

# 6

## Decision Making Guide





## LEADERSHIP DECISION MAKING PROCESS

**Decision to be made**

**Final Decision/Recommendation:**

**Participants:**

**Consultants:**

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### **Analyze:**

Leaders will determine:

- Why is this decision important?
  -
- Who will be impacted by the decision?
  -
- What information is needed to assist the decision-making process?
  -

### **Process:**

Leaders will establish:

- What kind of decision will this be?
  -
- Who should be responsible for making the decision?
  -
- What are the steps that will create a healthy process?
  -

### **Communicate:**

Leaders will articulate:

- Who needs to be communicated with?
  -
- What is the timeline of the communication(s)?
  -
- What will be the most effective communication strategy/mechanism?
  -
- How will the success of the decision be measured?
  -



# Crisis Communications





# IN AN EMERGENCY WHEN YOU HEAR IT. DO IT.

## LOCKDOWN! LOCKS, LIGHTS, OUT OF SIGHT.

### STUDENTS

Move away from sight  
Maintain silence  
Do not open the door

### TEACHER

Lock interior doors  
Turn out the lights  
Move away from sight  
Do not open the door  
Maintain silence  
Take attendance



## LOCKOUT! SECURE THE PERIMETER.

### STUDENTS

Return inside  
Business as usual

### TEACHER

Bring everyone indoors  
Lock perimeter doors  
Increase situational awareness  
Business as usual  
Take attendance



## EVACUATE! TO ANNOUNCED LOCATION.

### STUDENTS

Bring your phone  
Leave your stuff behind  
Follow instructions

### TEACHER

Lead evacuation to location  
Take attendance  
Notify if missing, extra or injured students



## SHELTER! HAZARD AND SAFETY STRATEGY.

### STUDENTS

Hazard	Safety Strategy
Tornado	Evacuate to shelter area
Hazmat	Seal the room
Earthquake	Drop, cover and hold
Tsunami	Get to high ground

### TEACHER

Lead safety strategy  
Take attendance







## Sample Crisis/Emergency Messages for Principals

The following pages contain sample messages for principals to inform parents/guardians, staff, students and stakeholders about an event at school that may be considered a crisis or emergency. These sample messages are provided as a reference when it becomes necessary to communicate accurate and timely information to parents/guardians, students, staff and community following a crisis or emergency related to your school. You may want to use email or the automated system.

**The decision to send a message rests with the principal.** Please remember to include the school letterhead and your contact information. You may also want to have the message translated into other language(s) based on your student population. Remember to think about using as many channels to get your message out, including social media.

**Be sure to involve the District's Communications Director x4360** when developing information about a crisis or emergency. She can assist you with "fine tuning" the message and can help in communicating with the media, and insure we coordinate with police and/or fire if they are involved.

### Sample messages:

1. School Lock Out/Lock In ..... pg. 3
2. Missing student..... pg. 3
3. Building evacuation due to threat..... pg. 4
4. Fire incident at school..... pg. 4
5. Weapon at school..... pg. 5
6. Weapon or other incident on the bus..... pg. 5
7. Bus accident with injuries..... pg. 6
8. Bus accident without injuries..... pg. 6
9. Drug Incident at school..... pg. 7
10. Death of a staff member (These same strategies and letters may be adjusted for use in the event of a death of a student.)..... pg. 8

### **Note: Contagious or Significant Diseases (e.g. Tuberculosis, Meningitis, Flu Outbreaks)**

The Washington County Health Department will advise you on timelines and communications.

**Contact: Washington County Health Dept.: (503) 846-8881**

## **Communication Suggestions for School Staff Following a Crisis or Emergency**

**1. Principals should prepare talking points so everyone shares the same message**

Most crisis or emergencies will create phone calls or visits by parents/guardians. Principals should make sure that staff members who answer phones are provided a short list of talking points to use in providing accurate information. Whenever possible, it is also beneficial to designate the same 1-2 staff members to answer all calls so the same message is communicated. The District's Communications Director can assist you in writing the talking points. Additionally, she will handle media communications.

