Dear Fresno Unified Family,

I’m not sure I can fully describe the feelings of heartbreak and disgust as the details continue rolling in about the tragically devastating school shooting yesterday in Uvalde, TX. So far, we know that 19 children and two teachers were killed by an 18-year-old gunman on Tuesday afternoon, just two days before the school year ended at Robb Elementary School. We still are not sure of an exact count of those who were injured, but we do know there are at least four additional people being treated at a San Antonio hospital, one adult and three children.

While not all victims have been identified yet, I want to honor and acknowledge the beautiful souls we know were taken much too soon in yesterday’s shooting.

- Xavier Lopez, 10 years old, fourth grader
- Naveah Bravo, fourth grader
- Uziyah Garcia, 9 years old, fourth grader
- Rojelio Torres, 10 years old, fourth grader
- Amerie Jo Garza, 10 years old, fourth grader
- Annabelle Guadalupe Rodriguez, 10 years old, fourth grader
- Eva Mireles, 44 years old, fourth grade teacher
- Irma Garcia, fourth grade teacher

We send our deepest condolences to the families of those lost, and our love and strength to the entire community of Uvalde, TX.
As a father, I’m sick to my stomach thinking of the excruciating anxiety parents felt as they awaited news about their children and the subsequent devastation of learning their child was never coming home. As an educator, my heart is breaking for the two teachers lost and also for every single educator across our Fresno Unified family and the nation who is terrified today to return to their classroom.

As your Superintendent, I am dedicated to ensuring the safety of our students and educators across all of our 100+ campuses. In recent months we have been revisiting our protocols and emergency plans, ensuring we are prepared for anything – but even more importantly, we are focused on prevention as we hope we never, ever have to use those emergency plans and protocols.

This tragedy is NOT about the shooter, and I will not speak the shooter’s name, however I must recognize the signs that are already unfolding that may have prevented this horrible tragedy. Details are being updated each minute, but it seems clear at this point that the shooter did post assault rifles on social media in recent days and had made cryptic comments to at least two individuals through social media or text message.

I beg of each and every one of our Fresno Unified family – if you see something, please SAY SOMETHING. Trust your gut and pay attention to behavior changes and disturbing comments that you hear from others. Tell a trusted adult on campus of any concerns you may have and don’t hesitate because you think someone is “just joking”. By being safe and reporting any concerning comments or behavior, you could be saving lives. We will investigate immediately alongside our Fresno PD partners, and if it turns out to not be a credible threat there is no harm done to anyone.

With that said, I need to remind our students and parents that threats of violence are never funny and are taken extremely seriously. Sadly, in the past we’ve seen an increase in non-credible threats by students who are “joking” and trying to make light of a tragedy that they might not be able to fully process. We don’t take that behavior lightly and will investigate and pursue appropriate disciplinary action. Please have conversations with your students at home about the seriousness of threats and implore them to tell an adult immediately if they hear or see anything concerning.

I want to leave everyone with several resources as you continue to have painful conversations working to process this devastating event.

**Resources for Families to Communicate with your Children:**

- [Hablarles a los niños sobre violencia: consejos para padres y educadores](https://www.schoolpsych.org/Resources/Documents/Hablarles_a_los_ninos_sobre_violencia_consejos_para_padres_y_educadores.pdf) (infographic) - *National Association of School Psychologists*
- [Five tips to help children cope with a national tragedy](https://www.oecd.org) - *OCDE Newsroom*
- [Parent Guidelines for helping youth after a shooting](https://www.childtreamaticstress.org) - *National Child Traumatic Stress Network*
- [How to Talk to Kids About Violence, Crime and War](https://www.commonsensemedia.org) - *Common Sense Media*

**Student Mental Health Resources:**
• Reach out directly to the social worker, psychologist, counselor, and/or restorative practice counselor at your school,
• Make a referral for social/emotional support for yourself or someone else at dpi.fresnounified.org/sss/sews/,
• Head to our CareSolace website to get a referral to support at https://caresolace.com/site/fresnofamilies/ (families can use as well),
• Text "HELLO" to 741741, and/or
• Call the SAMHSA Disaster Distress Hotline at 1-800-985-5990.

Staff Mental Health Resources:
• Reach out to Claremont EAP at https://www.claremonteap.com/ or 800-834-3773 where counselors are always available,
• Head to our CareSolace website to get a referral to support at https://caresolace.com/site/fresnofamilies/,
• Text "HELLO" to 741741, and/or
• Call the SAMHSA Disaster Distress Hotline at 1-800-985-5990.

It is not natural to know how to process tragedies such as this, please reach out and use our resources. We love you Fresno Unified family.

Sincerely,

Superintendent Nelson

Stay informed of Fresno Unified’s activities online: