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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Iredell-Statesville Schools and Law Enforcement Agencies Issue Pledge to Community to Ensure Student Safety at School

Statesville, NC—In light of the nationwide efforts to improve safety in our schools, Iredell-Statesville Schools Superintendent, Dr. Jeff James, Iredell County Sheriff Darrin Campbell, Statesville Police Chief David Onley, and Troutman Police Chief Josh Watson addressed members of the community to build awareness about student behavior and school safety today during a press conference. The event was held in the media center at Oakwood Middle School in Statesville.

Statements were made by each representative of the three law enforcement agencies as well as Superintendent Dr. Jeff James. He urged everyone to come together to keep our schools safe.

“In 2023, we are calling on our parents, students, and community members to join us in holding ourselves and others to the behavioral expectations that we have set on our school campuses,” stated Dr. James. “Furthermore, we pledge to our stakeholders that we will hold our students accountable so that all schools are emotionally and physically safe places to learn.”

Echoing that call to parents, Sheriff Campbell furthermore spoke of the strides the Iredell County Sheriff's Office has made.

“Over the years, especially the last 5 years, the Iredell County Sheriff's Office and the school system have made great strides to make sure our schools stay safe,” explained Sheriff Campbell. “We take serious school safety. We are not going to tolerate any type of just a few that try to cause problems in our schools for the other kids. We're here to help and protect everybody.”

Chief David Onley with the Statesville Police Department joined with Sheriff Campbell's statement.

“We take the schools and what goes on there very seriously,” affirmed Chief Onley. “Our kids are our number one investment. We cannot let a small percentage of the population of our school system affect the whole school.”

The local agencies spoke of their investment in school safety with equipment, programs, and personnel.

“Troutman Police Department takes the safety of the students, staff, and visitors to our schools as one of our top priorities,” stated Chief Watson. “As part of that priority, we made sure our officers had additional training on responding to violent events.”

The overall message called for the support of parents. Chief Watson continued his comments by saying that we need “parent to start taking responsibility that their children show the proper behavior at school. Without the support of parents, no matter what we do or the schools do, we will continue to have problems.”

At the conclusion of their statements, the floor was opened to the audience for any questions.

Iredell-Statesville Schools hosted the press conference the day before the district officially begins the second semester of the 2022-23 school year. To learn more about Iredell-Statesville Schools, please visit www.issnc.org .