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February 23, 2018

Dear Etiwanda School District Families,

The school tragedy that occurred in Parkland, Florida has profoundly impacted our school community and communities across the nation. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families that lost loved ones and those who are injured. Incidents such as this serve as another reminder to heighten our awareness of school safety.

Since the incident, I have received calls and messages conveying concerns from parents and families regarding the safety of our children while they attend school. First, I want to reassure you that the safety needs of students, staff, and the community is our highest priority. At all times, we maintain efforts to ensure that school campuses are safe, secure, and peaceful so that optimum teaching and learning can occur.

Since the Florida tragedy, some schools in our District, and indeed across the region, have had an increase in students reporting threats they have heard other students making about harming students. Our District takes all reports of threats seriously, investigating the threat and working with our law enforcement partners to determine the credibility of any such threats. In addition to any action by law enforcement, our District uses disciplinary procedures available to us under California law, as appropriate to each circumstance. We are grateful for those students who report to adults anything they hear or see that makes them uncomfortable or fearful.

Parents have also asked for assistance in knowing the best ways to talk with their children about the threat of school violence. The National Association of School Psychologists website has some helpful resources for parents to access via a link on our District website.

Over the past ten years, we have worked diligently to implement effective emergency response policies and procedures. Training staff members has been an integral component of our preparation and awareness process. Below is a brief listing of activities and initiatives that have been developed and are currently in place.

- We continuously encourage school personnel to maintain a “heightened awareness” for suspicious activity, suspicious vehicles, and suspicious persons. This includes affirming well established procedures and protocols for checking in and checking out of all ESD sites.
- A thorough screening process is conducted for all potential employees, including a Department of Justice fingerprint check.
- The District conducts emergency drills and trainings in conjunction with first responders, including lockdown drills, to prepare for worst-case scenarios. In addition, the District continually assesses response protocols to improve our emergency preparedness.
- We maintain very close relationships with first responders – local police and fire departments – to make immediate and long-term threat assessments.

- We provide special attention to perimeter security and access control issues, including reducing the number of doors accessible from the outside, stressing the importance of staff approaching and questioning strangers, reporting suspicious individuals/situations, reviewing security procedures for after-school and evening activities and building use, and identifying visiting service personnel and vendors.
- We maintain a locked classroom door protocol. While on campus, teachers keep their classroom doors locked at all times.
- The District reviews and updates its school safety plans on an annual basis and as needed during the year.
- Regularly, our Safety Committee and District Risk Management team meet with Principals, other District staff, and law enforcement representatives to review best practices as they relate to school safety issues. Additionally, each school site maintains its own campus safety team.
- We review staffing and supervision plans that stress the importance of adult supervision before, during, and after school, inside school buildings, on campus, and in common areas.
- We review and test emergency communications mechanisms and procedures on a regular basis.
- We are enhancing our campus facility security by utilizing *Measure I* funds. Examples include installing campus security cameras and office panic buttons.

In closing, please know that the Etiwanda school District is committed to a proactive and coordinated effort to assess, identify, prevent, intervene and manage any situation that may cause or have the potential to cause a safety concern or threat. Currently, we are working to better understand the Parkland tragedy and other patterns and trends to determine what lessons we can learn from these tragic incidents. In the meantime, we appreciate your continued support, understanding, and assistance in maintaining the safest learning environments for our children.

Our thoughts, prayers, and support continue to be with those who are affected by this overwhelming tragedy. Although these horrific events have deeply shaken us, together we continue to stand in love, support, and fellowship of one another.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Judson", with a stylized, flowing script.

Shawn Judson, Ed.D.  
Superintendent