

Know The Signs:

SANDY HOOK TRAGEDY INSPIRES VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAM



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PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

*Creating a Culture, Ensuring School Safety,
Engaging Communities*

We were heartbroken to learn about the mass school shooting at Freeman High School in Rockford on Sept. 13. Our hearts and thoughts are with Rockford and the entire Washington state community, as we know all too well the anguish that this community feels today and in the days to come.

“ I know that pain all too well because my six-year old son, Dylan, was killed in his first-grade classroom in the Sandy Hook Elementary shooting on Dec. 14, 2012.”

I know that pain all too well because my six-year old son, Dylan, was killed in his first-grade classroom in the Sandy Hook Elementary shooting on Dec. 14, 2012. Nineteen other students and six educators were

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murdered alongside my beautiful butterfly — and ever since that day, I have dedicated my life to protecting children from gun violence through Sandy Hook Promise.

Since losing my son Dylan, I have learned how gun violence — and other acts of violence and victimization — can be prevented when we know what to look for and when we Know The Signs. Far too often after an act of youth violence, including the tragic shooting in Rockford, facts come out that friends suspected or knew something was going to happen, but didn't know what to do with the information. In fact, in 4 out of 5 acts of gun violence, the shooter told someone of their violent plans prior to the event. Additionally, 7 out of 10 people who die by suicide told someone of their plans or gave some type of warning or indication.

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I want you to know that I know the tragedy in Rockford can make one feel helpless and like all hope is lost. But I need you to know that it is not. We must take this time to take real action to keep our children safe. Together, we can create change so that no

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other family or community has to experience the loss of a child to gun violence.

As you and your community begin to try to pick up the pieces after last month's tragedy in Rockford, my wish is that you can move forward with a sense of hope. We at Sandy Hook Promise are here to support you. We are focused on preventing gun violence (and other forms of violence and victimization) BEFORE it happens by educating and mobilizing youth and adults on mental health and wellness programs that identify, intervene and help at-risk individuals. Our intent is to honor all victims of gun violence by turning our tragedy into a moment of transformation.

We accomplish this through our no-cost, evidenced-based Know The Signs violence prevention programs. Our Know The Signs programs are easy to implement and train students, school staff, and administrators to recognize the warning signs and signals and to help someone who might be thinking of hurting themselves or others before it's too late. Gun violence is preventable if you know the signs.

We would like to offer you and your schools our free Know The Signs programs, which include:

- **Say Something:** Training for middle and high school students on how to recognize the signs, especially in social media, of an individual who may be a threat to themselves or others,

and say something to a trusted adult or report the threat via an Anonymous Reporting System. Say Something will benefit youth age 10+, educators, administrators and community based organization leaders as well as parents. By building a culture of “looking out for one another” and reporting possible threats of violence when someone sees, reads or hears something (especially within social media), entire communities will become safer and lives will be saved.

- **Signs of Suicide (SOS):** A training for students, school staff and parents about the warning signs of youth suicide and how to intervene before violence or self-



TO LEARN MORE about the Sandy Hook Promise and the “Know The Signs” program, visit sandyhookpromise.org or contact programs@sandyhookpromise.org.

harm occurs. This evidence-based suicide prevention programming benefits the entire community. Students and school staff learn critical and potentially life-saving skills, parents are encouraged to advocate for their children's health, and the community becomes more resilient overall.

- **Start With Hello:** Teaches children and teens how to be more socially inclusive and connected to one another. Start With Hello benefits youth, faculty, administrators and community based organization leaders involved with the program by fostering a connected and inclusive community and reducing social isolation.
- **Safety Assessment & Intervention:** Evidenced-based training for school teams on how to identify, assess and respond to threatening behaviors before they escalate to violence. Benefits include: Reported violence reduction, decreased anxiety, increased knowledge in responding to threats, and reductions of 50% in long-term suspensions and bullying.

Each of our four Know The Signs programs is provided at no cost to schools. Please contact us at programs@sandyhookpromise.org if you would like to bring one of more of our programs to your school.

You can help prevent gun violence. We all can. Together we can help protect children from gun violence by supporting solutions that create safer, healthier homes, schools and communities. ■



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