



NEWARK UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Olivier Wong Ah Sun, Ed.D.

February 21, 2018

Dear Newark Unified School District Staff and Families,

I wanted to reach out and share my thoughts as we returned to school this week after the holiday weekend and as we returned back to school after yet another senseless and tragic incident that occurred in Florida.

I find solace in my community in times of challenge, and this is a challenging time. We are once again forced to confront the mortality, danger, and heartbreak that we must often push to one side. And worst of all, it is the mortality of our children and our community's children that we must confront.

Before working in Newark, I lived and worked in Aurora, Colorado. My community there was devastated by a mass shooting in a theater in 2012. Every life lost was precious, and there were no answers to be found to satisfy our need to know why it happened. With this in mind, I know that students and staff can feel upset, scared and also our families can feel this fear. With this in mind, I want to share some resources that can be used with your children, our students that can provide comfort and information during this difficult time. I also want to stress that our employees' safety and the safety of our students is our highest priority.

I want to commend our schools for continuing to provide comprehensive safety drills and for putting plans in place that keep our campuses safe. I want to commend our employees who every day work diligently to keep our students safe and I also want to commend the Newark Police Department and our Chief of Police who works closely with our school district to ensure safe campuses. I pledge to work with district leadership and all employees to review Newark's safety plans with renewed focus, and continue working to make this world better for all of our children.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any concerns or questions or contact your school principal if you have any questions. For more information about how to help your child and/or if you would like to review pertinent resources, the following may be helpful:

[Talking to Children About the Shooting](#)

[Talking to Children About Tragedies & Other News Events](#)

For those in Florida, and anywhere else, who are not fortunate enough to feel gratitude at their children's safety: I grieve with you, and I mourn for you and your community

Sincerely,

Patrick Sánchez
Superintendent