**Contact: Maureen Wheeler, Public Communication Officer, 503-591-4360 or cell: 503-888-3717.**

**2. District's Tragedy Response Team/Flight Team (TRT) is available to assist principals, staff and students through the grieving process following the loss of students or staff or other significant event.**

**Contact: Leslie Rodgers, TRT specialist, 503-591-4372 or cell: 503-998-5590.**

**3. Staff need to watch what they say to students**

Any event will become school-wide knowledge within minutes via text messaging among students. Do not allow students to enter into idle gossip or speculation about the event. Reaffirm their safety and your commitment to a safe school/classroom. It is important to respond with facts and with one voice. Encourage reporting of fact-based information to an adult at the school.

**4. Staff need to watch what they say to others outside the school**

If an event occurs at your school and a teacher sends an e-mail to anyone outside the school, they become the voice for the school. Comments may be misrepresented and can impact the entire school. Remind staff what they say cannot be taken back and will be repeated.

**5. Staff should be deliberate in their choice of words following any crisis or emergency**

What is said may:

- A. Interrupt the learning process
- B. Put others in "crisis mode"
- C. Encourage copy-cat behavior
- D. Put stakeholders at ease knowing a plan is in place

**6. Staff should listen to idle conversation among students following any event**

Students often knew of the plans or events that led up to the violence and did not report it. They will share that information among friends after an event takes place. Careful, inconspicuous listening may gather information administrators will need as they piece together the information surrounding the event.

**7. Staff should take time to encourage those individuals involved in stopping the violence**

A violent act on campus will usually be handled by school staff. That can be a stressful event for many people. Take the time to check-on and encourage staff members who may have had to deal with such a situation. It is often after an event that the adrenaline slows and the emotions flow. Deliberate action toward those involved can make a very positive difference.

## School Lock Out

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (school name) Parents/guardians,

We are dedicated to maintaining a strong partnership with parents in our effort to provide the very best education for students. Key to that partnership is open communication.

*If incident occurred at the school use the following:* I want to make you aware of an incident that occurred today at our school. (Briefly describe incident). The \_\_\_\_\_ (law enforcement agency) investigated and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

*If incident occurred in the community near the school use the following:* As a precautionary measure, law enforcement officers asked us to put our school into lock out due to police activity in the area. This is standard procedure to ensure student and staff safety. Our school was in lock out for about \_\_\_\_\_ (length of time).

As always, the safety of students is our primary concern. We have many procedures and policies in place to maintain a safe learning environment for all students.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Principal

## Missing Student

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (school name) Parents/guardians,

We are dedicated to maintaining a strong partnership with parents in our effort to provide the very best education for students. Key to that partnership is open communication.

I want to make you aware of an incident that occurred today at our school. (Briefly describe incident). The \_\_\_\_\_ (law enforcement agency) and several community volunteers assisted in the search for the student. Fortunately, the student was located and returned to his/her family in a short time.

This incident serves as a good reminder to review your expectations with your children regarding established routines for going to school or returning home from school. Be clear with them who may pick them up and make sure the school office has this information.

I am thankful for our law enforcement partners and a caring community that helped us during this incident.

Sincerely,

Principal

## Building Evacuation Due to a Threat

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (school name) Parents/guardians,

We are dedicated to maintaining a strong partnership with parents in our effort to provide the very best education for students. Key to that partnership is open communication. For this reason, I want to make you aware of the facts surrounding the building evacuation that occurred today.

We received a \_\_\_\_\_ threat this (morning or afternoon or day), and always take any threat to the safety of students and staff seriously. We involved \_\_\_\_\_ (law enforcement agency) immediately and put our evacuation procedures in motion. We evacuated all students and accounted for each one in less than \_\_\_\_\_ minutes.

