NEWS RELEASEContact info:

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A Commitment to Safe Schools in El Dorado County

*A Message From El Dorado County Education Leaders and Law Enforcement Partners*

In El Dorado County, keeping students and schools safe is a top priority for every educational leader and law enforcement agency. Increasingly, families are asking about planning and preparedness for school emergencies, as well as prevention efforts. As a county, we have developed strong partnerships between schools, law enforcement, and school community partners to improve campus and community safety.

Within El Dorado County there are fifteen school districts that oversee more than 65 schools, as well as several charter schools. The El Dorado County Sheriff’s Office serves the majority of schools in the County, with seven full-time deputies assigned to the School Resource Officer (SRO) program. The SRO Deputies respond to calls for service at the high schools located in the County along with middle and elementary schools. In addition, the City of Placerville Police Department and South Lake Tahoe Police Department serve the schools in their local jurisdiction as well.

With guidance and technical assistance from law enforcement partners, public schools in El Dorado County have developed school safety plans that are regularly reviewed and updated. Plans include procedures for lockdowns, evacuations, active shooter, wildland fires, earthquakes and more. Each campus maintains plans that are tailored to their site and address critical needs at that campus. Safety plans include communication protocols for connecting with law enforcement and messaging to families. Plans are formally reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that current safety protocols are addressed.

Fire and lockdown drills are scheduled throughout the school year to ensure students and staff are familiar with what is expected of them in the event of an emergency. And, for the past several years, law enforcement and other public agencies have held active shooter drills on school campuses to familiarize themselves with campus layouts and school safety plans.

All schools strive to create a healthy school climate where students feel welcomed and connected. With funding recently provided by the Mental Health Student Services Act Grant, El Dorado County Office of Education and community partners will begin to expand access to mental health services for children and youth, including countywide student assessments and campus-based mental health services. It will also allow schools to connect families to ongoing mental health services with local agencies when needed.

As an additional prevention strategy, we are developing School Threat Assessment Teams at several sites who will be trained to recognize potential threats to schools and students. These multidisciplinary teams will include school officials, law enforcement, mental health professionals, and others who work together to evaluate situations and intervene when necessary to connect students to mental health supports and other assistance as needed.

And finally, it is important to acknowledge the role of students and families in looking out for one another and creating safer schools. They may be among the first to recognize warning signs of someone at-risk of hurting themselves or others. We encourage students and families to speak to a teacher, counselor, SRO, or another trusted adult to get help.

In summary, we would like to assure the community that we have protective systems in place, we are prepared to respond, and we will continue to be proactive in our prevention efforts to keep our schools safe and secure.

Respectfully,

Sheriff John D’Agostini, El Dorado County Sheriff’s Office

Chief Joe Wren, City of Placerville Police Department

Chief David Stevenson, City of South Lake Tahoe Police Department

Dr. Ed Manansala, El Dorado County Superintendent of Schools

Jeremy Meyers, Superintendent, Black Oak Mine Unified School District

Dr. David Roth, Superintendent, Buckeye Union School District

Matthew Smith, Superintendent, Camino Union School District

Dr. Ron Carruth, Superintendent, El Dorado Union High School District

Meg Enns, Superintendent, Gold Oak Union School District

Keri Phillips, Superintendent, Gold Trail Union School District

Grant Coffin, Superintendent, Indian Diggings School District

Dr. Todd Cutler, Superintendent, Lake Tahoe Unified School District

Dave Scroggins, Superintendent, Latrobe School District

Curtis Wilson, Superintendent, Mother Lode Union School District

Annette Lane, Superintendent, Pioneer Union School District

Eric Bonniksen, Superintendent, Placerville Union School District

Pat Atkins, Superintendent, Pollock Pines Elementary and Silver Fork School Districts

Jim Shoemake, Superintendent, Rescue Union School District