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Washtenaw Superintendents' Association Issues Statement of Care and Concern for Our Collective School Community

After the tragedy at Oxford High School this week, the Washtenaw Superintendents' Association (WSA) is issuing a statement out of care and concern for our collective school community. The WSA represents the superintendents of the Washtenaw Intermediate School District and the nine public school districts in Washtenaw County: Ann Arbor Public Schools, Chelsea School District, Dexter Community Schools, Lincoln Consolidated Schools, Manchester Community Schools, Milan Area Schools, Saline Area Schools, Whitmore Lake Public Schools and Ypsilanti Community Schools. Their statement reads:

As education leaders of the nine public school districts in Washtenaw County, our hearts continue to ache for the Oxford community as they grieve at this time. Our schools are special communities that should spark inspiration and cultivate the joy of learning, and this tragic act of violence shakes our foundation, especially given its close proximity to home.

Over the last 48 hours, schools across Southeast Michigan have seen a drastic increase in the number of potential threats of violence reported to them and to law enforcement authorities. Just this morning, the WSA collectively met with the police chiefs of Washtenaw County and the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office.

Every threat, no matter how big or small, is illegal and investigated by schools and law enforcement. Threats against the safety of our schools are never a joke, and law enforcement and school leaders will take action to protect our community, including and up to prosecution. We ask all families to speak with their students about the seriousness of making or sharing threats, and report any threats seen on social media, through text messages or other platforms to authorities through the statewide confidential reporting tool OK2SAY:

[Submit a tip online](#)

Call 855-565-2729

Text 652729

Email OK2SAY@mi.gov

Download the app for [iPhone](#) or [Android](#)

In addition to educating students, ensuring our schools are safe is our number one priority. Washtenaw County schools have close relationships with all of our law enforcement agencies and have worked together for many years behind the scenes to keep our schools safe. This includes consultation on Emergency Operations Plans and safety infrastructure and technology, partnering on grants from the Michigan State Police to secure additional safety-related resources and technology, annual county-wide coordination meetings, and regular safety planning for individual school districts. The Washtenaw Intermediate School District and the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office provides ALICE training for all school employees in our county throughout every school year, and while we hope this training never needs to be used, it is a protocol we must always be prepared for.

We also understand that reactions to this tragedy look and feel different for every student and adult, and you may notice changes in the behaviors of those around you as we collectively grieve, reflect and react. Help and support is available to you and your family:

Here are [tips](#) and an [infographic](#) for parents, guardians and caregivers on talking with your student about violence from the National Association of School Psychologists.

For younger children, [Sesame Street](#) provides these resources on [violence](#) and [trauma](#).

Washtenaw County's Community Mental Health 24/7 Crisis Line: Call (734) 544-3050

Ozone House's Youth Emergency Services and 24/7 Crisis Line:

Call (734) 662-2222

Text "Ozone" to (734) 662-2222 Monday-Thursday 10:00 am-5:00 pm and Friday 10:00 am-4:00 pm

[Click here](#) to chat Monday-Thursday 10:00 am-5:00 pm and Friday 10:00 am-4:00 pm.

Additional resources are available to your school district, including expanded crisis and clinical mental health support thanks to our community's Public Safety and Mental Health Preservation Millage.

We are deeply saddened that these events continue to touch our schools, and we will do everything in our power to prioritize the safety of our students, staff and families. We continue to lean on the close relationships and clear channels of communication we have among our school districts and law enforcement authorities to keep our schools safe together. Our schools will continue to keep you informed through individual district communications, and as always, thank you for your understanding and support of our school community.

Sincerely,

Dr. Christopher Timmis, Dexter Community Schools

Dr. Steve Laatsch, Saline

Dr. Julie Helber, Chelsea School District

Robert Jansen, Lincoln Consolidated Schools

Dr. Alena Zachery-Ross, Ypsilanti Community Schools

Dr. Jeanice K. Swift, Ann Arbor Public Schools

Tom DeKeyser, Whitmore Lake Public Schools

Bryan Girbach, Milan Area Schools

Naomi Norman, Washtenaw ISD

Dr. Bradley J. Bezeau, Manchester Community Schools

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