Once the building had been carefully checked and cleared, we re-entered and resumed our school day. We practice safety procedures regularly, and are very pleased with how smoothly we were able to evacuate, and with our ability to account for everyone in our school.

Our students did a great job, which made it possible for us to do our jobs efficiently, for us to re-enter the building calmly, and for us to resume teaching and learning.

If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to give us a call.

Sincerely,

Principal

## Fire Incident at School

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (school name) Parents/guardians,

We are dedicated to maintaining a strong partnership with parents in our effort to provide the very best education for students. Key to that partnership is open communication. For this reason, I want to make you aware of the facts surrounding the building evacuation that occurred today.

A fire was started in the \_\_\_\_\_ boy's/girl's restroom and was quickly and safely extinguished. I am proud to report that our students and teachers knew exactly how to respond by following our Emergency Fire Procedures. We evacuated all students and accounted for each one in less than \_\_\_\_\_ minutes. Thanks to student cooperation and the quick response by our staff and the Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue Dept., there were no injuries, and no damage was done to our facilities. Once the building had been carefully checked and cleared, we re-entered and resumed our school day.

Students who are involved in such behavior face school disciplinary action and referral to the juvenile justice system.

I'd like to take this opportunity to ask for your assistance in stressing fire safety. Please remind your children of the dangers of fire and review home safety precautions. We will continue to do the same at school.

We want you to be aware as we partner with you for the safety of your child. Thank you for entrusting your child to our care. Please contact me if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Principal

## Weapon at School

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (school name) Parents/guardians,

Recognizing parents' rights and need for timely and accurate information about student safety, I want to share with you an incident that occurred \_\_\_\_\_ at our school.

Yesterday \_\_\_\_\_ (morning/afternoon), a student allegedly brought a weapon onto school property. An anonymous tip was provided to a teacher that a student may have been in possession of a \_\_\_\_\_ (weapon). In cooperation with the \_\_\_\_\_ (law enforcement agency), we began an immediate investigation, questioning witnesses and the student. The student has been charged and taken into custody.

As with all matters of student safety, we have taken this incident very seriously and have acted accordingly, utilizing both school district disciplinary actions and the juvenile justice system.

Please encourage your child to let a teacher or administrator know when a situation exists that could place them and others in danger.

I want to thank those parents and students who have provided us with the information necessary to investigate and bring closure to this incident. Only by working as a school community in partnership with parents can we create and maintain the level of safety that we want for our children

Sincerely,

Principal

## Weapon or Other Incident on the Bus

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (school name) Parents/guardians,

We are dedicated to maintaining a strong partnership with parents in our effort to provide the very best education for students. Key to that partnership is open communication.

I want to make you aware of an incident that occurred on your child's bus during the \_\_\_\_\_ (morning/afternoon) route. One of our students was in possession of a \_\_\_\_\_, (brief description of weapon). No one was hurt and the bus driver immediately isolated the student, confiscated the weapon and contacted 9-1-1.

Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken including referral to the juvenile justice system. The student will not return to school or ride the bus until disciplinary action is determined.

As always, the safety of students is our primary concern. We have many procedures and policies in place to maintain a safe environment for all students.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Principal



## Bus Accident with Injuries

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (school name) Parents/guardians,

I want to inform you of an accident that occurred \_\_\_\_\_ (day/date of incident). One of our school buses transporting \_\_\_\_\_ (# of students) students (to school or home) was involved in a traffic accident on \_\_\_\_\_ (location of accident).

Some students were transported to an area hospital for observation and treatment. Fortunately, these injuries were not life threatening, but we will always take the proper medical precautions to ensure the safety and well-being of our students. All of the other students were cleared by medical personnel on scene and allowed to board another bus home. I also reported to the scene and checked on the students at the emergency room. All of the students were treated and released last night.

The driver of the school bus was not injured. The \_\_\_\_\_ (law enforcement agency) is investigating the cause of this accident and proper transportation system protocols will be followed.

