



**William J Hamilton
Chief of Police
Kirkland Police Department**

February 6, 2016

Dear Parents, Students and Staff,

I'm writing you today because I feel it's critical that I personally clarify any confusion or misinformation regarding the recent closure of Juanita High School in response to a threat.

The Kirkland Police Department has a longstanding and highly collaborative relationship with the Lake Washington School District. On Tuesday, February 2nd, the staff at Juanita High School learned of the threat and immediately contacted the Kirkland Police Department and we responded to this as our highest priority. We assigned two School Resource Officers, additional Patrol Officers and Detectives to the investigation at the high school. Operations Captain Cherie Harris immediately began critical incident response planning, of course hoping that it would never be necessary.

Very soon after the initial report, Lake Washington School District Superintendent Traci Pierce contacted Captain Harris to ensure that she had accurate information to share with parents, students and staff. This included the release of a photo of the actual threat. Superintendent Pierce and Captain Harris, worked tirelessly on the matter and collaborated on all decisions to include the closure of Juanita High School on Friday, February 5th. I was aware of their discussions and continue to support the decision.

I have seen a recent report that a Police Department employee is quoted as saying that this incident was somehow viewed as non-critical or "business as usual". I assure you that this was far from "business as usual". I believe that our noted response and our ongoing investigation serve to best demonstrate this. To be clear, as the Chief of Police as well as a parent, I am very grateful for the manner in which Superintendent Pierce and the Juanita High School staff handled this matter. Their response was timely, decisive and necessary given the possible tragic outcomes.

The investigation will continue and Kirkland Officers will remain visible, present and vigilant at our schools. It is critical that our students are able to attend school free from fear and violence. Please contact the Kirkland Police Department Tip Line at 425-587-3402 if you have any information.

Respectfully,

William Hamilton
Chief of Police