Lake Pend Oreille School Board
October 8, 2013
Statement prepared by Mindy Cameron, board member

<u>I do not agree that we should arm teachers or other staff in our school buildings.</u>

Because I am so proud of this school district and all we have accomplished in the last decade, I find this discussion of arming staff a needless and divisive distraction. We are better and smarter than this. And our track record proves it.

Thanks to highly qualified professional financial management we have moved from a district with deficit funding in the early 2000s to one of the most financially healthy districts in the state. We have had year after year of A+ audits, and have managed to maintain a reserve fund despite reduced funding from the state.

Professional educational leadership was absent in the early 2000s. Under board leadership of former chair Vickie Pfeifer, things began to change. First, Mark Berryhill was hired as superintendent to lead the district beyond the difficult and contentious years. Then we were fortunate to recruit an outstanding leader in Dick Cvitinach. Could we be that lucky again? Yes. We now have the excellent leadership skills of Shawn Woodward.

During this time we have seen steady improvement in student achievement and teacher effectiveness. Ten of our 11 schools have 4 or 5 star status. We have a national Blue Ribbon school. More graduates than ever are going on to post-secondary education. And so much more.

How did this happen? We had highly qualified professional educators and a <u>cohesive</u> board that had the good sense not only to <u>hire</u> them, but to <u>listen</u> to them. And – of course – the growing support of patrons who liked what they saw happening with our schools and began approving school levies.

My point is that qualified, experienced professionals matter, whether in finance, education, or school safety.

Why then, if the worst thing any of us can imagine were to happen here,
should we rely on <u>amateurs</u> to protect our children?

That makes no sense. It is time to move on.