

LOS ALAMITOS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

July 17, 2018

The Honorable Charles Margines
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

RE: 2017-2018 Orange County Grand Jury Report
Safer Schools - What Can We Do?
Response of The Los Alamitos Unified School District

To the Honorable Charles Margines:

In accordance with California Penal Code section 933.05, the Orange County Grand Jury has requested that Los Alamitos Unified School District respond to findings and recommendations in the 2017-2018 Orange County Grand Jury report entitled: "*Safer Schools – What Can We Do?*"

FINDINGS

F. 1. School safety and security are priorities in every school district in the Orange County public school system.

Response to F.1.: The Los Alamitos Unified School District agrees with this finding. School safety and security are a priority in the Los Alamitos Unified School District.

F.2. The implementation of security measures for schools, in many cases, is limited by funding.

Response to F.2.: The Los Alamitos Unified School District agrees with this finding. The extent to which our school can implement the type and extent of security measures is often dependent on funding.

F.3. Many Orange County school campuses were constructed to reflect an "open and inviting" atmosphere but are now faced with physical and philosophical security issues that challenge this thinking.

Response to F.3.: The Los Alamitos Unified School District School District agrees with this finding. Each of the schools within our district have perimeter fencing limiting access to the campus. Los Alamitos High School's perimeter fencing is pending due to modernization in the out years.

F.4. While every Orange County school district reported the use of a campus visitor sign-in process, there is a lack of procedural consistency among school campuses.

Response to F.4.: The Los Alamitos Unified School District has implemented a visitor management system and a common visitor procedure at all of its school sites.

F.5.: Many districts or school campuses do not require all teachers, staff, and volunteers to wear ID badges while on campus, making identification of authorized personnel difficult for substitute teachers, student teachers, visitors, volunteers, and first responders.

Response to F.5.: The Los Alamitos Unified School District has implemented the requirement of wearing an ID badge for all staff, substitute staff, and volunteers.

F.6.: Currently, student ID badges, which could easily distinguish students from non-students of similar age, are not required to be worn by Orange County middle and high school students.

Response to F.6.: The Los Alamitos Unified School District agrees that student ID badges would assist in the recognition of non-students of similar age on a middle or high school campus.

F.7. Campus personnel and volunteers, while on duty outside the classroom, have an inconsistent usage or availability of communication devices for emergency situations.

Response to F.7.: The Los Alamitos Unified School District agrees with this finding. As it pertains to our schools, two-way radios are utilized by staff as well as an emergency notification system that utilizes staff cellular phones, staff computer monitors, and scrolling messaging within the classroom.

F.8.: There is no documentation or reporting protocol within the districts of individual security incidents, making it difficult to track, analyze, and summarize such incidents.

Response to F.8.: The Los Alamitos Unified School District agrees with this finding. As it pertains to our schools, the student information system is the only source of documentation for student related incidences.

F.9.: While every Orange County school develops a school safety plan, few schools have used an individual school security assessment to identify deficiencies or to develop the required plan.

Response to F.9.: The Los Alamitos Unified School District agrees with this finding. As it pertains to our schools, the District has partnered with local law enforcement to conduct security assessments and garner recommendations for improvements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R.1.: School districts should explore all possible funding resources that may be available in order to implement desired security measures. (F.2.)

Response to R.1.: The recommendation has been implemented. The Los Alamitos Unified School District has applied for outside grant funding for safety related projects, but was denied. The District will continue to seek out alternative funding opportunities for safety-related projects.

R.2.: School districts should re-evaluate the lack of secure fencing on all school campuses and present a report to their respective boards by December 31, 2018, outlining their plans to make campuses more secure. (F.2, F.3)

Response to R.2.: The Los Alamitos Unified School District has completed fencing projects at each of its elementary and middle school sites. By the end of the 2018-19 school year, a camera/buzzer system will be implemented to control visitor access. In addition, the District will install e-badges to staff for entry into campus at select gates. For the Los Alamitos High School, an architect is under contract to design a new building on campus, possibly in the front of the school. The district will work with the architect to secure the perimeter of the entire campus pending design solutions.

R.3.: School districts should implement procedures to ensure that all campuses maintain a complete, daily log (electronic or manual) of every visitor and volunteer entering and exiting the campus, excluding program events such as awards ceremonies or stage or musical productions. (F.4.)

Response to R.3.: The Los Alamitos Unified School District employs a Visitor Management System at each of its campuses that maintains a data log of each volunteer/visitor.

R.4.: School districts should implement procedures to ensure that photo identification is required of all campus visitors and volunteers before a visitor's badge is issued. (F.4, F.5.)

Response to R.4.: As part of the Los Alamitos Unified School District's Visitor Management System, the volunteer/visitor scans their driver's license to obtain a visitor badge. Visitors are required to provide identification to gain entry onto campus.

R.5.: School districts should implement procedures to ensure that all faculty and staff are required to wear visible photo ID badges while on campus. (F.5.)

Response to R.5.: The Los Alamitos Unified School District requires all staff to wear a District issued ID badge while on campus.

R.6.: All school districts with middle or high school campuses should consider using student ID cards in a format to be worn as student ID badges while on campus. (F.6.)

Response to R.6.: The Los Alamitos Unified School District is not considering using student ID badges for students while on campus.

R.7.: School districts should evaluate available communication devices and ensure that custodial and supervisory personnel, as well as safety resource officers, playground supervisors and coaches, have two-way radios or equivalent communication devices with them at all times, enabling instant two-way communication with the office. (F.7.)

Response to R.7.: The Los Alamitos Unified School District provides two-way radios to staff for internal campus communication as well as site-to-site communication.

R.8.: School districts should consider requiring that all campus incidents of unauthorized access be recorded, tracked, and reported to the district office on a quarterly basis. All districts should share these reports with the Orange County Department of Education. (F.8.)

Response to R.8.: The Los Alamitos Unified School District is reviewing methods by which to document all campus incidents of unauthorized access, but does not have an identified system by which to document the above incidences.

R.9.: School districts should evaluate requiring each school to perform a school security assessment to evaluate their current school safety plan. (F.9)

Response to R.9.: By way of the Director of Safety, the Los Alamitos Unified School District conducts school security assessments with local law enforcement and security professionals on a yearly basis.

Sincerely,



Nancy C. Nien, Ph.D.
Assistant Superintendent
Business Services

cc: Orange County Grand Jury
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