



CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

TOM TORLAKSON

STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

May 13, 2015

Dear County and District Superintendents and Charter School Administrators:

SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS AND SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY

In spite of two decades of high-profile school shootings throughout the U.S., safety overall has improved and violence has dropped. Yet, almost weekly, another school attack or safety scare arises. The psychological impact of these incidents is evident.

With each incident, regardless of location, our awareness of the need to be vigilant increases. Any level of violence and victimization is unacceptable. Recent analysis of school shootings found that 68 percent of shooters brought firearms from home to their campus. It is important for district and school administrators to help educate parents and guardians about California's child access prevention laws; it is a crime for a person to negligently store or leave a loaded firearm in a place where a child is likely to access it.

Please consider this an urgent request to inform your school community about the law regarding safe storage of firearms. I have attached two templates (English and Spanish versions) for memoranda to parents and guardians informing them of the laws in California regarding safe storage of firearms. I strongly encourage you to use these documents to help educate parents and guardians of their responsibilities under California law.

When it comes to gun violence, schools cannot do it alone. The California Department of Education and the education community are dedicated to making our schools the safest in the nation, but it is the responsibility of parents and guardians to store firearms according to California law. If California's child access prevention law is to be practiced more widely throughout the state, we must all work together to prevent future tragedies.

Schools must remain welcoming while maintaining consistent efforts to increase the safety of students and staff. This is not an easy task, and I applaud your ongoing efforts to increase school safety and awareness. Students and staff thrive in a culture free of fear and risk of school shootings. To that end, my staff will continue to provide resources and technical assistance. If you have questions about school safety and security, please contact Stephanie Papas, School Health Education Consultant, by phone at 916-445-8441 or by e-mail at spapas@cde.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom Torlakson".

Tom Torlakson

TT:sp
Attachments

2015-03037