



TINA KOTEK  
GOVERNOR

November 21, 2024

Mayor Rick Scholl  
City of St. Helens  
City Hall  
265 Strand Street  
St. Helens, OR 97051

*Via electronic delivery*

Dear St. Helens Community,

It is with a heavy heart that I reach out to you today. Over the last week, I have been closely monitoring developments for the St. Helens School District and community following the arrests of a current district employee and a retired district employee.

My duty as your Governor, and the superintendent of public education, is to ensure the safety and well-being of all students that enter our schools, each and every day. I am taking this issue very seriously and I offer my sincere condolences for the current situation that your community is facing, including the trust broken by the lack of transparency and immediate response to the allegations by district leadership.

As you know, the Oregon Department of Human Services Office of Training, Investigations and Safety (OTIS) is investigating these allegations of abuse and whether mandatory reporters in the district failed their legal obligation to report suspected child abuse. Once their investigations are complete, they will share their findings with local law enforcement, the school district, and relevant state agencies so these entities can take the appropriate course of action to hold accountable every person who failed their legal obligation to report suspected child abuse. In addition, OTIS has provided training on mandatory reporting to St. Helens High School administrative staff this week and will provide training to St. Helens middle and elementary school administrators by the end of December.

St. Helens Community  
November 21, 2024  
Page 2

Our children rely on us to recognize when something isn't right and to protect them by calling the abuse hotline to report suspected abuse or neglect at 855-503-SAFE (7233). The hotline is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

My team has been working with the Oregon Department of Education, education partners, and our congressional delegation to support the district. I understand that an acting superintendent will be appointed swiftly. If this expectation is not met within 14 days, I am prepared to escalate the state's engagement with the district and make a recommendation for an interim superintendent.

I stand with you and your community as you continue to navigate the impacts from this situation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tina Kotek". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tina" and last name "Kotek" clearly distinguishable.

Governor Tina Kotek

cc: Mayor Elect Jen Massey  
St. Helens City Manager John Walsh  
Columbia County Chair Casey Garrett  
St. Helens School Board Acting Chair Trinity Monahan  
Northwest Regional Education Service District Superintendent Dan Goldman  
Senator Suzanne Weber