



December 2, 2021

Dear Everett Public Schools' families:

I am reaching out to you to ask for your help and to provide some resources and information. In recent weeks, we have seen a sharp increase in the number of social media posts, texts and graffiti by students that are inappropriate and/or threaten the safety of our schools. In the last three weeks we have had two social media posts in our district that created concerns about student safety and ultimately, resulted in district, school and law enforcement investigations and significant disciplinary consequences.

This issue is not unique to Everett Public Schools. Neighboring districts have been experiencing the same issues and you may see in the news reports of students posting what appears to be a threat of violence at school. In the vast majority of cases, these posts turn out to be non-credible threats where students did not intend harm or do not have access to weapons that could cause harm to a school. Students will often say the online post or threat was a joke. The safety of our children is not a joke.

In every case, we have a duty to immediately respond and assume the threat could be credible until the investigation is complete. Often, this requires dozens of school and district leaders and law enforcement to act all hours of the day and night to ensure the safety of our students. In some cases, it has resulted in parents getting a knock on the door late at night from a police officer following up on the social media post. And in every case, students receive significant disciplinary consequences, regardless of the intent. In addition, the broader impact on the entire school community cannot be overstated. This behavior always causes unnecessary worry and concern among all parents, students and staff.

When we hear of tragedies like what occurred in a Michigan school earlier this week, it intensifies our emotions. We want our schools to be physically and emotionally safe for our families. I understand how families may feel on edge right now with threats on the rise nationally and locally.

I commit to you we take every threat seriously. We partner with our local law enforcement to ensure threats are fully investigated and resolved. There are consequences for students who are guilty of threatening our schools, students or staff.

This is where I ask for your help and hope to provide some assistance. Please consider the following:

- Please talk to your children about the consequences of posting or sharing inappropriate content or threats of violence online. Help them understand there will be a significant disciplinary consequence and a lasting effect on their future. Everything they post or share can become public even if it's only shared with one person.
- Please monitor your child's online and social media behavior. Here are some [resources](#) you may find helpful.

- Please remind your children if they see something, they say something. In most cases, since we do not have access or a need to see social media posts, it is a student, parent or staff member who alerts us and law enforcement to a potential concern. We appreciate your support in this effort. Students quickly reporting incidents to administration helps us respond quickly and resolve the issue without having to interrupt school.
- Please reassure children of any age that all is well and many people are working behind the scenes to keep them safe, day and night.

My intent in sending this letter is not to cause worry or angst. It is to share what really happens when students make poor choices and the significant impact it causes for them, their family and our entire community. I hope this leads to more open, positive conversations with your children that will prevent this from happening further. And I hope these resources will help as you navigate this parenting challenge.

Thank you for taking the time to listen and for your continued efforts to keep all of our children safe online and at school. By working together, we can support our students in this ever-changing world.

Stay safe and be well,

Dr. Ian B. Satlzman