



For Immediate Release

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Joint Statement from the City of Mount Vernon and the Mount Vernon School District

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MOUNT VERNON—Total prevention of the senseless and tragic loss of life due to the occurrence of mass shootings may not ever be achieved. Resolving the myriad of factors that play a role in a scenario such as a school shooting is a complex task, at best.

And while the majority of our local law enforcement response to these events are necessarily reactive; the City of Mount Vernon, in partnership with the Mount Vernon School District, have instituted some proactive measures on school campuses that officials hope may thwart the likelihood of such a nightmare event from ever occurring.

Assigning officers to campuses, monitoring video surveillance and continued, combined student/staff/officer trainings are among some of the tools being utilized within Mount Vernon schools.

As mentioned in the Mount Vernon Police Annual Report, a uniformed police officer is assigned to Mount Vernon High School every day of the school year. A second officer is assigned to both of the middle schools. The purpose of these officers' presence goes beyond security. They participate in a number of school activities, collaborate with and advise the School District's six security monitors, teach classes on topics that range from social media bullying to anonymously reporting suspicious activity; they assess classroom safety, and they attempt to identify at-risk youth situations by focusing on building positive relationships with students and staff.

Additionally, since 2014, interior and exterior security cameras have been added throughout all school campuses. Video from these cameras is fed directly into MVPD headquarters. Officers can also pull-up those video feeds on their patrol car screens.

Recently, school security cameras have been augmented with the installation of duress buttons in all Mount Vernon Schools. When triggered, these buttons activate live video and audio feeds directly to Skagit 911 and the Mount Vernon Police Department.

The frequent presence of patrol cars near campus and in school zone areas at the opening and closing of each day adds further visibility and responsiveness. And regular active shooter trainings are conducted in cooperation with surrounding first response teams, onsite, where a plan is in place for each school campus.

An absolute solution to these horrific events may not be easily attainable, however much has been done preemptively through a strong partnership between Mount Vernon Police and the Mount Vernon School District.

Officials urge parents and students to talk about concerns, and to report any suspicious behavior as soon as possible, by calling 9-1-1 or the Safe Schools Hotline: 360-526-8375.

More information on safety in Mount Vernon can be found in the Mount Vernon Police Department Annual Report at:

<http://mountvernonwa.gov/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/542>

Questions regarding school security and policy can be directed to Dr. Carl Bruner, School Superintendent the Mount Vernon School District office at: 360-428-6110

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