Our transportation department has a very safe driving record, and this was an isolated accident. Regardless, we want you to be aware as we partner with you for the safety of your child. Thank you for entrusting your child to our care. Please contact me if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Principal

## Bus Accident without Injuries

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (school name) Parents/guardians,

I want to inform you of an accident that occurred today at approximately \_\_\_\_\_ (time). One of our school buses was involved in a traffic accident on \_\_\_\_\_ (street location).

Several of our students were on board. None appeared to be injured in any way and all were given the opportunity to be evaluated by medical personnel on the scene. Parents were notified and students were loaded on another bus and transported to school.

The driver of the school bus was not injured. The \_\_\_\_\_ (law enforcement agency) is investigating the cause of this accident and proper transportation system protocols will be followed.

Our transportation department has a very safe driving record, and this was an isolated accident. Regardless, we want you to be aware as we partner with you for the safety of your child. Thank you for entrusting your child to our care. Please contact me if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Principal

## Drug Incident at School

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (*school name*) Parents/guardians,

In an effort to maintain open communication, especially regarding issues pertaining to student safety, I wanted to inform you of an incident that occurred at our school on \_\_\_\_\_ (day/date).

\_\_\_\_\_ (*# of students*) students brought suspected drugs into our school. Working with the \_\_\_\_\_, (*law enforcement agency*) the drugs were confiscated and the students face criminal charges. Students who are involved in such behavior face school disciplinary action and referral to the juvenile justice system.

We will continue to work cooperatively with law enforcement and school leaders to address this issue and to maximize safety on our campus in every way possible. As we do, I would like to ask for your help in speaking with your child about the dangers of drug use and the importance of reporting suspected drugs at any time. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Principal

## Death of a Staff Member or a Student

*NOTE: The District's Tragedy Response Team will assist school staff as needed.*

### Email Message/Phone Call to Staff about Current Staff Member Passing

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (school name) Staff,

The purpose of this e-mail is to share information about the unfortunate passing of our friend and colleague, \_\_\_\_\_. We will miss \_\_\_\_\_ him/her immensely.

*(Share additional information as appropriate.)*

Funeral arrangements are pending. **or** The funeral arrangements are as follows:

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Also, we will have a plan in place for \_\_\_\_\_ (day of week) morning to address the inevitable grieving of our staff and students.

The District's Tragedy Response Team will be here on \_\_\_\_\_ (day of week) to help our school community through the grieving process.

---Principal name

### Email Message/Phone Call to Staff about Current Student Passing

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (school name) Staff,

The purpose of this e-mail is to share information about the unfortunate passing of \_\_\_\_\_ (name of student), a \_\_\_\_\_ (grade) grader at our school. We will miss \_\_\_\_\_ him/her.

*(With parent/guardian permission, share additional information. Stress confidentiality if requested by family.)*

Funeral arrangements are pending. **or** The funeral arrangements are as follows:

---

Also, we will have a plan in place for \_\_\_\_\_ (day of week) morning to address the inevitable grieving of our students and staff.

The District's Tragedy Response Team will be here on \_\_\_\_\_ (day of week) to help our school community through the grieving process.

---Principal name



**8**

## **Social Media**

**So many choices, so little  
time!**





Home Moments

Search Twitter

Have an account? Log in

## Jeff Rose

@JeffRoseSupt

A passionate educator, devoted to my work as the superintendent of Beaverton SD. 1st & foremost, husband to my beautiful wife and father to my amazing children.

Beaverton

[beaverton.k12.or.us/about/superint...](http://beaverton.k12.or.us/about/superint...)

Joined June 2013

446 Photos and videos



Tweets Tweets & replies Photos & videos

Jeff Rose Retweeted



**Noelle Ellerson AASA** @Noellerson · Nov 30

WSJ Editorial: #ESSA is "the largest devolution of federal control to the states in a quarter-century" [edworkforce.house.gov/newsroom/docum...](http://edworkforce.house.gov/newsroom/docum...) @AASAhq

8 2 ...



