



December 3, 2021

Dear School Community,

The tragedy that occurred Tuesday in Oxford, Mich., continues to weigh heavily on our hearts, and our thoughts remain with the entire Oxford school community. With any school crisis, the safety of students and staff is our top priority, and this event, though hundreds of miles away, serves as a reminder of the crucial role we all play in the safety of schools here in our five counties of Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska and Leelanau.

If you see something, say something. Students, families or other individuals who have information about any potentially harmful event should immediately contact local law enforcement and school officials directly: Call 911, or report anonymously via OK2SAY. Contact OK2SAY via phone: 855-565-2729, or text: 652729, or email: OK2SAY@mi.gov.

School officials and law enforcement take every threat seriously and will investigate them thoroughly to protect students and staff. While we are not aware of any credible threats to schools in our region, other districts throughout Michigan have seen disruptions in learning as a result of what happened in Oxford and subsequent social media posts and rumors circulating in those communities.

We all have an obligation to ensure our schools are safe spaces, and the best way forward is through trust and collaboration. This starts with understanding the consequences of making false claims of a threat. School leaders and law enforcement are unable to intervene if we aren't aware, and it is often our students and their families who are first to notice something unusual or alarming. Reporting false threats, though, draws limited resources away from critical needs, such as investigating legitimate concerns, and such actions can be met with legal repercussions.

As educators, this tragedy is a moment for us to reflect on whether we are taking the steps necessary to connect with all of our students to make sure they feel welcomed, supported and safe. For students and their families, we hope to foster stronger relationships with each other and our communities, and build upon the ways in which we can all work together to ensure a safe learning environment for everyone.

Tragedies, regardless of where they happen, can affect our lives in many ways, such as causing some to feel grief or anxiety. There are a number of [resources related to school violence](#) available through the Michigan Association of School Psychologists. [Mental health resources](#) are also available through the Michigan Department of Education, and the National Association of School Psychologists provides information on [how to discuss violence with others](#).

Northwest Education Services

Our school leaders and staff work hard to ensure our buildings, classrooms and school campuses are safe and secure learning environments every day, and we will continue to prioritize the well-being of our students and staff. We place trust in our communities to help us in that effort.

Respectfully,

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Northwest Education Services

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Leland Public Schools

Casey Petz
Suttons Bay Public Schools

Mike Hill
Crawford School, Excelsior District #1

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Northwest Education Services

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