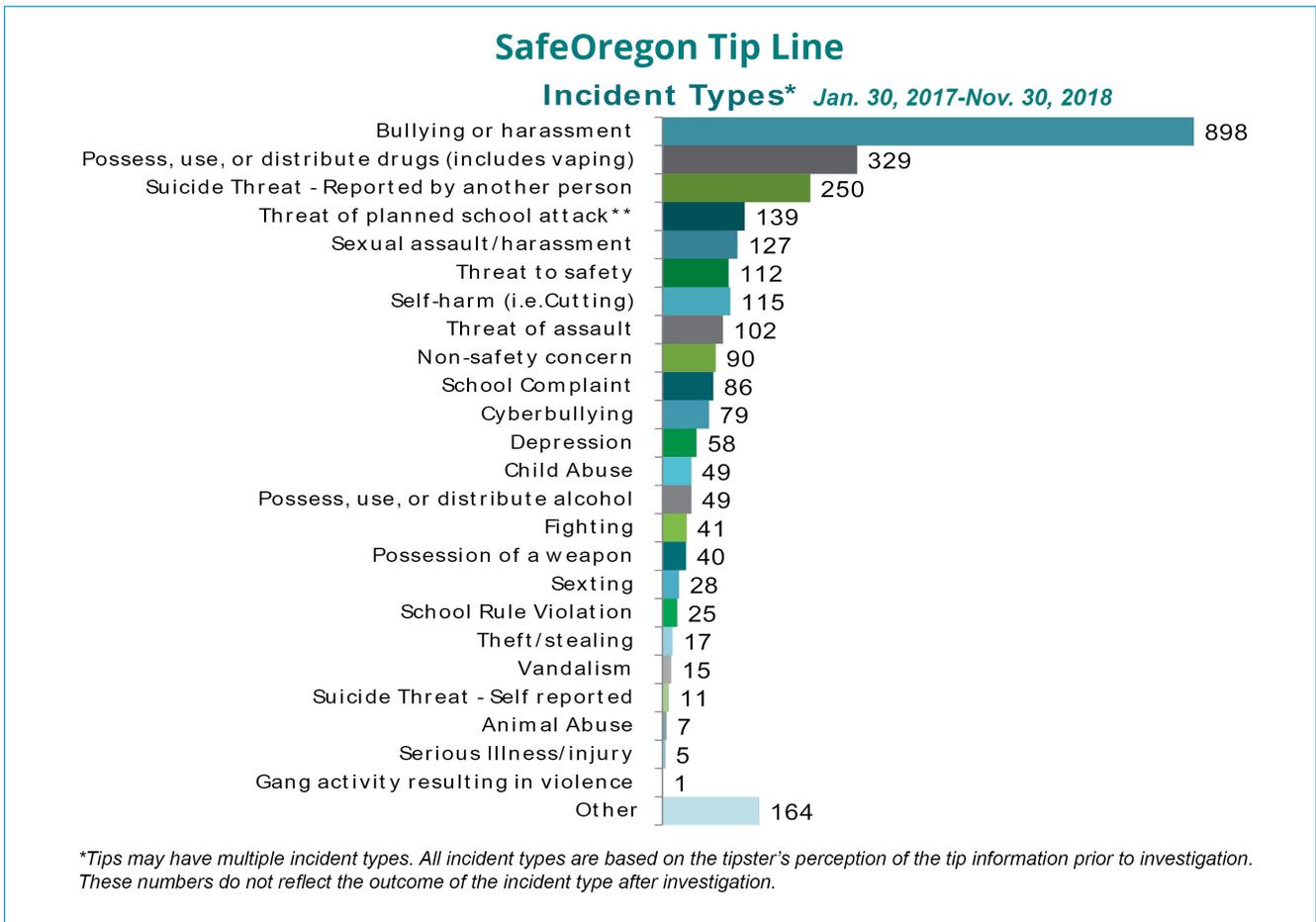
SECTION 1:

The State of Safety in Oregon Schools

We are learning many important things about the state of student safety in our schools through our SafeOregon tip line reports. Data from the first 22 months of the tip line indicates that Oregon students are struggling with a wide range of concerns including bullying and harassment, suicide and self-harm, threats of violence, drug and alcohol use and more. Our tip line received 898 tips about bullying or harassment, and another 79 tips about cyberbullying. Threats of suicide prompted 261 tips, and 115 tips were received about threats of cutting and self-harm. There were an astonishing 139 reports of threats of planned school attacks in Oregon. These numbers are staggering and show us the value of providing students and families with a safe and easy reporting mechanism to share concerns of threats to our students and schools.

