

Idaho Has a Tool in Place to Prevent School Tragedies

By Kurt Liebich, President, Idaho State Board of Education

With the school year upon us and in light of recent events in Texas and elsewhere, I want to raise awareness of parents and school leaders about a tool to help keep our students safe.

Offered by the Idaho State Board of Education's School Safety and Security Program, *See Tell Now!* is a confidential reporting system that can connect people who have information, with people who can intervene and prevent a tragedy like what happened three months ago in Uvalde.

"We have seen a lot of studies that show that prior to committing an act of mass violence, most perpetrators exhibited behavior that was worrying to those around them," said Mike Munger, the school safety and security program manager. "The failure seems to be very common that people who observe that behavior don't have the means to communicate that to people who have the ability to change the situation."

People can send an email, text via a dedicated app, or they can call 888-593-2835. [See Tell Now!](#) is staffed 24 hours a day. "They will always answer the phone, they will answer the text, they will answer an email and get that information routed from the person who has the concern to the right parties at the local level," Munger said. "That could be a local school official, a school resource officer or local law enforcement depending on the nature of the information."

Many Idaho schools are actively promoting the See Tell Now! program. Information about the See Tell Now! is posted in prominent places in schools, where students and parents can see it and learn about the program. Munger encourages parents to reach out to administrators at their students' school to see if they are involved. "If your school is not participating, you can [visit our website](#) or call our office at 208-615-6768 and we would be more than happy to talk you through how the process works."

School Administrators interested in enrolling in the See Tell Now! tip line can contact the Idaho School Safety and Security Program via email at chris.thoms@osbe.idaho.gov. See Tell Now! is paid for by the state, so there is no cost to schools to enroll and make this resource available to their campus community.

And there are safeguards in place to keep the confidential tipline from being misused. "The key safeguard is this information is given to local school officials and authorities who have the context. They know the difference between whether this is bullying, an interpersonal conflict between students, and if someone is trying to use See Tell Now! Inappropriately," Munger said.

We've seen way too many times how these tragedies play out. A troubled student signals intentions but no one takes them seriously, or perhaps their friends just don't know where to go to with concerns. "That's really what the goal of See Tell Now! is," Munger said. "To be able to collect and connect the dots so that we can intervene in situations before they go critical rather than waiting to see it on the evening news." So when you see something, tell someone now!