



Countryside Academy

The most important resource we develop is children.



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Countryside Academy Praises Launch of New Statewide Student Safety Initiative, OK2SAY *Partnership with AG, MSP, State Agencies, Schools, and Law Enforcement Creates Comprehensive Safety Initiative for Michigan Kids*

Benton Harbor, Mich. –Administrator Lyn Sperry today praised the launch of OK2SAY, a new hotline and student safety initiative available to Michigan students beginning in the 2014-2015 academic year. OK2SAY enables students and others to confidentially report potential harm or criminal activities aimed at students, teachers, staff or other school employees. The program will operate as an early warning system in our schools to thwart tragedies before they occur. Created as a result of the Student Safety Act (183 PA 2013), OK2SAY's focus is on early intervention and prevention.

"The OK2Say hotline will allow us an important tool to protect students and promote school safety and security," said Scott Pfeiffer, Middle School and High School Principal.

"Our students learn best in a safe environment, but dangerous behaviors threaten to disrupt our schools and, in the worst cases, take the lives of our students," said Attorney General Bill Schuette. "OK2SAY will create an early warning system in our schools and communities to stop tragedies before they start. We cannot sit and wait for the next Columbine or Sandy Hook. We must be proactive to ensure our kids are safe, both inside and outside the classroom. If even one child is saved, this program will be a success."

Fighting the Culture of Silence

According to the U.S. Secret Service, for 81% of violent incidents in U.S. schools, someone other than the attacker had knowledge of the attacker's plan, but failed to report it. OK2SAY will discourage the persistent culture of silence among students who fear reporting threatening behavior will lead to retaliation or result in stigmatization as a "snitch."

Key features of OK2SAY include:

- **Confidential Reporting:** State law protects the confidentiality of the reporter's identity. The identity of the reporting party will not be disclosed to local law enforcement, school officials, or the person against whom a tip is offered, unless the reporter voluntarily chooses to disclose his or her identity. If the reporter is a minor,

the parent or guardian must also consent. However, to address any false reports to the program, prosecutors do have authority to seek a court order to review records when investigating false reports.

- **Comprehensive Technology:** OK2SAY will be operational 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day of the year. The program will accept tips by phone, text message, email, mobile application, and website form, accessible at www.mi.gov/ok2say. Multimedia attachments with additional information are encouraged.
- **Coordinated Intervention:** Upon receipt of a tip, specially trained OK2SAY operators at the Michigan State Police will address the immediate need and, as necessary, forward the information to the appropriate responding agency or organization. Most tips are expected to go to schools and local law enforcement agencies, but in some instances, tips may go to local community mental health agencies or the Michigan Department of Human Services.
- **Accountability & Complete Disposition:** To ensure tips are acted upon, agencies receiving tips are asked to submit outcome reports to the Department of Attorney General. An annual report on the program's impact will detail the types and numbers of tips handled throughout the year.

OK2SAY is anticipated to log tips on a variety of issues involving student safety, including: weapons possession, bullying, substance abuse, and suicide threats.

OK2SAY will be operated through a partnership between the Department of Attorney General, the Michigan State Police, state agencies, schools, parents, law enforcement and community leaders. A full list of OK2SAY partners and stakeholders can be found at www.mi.gov/ok2say.

How to Submit a Tip

Students, teachers, parents, school workers, friends and neighbors can all submit tips, if they are aware of a threat in school. Tips can be submitted through the following ways:

Call: 1-8-555-OK2SAY, 1-855-565-2729

Text: 652729 (OK2SAY)

Email: ok2say@mi.gov

Web: www.mi.gov/ok2say

OK2SAY Mobile App: Available for download in app stores for iPhone and Android.

*Students do best when provided a safe and secure learning environment.
Let's all do our part to protect and promote school safety and security.*