The tip line data also validate school safety statistics cited by other reputable sources:

- 107 youth ages 10 to 24 years died by suicide in Oregon in 2017, making suicide the second leading cause of death (behind unintentional death) among youth in that age bracket. (*Oregon Violent Death Reporting System, 2018*)





- One half of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth said they considered suicide during 2017, and one fourth said they attempted suicide. *(2017 Oregon Healthy Teen Survey)*
- In 2017, more than 9% of our 8th graders reported not going to school at least one day in the previous 30 days due to safety concerns. *(2017 Oregon Healthy Teen Survey)*
- Nearly one in three 8th graders – and over one in five 11th graders – reported having been bullied at school in 2017. *(2017 Oregon Healthy Teen Survey)*
- More than 30% of Oregon 8th graders in 2017 reported feeling “so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks in a row” that they “stopped doing some usual activities.” *(2017 Oregon Healthy Teen Survey)*
- Ten percent of public school teachers say they were threatened with injury by a student during the 2015-16 school year, the most recent year for which the data was compiled. *(National Center for Education Statistics)*
- Nationwide, 239 shootings have occurred at schools since 2014, resulting in 138 deaths *(Gun Violence Archive, 2018)*

It is time to substantially and deliberately address these sobering challenges so that all Oregon students can feel safe at school, and learn and thrive, without fear of being bullied, harassed or threatened with physical or emotional harm.

SECTION 2:

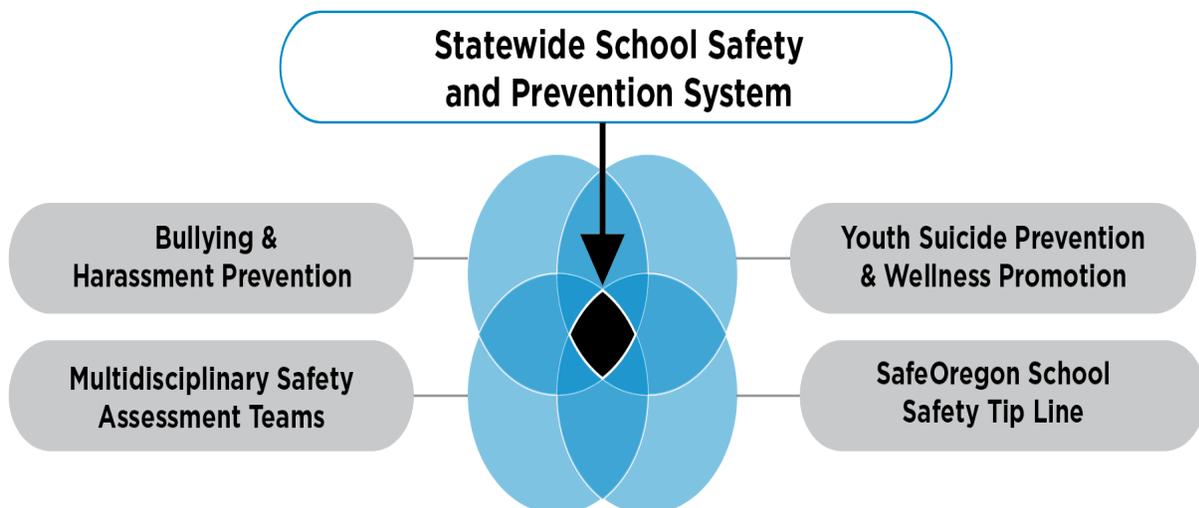
Introducing the *Oregon Safe to Learn Act* A Statewide School Safety and Prevention System

The Task Force recommends that the 2019 Legislature authorize and fund the *Oregon Safe to Learn Act* (HB 2327; SB 584). The *Oregon Safe to Learn Act* enjoys broad bipartisan, bicameral legislative sponsorship and an impressive list of supporters from education, youth mental health and public safety. The measure will establish a Statewide School Safety and Prevention System within ODE. This system will create an infrastructure to support all Oregon schools and education service districts in three critical areas:

