



# K A N S A S

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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*The following is a column by Governor Kathleen Sebelius:*

## **Information critical to stopping school violence**

The thoughts and prayers of the nation are with the victims of the Virginia Tech massacre, and their families, friends, and the entire community, as they recover from that horrific event. It, just like the anniversary of the Columbine shootings which was also last week, serves as a reminder that violence sadly can reach our children even at places that should be sanctuaries.

We should also be reminded by these events of the need for vigilance, a fact that was emphasized here in Kansas as several schools in our state implemented heightened security measures as a result of threats made during the past week.

Information is our best weapon in the fight to prevent school violence, which is why anyone who knows about a potential act of violence should call the Kansas School Safety Hotline at 1-877-626-8203 or contact local law enforcement.

All calls to the hotline are answered by trained Kansas Highway Patrol dispatchers and you can provide the information anonymously.

The dispatchers will analyze the information and, when it is deemed appropriate, information from the calls will be forwarded to local school officials and local law enforcement for further action.

Since the hotline was started in 1999, it has received nearly 3,300 calls from individuals who suspected someone was planning to commit violence. Of those, more than 700 had information that was referred to local school officials and law enforcement officers for further investigation.

I know there can be a reluctance on the part of some, particularly fellow students, to provide information to law enforcement when they have suspicions that someone is planning to commit violence. They might fear retribution or be afraid that the threat they perceive isn't serious enough to warrant reporting.

The risk of not passing along that information is just too great, however, so if you suspect someone is planning to commit school violence, please call the hotline at 1-877-626-8203 or contact local law enforcement immediately. Your information truly can make a difference and may even save lives.

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