MEMORANDUM

To: Mr. Wade Smith, Superintendent WWPS

From: Sheriff John Turner, Walla Walla Sheriff's Office
Chief Scott Bieber, Walla Walla Police Department

Date: November 1, 2016

Re: School Safety Summary

Finding the correct balance between maintaining an open and inviting school environment and making sure that all reasonable safety and security measures have been taken is no easy task. We applaud you and the Walla Walla Public Schools for your efforts to do just that.

We have had the opportunity to review the School Safety Onsite Evaluation Summary Report prepared by Sprigeo for the School District last spring. Although the report details specific areas of concern for particular schools and we will not go into the pros and cons of each recommendation, we have listed below our general recommendations for all of the Walla Walla Public Schools.

General Safety and Security Recommendations:

- Entry into a school should be through one main entry point – where the office is located. If at all possible, the visitor check in area should be a vestibule type entry area.
- All other exterior doors should remain closed and locked, allowing exit only. Any doors requiring entry should be equipped with cardkey entries.
- Doors that need to be opened for class passing times should be monitored to only allow students and staff entry.
- Signage at all doors should direct visitors to the main entrance to check in.
- A standardized, district-wide check-in procedure and visitor badge system should be used.
- Visitors allowed to move about inside the school should have a visitor badge readily visible. When possible, visitors should be escorted to their destination or at the very least, the receiving staff member should be notified a visitor is en route.
- Setting up schools in a way that would allow for wings or buildings to be locked down from each other during lock down situations. These could be as simple as entry doors held open by magnets in normal situations, but released and automatically locked during crisis situations. A procedure for allowing entry by emergency personnel upon arrival would need to be developed.
- Exterior windows of classrooms and offices would benefit from shatterproof tinting.

- Minimize potential "hiding" places both on the exterior and interior of the buildings. This would include but not be limited to trimming shrubs up and away from the walls of the building, considering the placement of any exterior structures so as to not create blind areas, consider the placement of interior fixtures (i.e. vending machines, files, bookcases, etc.) so as to not create areas of concealment.
- Maximize the viewing of security cameras to everyone who should have access, even emergency responders via secure internet connections.
- Deploy security cameras to help cover any "blind" spots in or around each school.
- Buildings, wings, and classrooms should be labeled for easy location by emergency personnel.
- Interior classroom doors should remain closed and locked during class time. These doors should be accessible from the exterior by appropriate staff and emergency responders.
- Train staff on how to safely approach and engage visitors on campus – asking them if they need assistance.
- Exterior windows large enough to allow access into the building should remain closed and locked.
- Power breaker panels, fire risers, server rooms, etc. should be locked and only accessible by designated personnel.
- We encourage the development of an electronic reporting pathway for students, parents, or others to report potential safety threats.
- We encourage an electronic communications system that could quickly and easily be deployed communicating occurring incidents and directions to both older students and parents.
- We concur with the Sprigeo report that a consistent set of safety protocols used district-wide would be beneficial.

This list should by no means be considered a complete list of safety and security recommendations for the Walla Walla Public Schools. They are simply our general list of some best practices and concur with many mentioned in the Sprigeo report. We and/or our staff members are always available to assist the district with general or specific safety and security concerns or questions. Should the district embark on implementing safety and security protocols and target hardening strategies, we are certainly open to reviewing those ideas and providing our professional feedback.

Given that schools campuses are open environments and are not considered harden facilities, administrators must consider whether their active intruder (shooter) responses are adequate to **deter**, **detect** and/or **delay** these threats. During an incident, the run-hide-fight strategy is still a solid practice and a valid response.

When examining campus security and/or responses, can the entity first **deter** an attack using cost effective and less intrusive measures such as security cameras, fencing and limited or controlled access? In addition to these physical improvements, signage can act as a deterrent. Signs can clearly deter attacks when indicating video coverage, security guards, or alarm systems are active or present. Visitor protocols and challenge policies must be clear and uniformly practiced.

Can the security measures **detect** an imminent attack allowing a window of time to act? If cameras are the schools' answer to detection, the primary question is will the system be utilized to allow proper monitoring and include redundancy and accessibility to provide any measure of usefulness? A school district should have the capability to link security cameras and live video systems across the entire

network allowing monitoring at the local level as well as on a regional platform for first responders. Absent video assets, the best detection method is "Situational Awareness." All staff, administration, and facility workers must be trained in SA. If something seems out of place, it should trigger a response. Proper and timely reporting can mitigate many incidents.

Finally, will measures provide some level of **delay** against the malevolent acts of an intruder giving staff and student's time to either run, hide, or if necessary, fight? Locking doors, secure windows, escape planning, and confrontation strategies must be examined and trained to.

According to the 2013 FBI report on such incidents, most school incidents are initiated by current or former students who ranged between the ages of 14 to 19. Understanding behavioral and social indicators has been recognized as one of the best "first line" of defense strategies in the prevention of these attacks. If teachers, staff, and students see or hear something, they need to be encouraged to say something. Especially on social media sites utilized by today's youth, many pre-incident indicators could have been discovered and used to mitigate planned attacks. Active intruder incidents are fast moving and fluid, and they rarely last more than 10 minutes. Timely notification of any unusual or suspicious activity to local law enforcement is essential to prevent loss of life and detect, deter, or delay potential tragedies. Many SRO's utilize social media monitoring software to alert them to such indicators for early prevention and intervention of such incidents.

There were 14 HS active shooter incidents between 2000 and 2013. Ten were apprehended at the scene, 2 by responding police, but 7 were restrained by school staff. This clearly indicates that the true first responders are the schools' employees and with some basic training, considering the Deter, Detect and Delay planning, a school district might reduce the threat of an intruder.

As was mentioned at the beginning of this memo, we applaud WWPS for taking school safety and security seriously and looking for ways to reduce that likelihood one of our schools would be victimized. This is a difficult task while at the same time trying to present an open and inviting environment for students, staff, parents, and volunteers. Finding the right balance between fortress and free-flowing schools is the challenge.