

## EXAMPLE INITIAL PRESS STATEMENT

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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#### **Tretorn School Family Locks Arms for Children and Community**

Tretorn, AL-The Tretorn school family is locking arms for children and community today, bracing for the advancing Hurricane Flo. Superintendent Mary Lawkins released school employees and students at 11:00 a.m., allowing them to join their families to prepare for the storm. "Our first priority is to make sure that all students and staff are safe," said Lawkins. "We want our employees to attend to their families, secure their property, and prepare for the oncoming storm."

Students whose families are unable to pick them up from school will be provided supervised care, classroom activities, and lunch at the school until the regularly scheduled release time of 3:30 p.m. Buses will transport students at 11:15 a.m. and again at 3:30 p.m.

Any decision with regard to school tomorrow will be announced through the news media and the school crisis response hotline (555-8900) late this afternoon and tomorrow morning. School employees who need information regarding Friday's work schedule should call the school staff voicemail or tune into local radio and TV stations for updates. Employees and the news media may also access the Alabama state hurricane web site at [www.state.al.us/flo](http://www.state.al.us/flo).

"We are doing everything we can to ensure all of the available resources are in place to help our community prepare for this storm," said Lawkin. "The state has emergency response personnel monitoring the situation and will be ready to begin assessing and repairing damage as soon as the storm has passed."

Media coverage of the storm has produced anxiety in many children, especially those who remember the wrath of Hurricane Roger last year. All children in every classroom had the opportunity to talk to a school psychologist from the crisis team today. Parents may expect children to want to discuss their feelings and concerns when they get home from school. As difficult as it can be, talking about feelings will help them deal with their fears and draw on coping resources. "As educators, community members, and others who care deeply about children, we must do all we can to comfort our students and show them full support from adults and community. In the midst of boarding up windows and securing our property, please remember to attend to the fears and concerns of our students," said Lawkins. "We are a hearty bunch here in Tretorn. We've weathered storms in the past, and I am confident we will pull together and pull through Flo as well."

Following are some useful phone numbers for parents and the public:

**Volunteering:** (888) 835-9966  
**Information about federal disaster aid:** FEMA Alabama Hotline 1-800-462-9029  
**Assistance:** Red Cross Helpline 1-800-958-2351  
**Donations:** For credit card contributions, call 1-800-HELP-NOW  
**Youth Advocacy/Mental Health and Counseling:** (606) 877-9800

*Source: Based on an example from the National Education Association [www.nea.org/crisis/b4home.html](http://www.nea.org/crisis/b4home.html)*