- Bullying and harassment prevention
- Youth suicide prevention and wellness promotion
- Multidisciplinary safety assessment teams

Our School Safety and Prevention System involves developing a team of 15 specialists who will deliver training, technical assistance and resources to all Oregon school districts and education service districts. This will empower schools to implement evidence-based, multitier practices and coordinate services with community partners to address potential safety concerns early and intervene before they become a crisis. While prevention and support are the primary goals, specialists will also equip school leadership teams to better understand risk, promote trauma-informed care practices that build resilience, and manage threats of violence when they do occur.

The specialists will be assigned to different regions throughout the state, working directly with school districts to provide training and technical assistance. While specialists will serve all Oregon schools, they will also provide strategic, focused and ongoing support to all school districts, but primarily to smaller, more remote school districts that may not have the capacity to sustain these efforts on their own.





The Statewide School Safety and Prevention System will be aligned with the Oregon Equity Lens with regard to school safety, student discipline and prevention programs to mitigate the impact on students of color; students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, intersex, asexual or two spirit (LGBTQIA2); female students; students with disabilities; and other protected classes of individuals. This initiative will also impact chronic absenteeism and attendance, student achievement and the psychological safety of students and staff.

A biennial budget of \$3.87 million is needed to hire 15.1 FTE to implement this timely and vitally important Statewide School Safety and Prevention System. Staff will include:

- **School Safety and Prevention Specialists (8.0 FTE)**
Specialists in bullying and harassment prevention and safety assessments will be assigned to Education Service Districts (ESDs) regionally to work with schools throughout the state. This approach will form strong linkages, familiarity and partnerships within each community.
- **Youth Suicide Prevention Specialists (5.0 FTE)**
Specialists in youth suicide prevention and mental wellness will provide training, outreach and technical assistance to key school staff throughout our state. These positions may be contracted through a qualified organization that is experienced in working with youth suicide prevention.
- **Program Oversight (2.1 FTE)**
Subject-matter experts will provide training, supervision and oversight of the school safety and prevention system staff and services. The positions will include a program administrator (1 FTE), a school psychologist (.50), clerical support (.50) and technical assistance (.10). In addition, a multidisciplinary steering committee comprised of experienced practitioners in these areas will be established to support the school safety and prevention system.

A Deeper Look at the Statewide School Safety and Prevention System

If you are not yet convinced about the need for a Statewide School Safety and Prevention System, consider Nicole Hockley, whose six-year-old son Dylan was killed at Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2012. She believes much of America looks at school safety the wrong way. The focus, she said, tends to be on imminent danger and what happens in the moment, “as opposed to what you do to stop it from happening in the first place.”

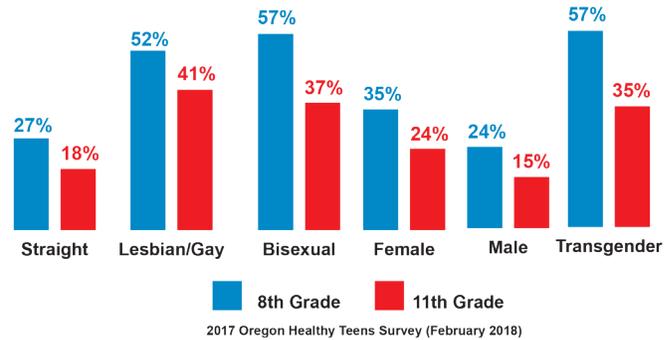
Our proposed Statewide School Safety and Prevention System addresses both challenges: prevention and response. We intend to accomplish this by supporting all Oregon schools in three distinct yet interconnected areas: bullying and harassment prevention, suicide prevention and student wellness promotion, and through establishing safety assessment teams that will be equipped to assess and respond appropriately to threats of violence.

1 Support Bullying and Harassment Prevention Efforts

Bullying and harassment are consistently the most common safety concerns reported to the SafeOregon tip line. Since its launch nearly two years ago, the tip line has received 898 tips about bullying or harassment and another 79 tips about cyberbullying. It is a problem with a wide reach. Nearly one third of 8th graders and over one in five 11th graders reported having been bullied at school in 2017, according to the 2017 Oregon Healthy Teen Survey. The Oregon YouthLine (a peer to peer crisis line) saw a 36 percent increase in bullying-related contacts from teens in 2017 over 2016.

