



## Staking A Claim in Our Students' Future

**Mike Simpson, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent

**Phone 405-282-8900**

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All Guthrie Public School Parents, Students and Patrons:

Recently, in our state and across the nation, reports have circulated on social media about potential school violence. Often, these messages do not include specific information or a location. Instead, generic abbreviations are used. In some cases, a singular post has sparked concerns, copycat threats and disruptions in multiple states and communities, including our own.

The safety of Guthrie Public Schools students and staff is our greatest priority; therefore, every report is taken seriously and thoroughly investigated by local law enforcement in collaboration with state law enforcement agencies. We also utilize the most recent recommendations produced by the Oklahoma Counter Terrorism Information Center (OCTIC).

Hopefully, you are asking, "How can I help?" The answer is simple, don't get caught up in the rumor mill. There is a difference between "someone is threatening" and "John Doe is threatening an act of violence at school." When someone claims to have knowledge about a threat, we ask them if they have reported that threat to school officials or law enforcement. If they have not, why not? If your student comes home from school telling you that they are concerned about their safety, ask them to be specific about their concern. Don't accept "someone said" or "I heard"; try to find out who, what, when or where, and if they answer those questions to your satisfaction, call school authorities or the police.

Some parents have chosen social media to communicate their thoughts. Social media is the "corner coffee shop" of our time. In an age where information spreads quickly without verification, we are asking students, staff and families to please approach communication with care and responsibility. Communicating rumors anywhere without verifiable substance only fuels an unjustified frenzy. Maintaining the safe environment we all want requires resources to be used only to investigate verifiable threats. As a parent or student, you are a big part of that process by providing the school and law enforcement with valuable information. Reporting specific threats to school officials and local law enforcement is the most important piece to keeping our schools safe.

We understand the importance of timely and transparent communication with parents and guardians. You can count on us to keep you informed about situations that may impact your student and family. If there is an urgent situation or safety concern, the district will send a text, email and/or phone call to parents/guardians through the district's mass notification system, Parent Square. For this process to be successful, families must update their contact information whenever it changes by contacting their student's school.

Many members of our school leadership team including myself are also parents of GPS students. We consider it a duty to provide a safe environment for our students to learn effectively. We will continue to remain vigilant in maintaining that environment for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Simpson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mike" being more prominent than the last name "Simpson".

Mike Simpson, Ed. D.  
Superintendent of Schools