

The incident yesterday at the middle school (a student brought an unloaded gun) tells us we need to do more to keep our students and staff safe. I know it's easy to point fingers and place blame and we can do that all day long but that won't solve the problem.

My focus has ALWAYS been on safety. When parents drop their children off at school, they need to be confident in knowing we are doing everything possible to ensure their protection and wellbeing.

How do we do that?

- A safety committee that consists of staff members, community members, parents, and local law enforcement. Regular meetings to discuss the various concerns and solutions to these issues. Adapt to new findings, or trends. Meet with local leaders to encourage change at the state level. Meet with other schools, find out what they are seeing and what is/isn't working. Be proactive on training for staff and volunteers.

- Metal detectors at doors. At a minimum the main entrance where students enter and lock remaining doors. This will be a firm deterrent for students to not bring in any weapons, vapes etc. This will provide peace of mind to students, staff, and parents.

- A full-time SRO or private security. This is another visual deterrent for students with negative behaviors and plans of action. Having an on-site full-time security person to respond immediately to threats of all kinds is a valuable tool.

The district can't control WA legislation, they can't control parents/home lives, they can't control the negative actions of students but what they can control is the school environment.

The district CAN control what happens on school property. The district CAN control what consequences are given for poor choices made at school. We need to prioritize safety and protect these kids! Safety needs to be funded FIRST!

We must work together and find the solutions that keep families in Centralia.

Sarah Holmes