Bullying, intimidation, harassment and threats of violence are even bigger issues for LGBTQ youth. In 2017, LGBTQ youth were twice as likely to experience bullying and harassment at school (2017 Oregon Healthy Teen Survey). They were twice as likely to have been threatened with a weapon. They were three times as likely to have stayed home from school because they were afraid for their safety at school.

Bullied in last 30 days



Even though Oregon school districts have done a great deal to address this issue by implementing anti-bullying policies and programs, reports of bullying and intimidation are not decreasing. The specialists in our school safety and prevention system will use evidenced-based resources to assist school districts with high quality training and support to put anti-bullying policies into action. This objective is in line with the recommendations of the Oregon Safe Schools & Communities Coalition, State of Safe Schools Report (2017). The intent is not only for adults to know how to respond effectively, but also to develop a culture in our schools so that peers also interrupt bullying.

2 Enhance Youth Suicide Prevention Efforts and Student Wellness

One loss of life is too many, so it's distressing to know that the number of suicides among Oregon youth continues to grow. There were 107 suicides by youth ages 18-24 in 2017, according to data from the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). Oregon ranked 15th highest in the nation for suicide among youth ages 10 to 24 years.

Threats of suicide prompted a total of 250 tips to the SafeOregon tip line, including 11 from youth who reported they were considering suicide themselves. A total of 115 tips were received about threats of cutting and self-harm. This number does not consider data from other crisis-line resources, so we know that the threat of suicide and self-harm numbers are much higher.

Number of Suicides
Youths aged 10-24



Oregon Health Authority data, 2018

Suicide is an even greater concern among LGBTQ youth. One half of LGBTQ youth said they considered suicide during 2017, and one fourth said they actually attempted suicide. (2017 Oregon



Healthy Teen Survey) According to the Suicide Prevention Resource Center, LGBTQ youth are more likely than other youth to report attempting suicide. A 2011 National Transgender Discrimination Survey found that 41% of transgender survey respondents reported attempting suicide, compared to 1.6% of the general population.

Increasing connections to families and peers is a primary driver in preventing youth suicide. Another is helping youth develop a sense of belonging, according to Oregon Health Authority’s 2017 Youth Suicide Intervention and Prevention Plan Annual Report. Programs like Sources of Strength, a peer-led school prevention and resiliency program, is highlighted in the Oregon report for its successful pilot project in the Albany and North Clackamas school districts. The results were so impressive that both districts plan to expand the program to additional middle and high schools. Other programs such as the Signs of Suicide and Good Behavior Game also have shown to reduce suicide as well as decrease suicide ideation and improve general life skills. (Katz, Bolton, Katz, Isaak, Tilston-Jones and Sareen, 2013)

Equipping schools with training that supports early identification and intervention strategies for students at risk of suicide and self-harm is a critical piece of our Statewide School Safety and Prevention System. These are the types of suicide prevention programs and training that the Task Force envisions will be accessible to schools through the role of the suicide prevention specialists.

3 Establish Safety Assessment Teams

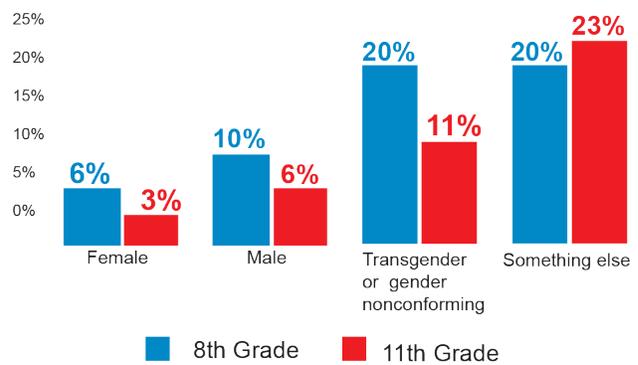
Our schools face safety threats to students and staff on a too frequent basis. Since its launch two years ago, the SafeOregon tip line has received 139 tips about a threat of a planned school attack. It has received 112 threats to safety, 102 threats of assault, and 40 tips about possession of weapons.

Our approach to responding to safety threats is modeled after Salem-Keizer Public Schools’ successful two-tier safety assessment system. Most safety threats fall within the Level 1 protocol conducted by a school-based team. The Level 2 protocol, which is followed if there is a perceived high risk, is a collaborative, multidisciplinary effort involving representatives from schools, public mental health, law enforcement and community-based services.

School safety and prevention specialists will work within their regions to help schools develop two-tier safety assessment protocols and bring together multi-disciplinary teams to help schools assess threats of violence and identify supportive resources for students and families. Using this system will:

- Provide standardized assessment protocols, training, and technical assistance for all schools and their community partners throughout the state.

Threatened With a Weapon at School in Last 12 Months



2017 Oregon Healthy Teens Survey (February 2018)

-
- 
- Empower school teams to support students involved in reactive or targeted violence, develop supervision strategies for students who are in at-risk situations, and help connect students and families with community-based services and support.
 - Improve the ability of school teams to assess and understand risk, promote trauma-informed care practices that build resilience, and make informed decisions about appropriate interventions.

Safety assessment is a proven method of early intervention that is recommended by a long list of organizations, including the FBI, U.S. Departments of Education and Justice, U.S. Secret Service and the National Association of School Psychologists. Collectively, these strategies will improve health and safety at our schools and at the same time reduce risk and liability.

Strong Support for a Statewide School Safety and Prevention System

The Task Force has received strong support for its system-based approach to provide technical assistance to schools and education service districts. We are encouraged that the legislative Joint Interim Committee on Student Success supports the Task Force's recommendation, and we are grateful to Governor Brown for including funding for our recommendation in her proposed 2019 biennium budget.

Other organizations in support of the *Oregon Safe to Learn Act* include:

- Oregon Department of Education (ODE)
- Oregon State Police (OSP)
- Oregon School Boards Association (OSBA)
- Confederation of Oregon School Administrators (COSA)
- Oregon Association of Education Service Districts (OAESD)
- Oregon Education Association (OEA)
- Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA)
- Association of Community Mental Health Programs (AOCMHP)
- Oregon Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP)
- Oregon State Sheriffs Association (OSSA)
- Oregon Fire Chiefs Association (OFCA)

SECTION 3:

Celebrating the Success of Our SafeOregon Tip Line

The Task Force championed the idea of establishing a statewide school safety tip line. The Legislature commissioned and funded the tip line. After less than two years in operation, SafeOregon has shown to be an invaluable tool in averting acts of violence and connecting young people in distress with the help they need. It has also become the foundation for our proposed school safety and prevention system.

SafeOregon provides Oregon students with a platform to share anything that threatens their safety or makes them feel unsafe, or also to share if they know someone who feels unsafe. Trained staff are available 24-hours-a-day, 365-days-a-year through a phone call, text message, email, mobile application or web form. Tips are promptly analyzed for urgency and routed to school administrators and law enforcement (when necessary) for the most appropriate follow-up. All follow-up on a tip is completed at the local level, where schools, mental health providers and local law enforcement know their students and community best.



Through timely identification of potential threats, schools can intervene earlier to assess risks and avert tragedies. The SafeOregon school safety tip line is already credited with directly saving at least one life. In Hermiston, the tip line was notified by a youth whose friend had sent text messages indicating an intent to commit suicide. Two Hermiston police officers responded to the friend's home and found the teen unconscious in his bedroom. They immediately administered life-saving CPR. (*Hermiston Officers and Tip Line Save a Life*, January 12, 2018, <http://www.mycolumbiabasin.com/2018/01/12/hermiston-officers-and-tip-line-save-a-life/>)

The SafeOregon Tip Line Moving Forward

There is still work to do so that all Oregon youth are aware of the tip line, can easily access it, and are protected from inappropriate disclosure of tip information. We need to:

- **Work to Enroll All Oregon Schools**

Enrollment in the tip line is voluntary and currently more than 1,075 schools (out of 1,247 public schools in Oregon) are signed up and participate in the tip line. One hundred percent participation of our schools in the tip line is crucial so that all students and parents have a safe, anonymous way to report threatening or unsafe behavior. The proposed Statewide School Safety and Prevention System specialists will work with the schools in their region to enroll the remaining schools and support schools in implementing and promoting the tip line.



