



## MEDIA RELEASE

**Dec. 18, 2018**

Contact: Alandra Johnson, Communication Specialist  
541-355-1005, [alandra.johnson@bend.k12.or.us](mailto:alandra.johnson@bend.k12.or.us)

### **Safe Schools Alliance Celebrates 20 Years of Partnership**

*Local leaders to sign proclamation of support during event Wednesday*

Students, police chiefs and sheriffs, district attorneys, school superintendents, mental health professionals and many other regional leaders will gather at the High Desert Education Service District on Wednesday, December 19 at 8 a.m. to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Safe Schools Alliance (SSA).

Established in 1998 following the deadly on-campus attack at Thurston High School in Springfield, Oregon, the local tri-county alliance was formed to enhance safety within school environments, protect students and teachers and provide immediate accountability for crimes committed at schools.

Safe Schools Alliance was one of the first collaborations of police, fire, mental health, district attorneys, and schools of its kind in the country in 1998 and quickly become a model for excellence in collaboration and communication among partner agencies that work together to improve school safety in the United States.

Today, SSA partners work to provide safe school environments through community and interagency partnerships that enhance safety training, facility reviews, positive school climate efforts and more.

"Working together through the Safe School Alliance makes us stronger and more equipped to reduce crime and create a better environment for students," said Sharon Smith, a longtime local attorney and original member of SSA. "This partnership has paid dividends over the last 20 years that include improved communication between agencies, school resource officers in schools, more mental health supports for youth and safety interventions."

**#MORE#**

Smith and former Deschutes District Attorney Mike Dugan – two of the alliance’s founders – will keynote the event. Local students will also share their thoughts on school safety today and hopes for the future with attendees.

"Keeping our students safe at school continues to be a critical focus for our entire community," said Smith. "I am proud to have been part of this visionary team and look forward to seeing what today’s partners will accomplish in the next 20 years to ensure our students and staff have safe, positive learning environments they deserve."

***Safe Schools Alliance partners include:***

Bend–La Pine Schools, Crook County School District, Culver School District, Redmond School District, Sisters School District, High Desert Education Service District, Jefferson County School District

City of Bend Police Department, City of Prineville Police Department, City of Redmond Police Department, Crook County Sheriff’s Office, Deschutes County Sheriff’s Office, Jefferson County Sheriff’s Office, Sunriver Police Department, Warm Springs Tribal Police

Deschutes, Crook and Jefferson County District Attorney's Offices; Deschutes County Juvenile Justice, Deschutes County Public Health

Bend, Redmond and Sunriver Fire Departments

St. Francis School, Trinity Lutheran School, Cascades Academy, St. Thomas Academy

**Note:** The High Desert Educational Service District is located at 2804 SW Sixth Street in Redmond.

**#END#**