

Statement from Oklahoma School Public Relations Association to state news agencies:

News Agencies,

Several of you have asked for comment from local school districts. Many of the districts are members of the Oklahoma School PR Association. In light of the mass request, OKSPRA has provided a membership statement for you to use as you need.

*Thank you,
Kathleen Kennedy
OKSPRA
Immediate Past President*

In light of the Connecticut school shooting, the Oklahoma School Public Relations Association wants to assure the public that its members participate in professional development for crisis situations, crisis planning and other communications issues. All of the OKC metro area public schools with Communications Departments are OKSPRA members and have attended crisis trainings led by national crisis communications leaders such as Rick Kauffman and C. J. Huff. Kauffman worked for Jefferson County Schools during the massacre at Columbine High School. Huff is the Superintendent who lead the recovery efforts following the Joplin tornados.

Communications and crisis planning includes preparing school sites on lockdown drills, evacuation procedures, and natural disaster precautions as well as communicating with families, students, parents and communities during crisis.

“There are no words to express the sadness we feel for every family member who lost a loved one and for the hundreds of lives who will be forever changed by today’s tragedy,” said Kathleen Kennedy, OKSPRA Immediate Past President. “Although we practice and train our members and school districts for situations like this, you can never take away the evil intentions of someone.”

Most school districts also meet regularly with local community police, fire and sheriff's office. During these meetings safety issues are discussed, emergency plans are reviewed and districts and agencies participate in trainings.

School safety is a priority of all school districts. Oklahoma schools have safe school plans in place that are continually updated and practiced. It is not the practice to share the specifics of these plans with the public as this could compromise the safety of Oklahoma children.