- **Marketing and Promoting the Tip Line**

Strategic, ongoing marketing and promotion of SafeOregon is essential so that use of the tip line is ingrained in the culture of every school and community. However, no additional funds are available at this time to support such marketing and promotion. We recommend additional funding to address this purpose.

- **Strengthen Tip Line Confidentiality**

A minor but important adjustment to the language of ORS 339.329 is necessary so that the identity of students or others making reports to the tip line can be protected from public records requests. The intent of the Legislature was for students to use the tip line confidentially and anonymously. The current language of the statute needs to be strengthened to clarify this original intent. Otherwise, the release of tips or portions of tips could inadvertently disclose the identities of the tipsters and victims and put them at greater risk. Without this change, students may be discouraged from providing information in confidence. We recommend language that would exempt not only the identity of the person submitting the tip to SafeOregon, but also any portion of the tip from being released under Oregon public records law.



OSP hosted the first annual **National Summit on Statewide School Safety Tip Lines** in June 2018. Representatives from 21 states and Canada gathered in Oregon to learn from the experience of several states including Oregon that operate statewide tip lines.

The concept began in August of 2017 when OSP organized a phone call with six other states that operate statewide tip lines. Participants found so much value in the information sharing that the phone calls have continued monthly. All participants agreed the knowledge needed to be shared across the country, and OSP volunteered to organize the first tip line national summit.

The event was hosted by the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training, and presentations were made from Oregon and Colorado's attorney generals, the FBI, and school safety leaders from across the nation. Participants learned strategies for creating and optimizing the use of a tip line, as well as getting the most out of their data, marketing and tip information. Attendees recognized Oregon for being a leader in school safety and OSP for its administration of SafeOregon and bringing together the first national summit. A few participants have since initiated statewide tip line systems of their own. The common message shared by all of the involved states: tip lines are a critical tool in school safety.

SECTION 4:

Task Force on School Safety Recommendations

The Legislature’s foresight to establish a richly diverse Task Force membership of stakeholders from a wide variety of disciplines has yielded many direct benefits toward strengthening safety in our schools, as discussed earlier in this report. Some indirect but very important value brought forth by the diverse membership and longevity of the Task Force involve richer communication, collaborations and connections among these stakeholders and their school-serving organizations. This in turn improves the safety and health of Oregon students and schools.

Moving forward, the Task Force recommends that the Legislature authorize and fund the *Oregon Safe to Learn Act*, extend our term of service past our 2019 sunset date, set aside the original statewide school floor plan objective, have the Task Force’s administrative support be shared by ODE and OSP, and increase membership on the Task Force.



- **Authorize and Fund the *Oregon Safe to Learn Act***

The Task Force recommends that the Legislature authorize and fund the *Oregon Safe to Learn Act*. This act will establish a Statewide School Safety and Prevention System within ODE, creating the infrastructure to support schools and education service districts in bullying and harassment prevention, youth suicide prevention and mental wellness, and multidisciplinary safety assessment teams.
- **Extend Task Force Term of Service**

There is more work to do to strengthen safety and student wellness in our Oregon schools. Since 2014, the Task Force has seen the value of exploring solutions through a multidisciplinary approach that brings key policy makers together from the Governor’s office, Legislature, state agencies and professional associations representing education, first responders and public mental health. The Task Force is scheduled to sunset on December 31, 2019 but is unanimous in our desire to continue our work together. We request that the Legislature extend our term of service, so we can continue to bring people and resources together to advance school safety and student wellness in Oregon.
- **Set Aside the School Floor Plan Objective**

The Task Force’s original mandate from the Legislature included developing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for creating a database of school floor plans to enhance the readiness of first responders in the event of active shooter attacks. After extensive research, the Task Force has concluded that due to the expense of creating and maintaining such a database and the ineffectiveness of its use by first responders during these fast-paced attacks, we do not believe this strategy to be a prudent focus at this time. The Task Force is encouraged by the level of collaboration already occurring between first responder agencies and their respective schools. In October 2018, the Task Force surveyed Oregon fire and law enforcement agencies to evaluate their efforts to work with schools regarding emergency planning. Of the 81 that responded, we learned that three-fourths already have floor plans of the schools in their jurisdictions. Nearly 80 percent of those responding have conducted tabletop



or full-scale exercises with their schools within the last three years. About 95 percent of those responding have had discussions with their schools within the last three years about what would happen in the event of an active shooter. More than 60 percent of those responding have copies of the emergency operations plan for their schools. The Task Force encourages these agencies to continue to work closely with their schools, to share school floor plans and emergency plans, to train together, and to develop customized emergency response plans for their jurisdictions.