**Jeff Rose** @JeffRoseSupt · Nov 30

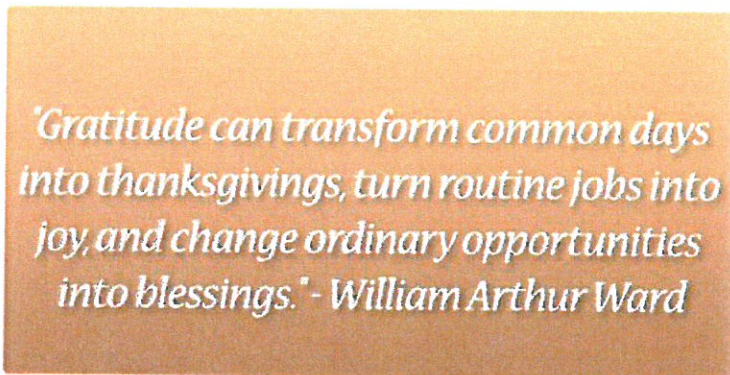
BSD Students & Community- After a long Thanksgiving weekend, Monday morning can be challenging. Stay positive, strong and focused! WE r BSD!

4 ...



**Jeff Rose** @JeffRoseSupt · Nov 26

Thanksgiving brings a myriad of emotions: joy, love & even anxiety. Nevertheless find time for rest & reflection.



1 2 ...



**Jeff Rose** @JeffRoseSupt · Nov 23

Washington County Town Hall meeting with @RepBonamici & @JeffMerkley here at @BeavertonHigh. Packed house!





## Working with the media







## Working with the Media

*Remember to refer media to the Communications & Community Involvement Department, or if you need assistance, please call x4360.*

1. **Get the “facts” (what the reporter says happened)**
  - ☐ What is the story? Clarify the reporter's question.
  - ☐ How did they find out about it?
  - ☐ Who else are they talking to?
  - ☐ Know who is calling.
2. **Practice good media relations**
  - ☐ Ask the reporter's deadline.
  - ☐ Set a time to get back to the reporter.
  - ☐ Don't argue.
3. **Get the facts (what your people say happened)**
  - ☐ Answer the **5 Ws: Who, What, Where, When and Why.**
  - ☐ What else can they tell you (background)?
  - ☐ What can't they tell you?
4. **Build your story**
  - ☐ Determine spokesperson.
  - ☐ Develop key messages.
  - ☐ Develop your game plan.
  - ☐ Talk through questions and answers.
5. **Prepare, prepare, prepare**
  - ☐ Keep key messages in front of you.
  - ☐ Reinforce messages.
  - ☐ Write it down.
  - ☐ Practice, practice, practice.
6. **Manage the interview**
  - ☐ Relax! You usually know more than they do.
  - ☐ Set parameters.
  - ☐ Be brief. Be honest.
  - ☐ Meet reporters' needs.
  - ☐ Own the interview by leading the conversation.
  - ☐ Avoid jargon and condescending remarks.
  - ☐ Admit mistakes and problems.
  - ☐ Never go “off the record.”
  - ☐ Avoid saying “no comment.”
  - ☐ If you don't know, say so.
7. **Follow Up**
  - ☐ Provide additional information.
  - ☐ Build a positive working relationship with media.
  - ☐ Correct inaccuracies.
  - ☐ Evaluate coverage. Clip news stories.

**Sources:** M. Wheeler, Beaverton SD, S. Knagg, Garland SD,  
S. Linders, St. Paul Minnesota SD 2006





# 10

**Oregon &  
national resources  
to help you**

**OSPRA: [oregonschoolpra.org](http://oregonschoolpra.org)**

**NSPRA: [NSPRA.org](http://NSPRA.org)**





# Thank you!

**Contact:**

Maureen Wheeler, APR  
Public Communications Officer  
Beaverton School District  
503-356-4360