- **Share Administrative Support**

OSP has provided administrative support to the Task Force since its inception in 2014. ODE would like to assist the Task Force and share that role. We recommend that administrative support be a shared responsibility of ODE and OSP.

- **Increase Membership**

The collective wisdom of our rich and diverse membership on the Task Force has contributed to our success in strengthening safety in Oregon schools. We would like to increase our membership to include representation from the Oregon Health Authority to provide an informed public health perspective and subject-matter expertise on the challenges of bullying and harassment, youth suicide and student wellness. We also recommend adding Oregon Emergency Management to provide expertise regarding school safety and emergency preparedness.

Task Force On School Safety Members

Jeff Barker

State Representative, House District 28

Lindsey Capps

Chief Education Officer and Education Policy Advisor,
Governor’s Office

Charan Cline

Superintendent, Yamhill-Carlton School District
Confederation of Oregon School Administrators

Caryn Connolly

Teacher, Roberts High School, Salem-Keizer School
District

Oregon Education Association

Eriks Gabliks

Director, Oregon Department of Public Safety
Standards and Training

Colt Gill

Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction
Oregon Department of Education

Susan Graves

Safety Coordinator, Lincoln County School District
Oregon School Employees Association

Travis Hampton

Superintendent, Oregon State Police

Peggy Holstedt

Director of Policy Services, Oregon School Boards
Association

Scott Magers

Chief, Hillsboro Fire Department
Oregon Fire Chiefs Association

Heidi Moawad

Public Safety Policy Advisor, Governor’s Office

Dave Novotney, Ph.D., Vice Chair

Superintendent, Willamette Education Service
District

Oregon Association of Education Service Districts

Cherryl Ramirez

Director, Association of Oregon Community Mental
Health Programs

Craig Roberts, Chair

Sheriff, Clackamas County Sheriff’s Office
Oregon State Sheriffs Association

Geoff Spalding

Chief, Astoria Police Department
Oregon Association of Chiefs of Police

Rob Wagner

State Senator, Senate District 19



CONCLUSION

During our four years together, the Task Force on School Safety has worked diligently and collaboratively with legislators, schools, mental health specialists and first responders to strengthen safety in Oregon schools.

A significant step forward was establishing the SafeOregon tip line, where students and parents can anonymously report threats to student safety. Reports made to the tip line reveal that our students are struggling with significant challenges, such as bullying and harassment, suicide and self-harm and a variety of threats of violence - all of these in unacceptable numbers. Oregon schools need assistance to address these challenges and support their students.

The Oregon Safe to Learn Act - the Next Step

The *Oregon Safe to Learn Act* would help schools create safe environments where all students can feel secure, learn and thrive. The Act creates a Statewide School Safety and Prevention System that provides the infrastructure to deliver technical assistance to schools in bullying and harassment prevention, youth suicide prevention and wellness promotion, and multidisciplinary safety assessment teams. We are encouraged that Governor Brown, the Joint Interim Committee on Student Success and 11 professional associations from education, public mental health and first responders have joined the Task Force in supporting this next step to strengthen the safety and wellness of Oregon schools.

Significantly, we are indebted to the leadership of Task Force members Representative Jeff Barker and Senator Rob Wagner for their sponsorship of the *Oregon Safe to Learn Act*. The Task Force is grateful to the Oregon Legislature for its vision, support and commitment to maintaining safe schools. We appreciate the Willamette Education Service District and Oregon State Sheriffs' Association for financing the Task Force's annual reports to the Legislature.

We are passionate about our work and are proud of our collective efforts to propose and develop a Statewide School Safety and Prevention System to serve Oregon's students and schools. Through a comprehensive, collaborative approach, we look forward to continuing this important work to make our schools safer for all students.