



**Newport-Mesa**  
Unified School District

**BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
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July 27, 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 Newport-Mesa 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 Newport-Mesa 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 Newport-Mesa Unified School District agrees with this finding. School safety and security are a priority in the Newport-Mesa Unified School District.

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

**Response to F.2.:** The Newport-Mesa 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 Newport-Mesa Unified School District agrees with this finding. Our district's campuses typically reflect an "open and inviting" atmosphere corresponding to the

**Frederick Navarro, Ed.D., Superintendent**

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school and urban planning concepts of the eras and communities in which they were constructed. In recent years, our district has made security enhancements at many of our schools that more clearly define and separate publicly “open” areas of our campuses from secure areas.

**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 Newport-Mesa Unified School District agrees with this finding as it pertains to its schools. While all schools within the district have visitor sign-in procedures we are working towards greater procedural consistency among all school campuses.

**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 Newport-Mesa Unified School District agrees with this finding as it pertains to its schools. Though ID badges are required of all employees we are working towards greater procedural consistency among all school campuses for 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 Newport-Mesa Unified School District agrees with this finding as it pertains to its middle and secondary schools.

**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.:** Two-way communication is currently present with key personnel at each site, the Newport-Mesa Unified School District agrees with this finding as it pertains to its schools and is working to establish consistent availability and usage at all sites.

**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 Newport-Mesa Unified School District agrees with this finding as it pertains to its schools.

**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 Newport-Mesa Unified School District agrees with this finding as it pertains to its schools.

## **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. District staff has reviewed funding opportunities associated with Federal, State and Local grants/entitlements and identified all available 2018-19 funding qualifying for security expenditures.

**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 recommendation has been implemented. Fencing and perimeter access to all school campuses was evaluated during the spring of 2018. A report was presented to the Board of Education on July 10, 2018.

**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 recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. On July 10, 2018 the Board of Education approved an agreement for a standardized visitor/volunteer management system to all campuses. Implementation has begun and will be operational for the 2018-19 school year.

**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.:** The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. On July 10, 2018 the Board of Education approved an agreement for a standardized visitor/volunteer management system to all campuses. Implementation has begun and will be operational for the 2018-19 school year.

**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 recommendation has been implemented. All employees are required to wear ID badges 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 recommendation requires further analysis. While students are issued ID cards annually they are not required to visibly display them while on campus. The feasibility of making this a requirement and properly enforcing this new requirement poses many logistical challenges for large student populations. For these reasons further analysis will be conducted by the Executive Director of Secondary Education and the secondary principals on this recommendation. The process will be completed by November 2, 2018.

**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 recommendation has not yet been fully implemented. Although two-way communication is currently issued to key personnel at each site, the Newport-Mesa Unified School District will establish consistent availability and usage of two-way communication for personnel including but not limited to supervisory personnel, playground supervisors, PE teachers, custodial and school resource officers at all sites for the 2018-19 school year.

**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 recommendation requires further analysis. The Deputy Superintendent will consult with OCDE and district safety committees to determine the feasibility of the creation and implementation of a standardized reporting system for incidents of unauthorized access. It is essential that if this system were to be effective it must be done in collaboration with the Orange County Department of Education, law enforcement and other OC school districts. The analysis process will be completed by November 2, 2018.

**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.:** The recommendation requires further analysis. The Deputy Superintendent will meet with safety consultants to review and consider various school security assessments to evaluate school safety plans. This process will be completed by November 2, 2018.

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Sincerely,



Russell Lee-Sung  
Deputy Superintendent  
Newport-Mesa Unified School District

cc: Orange County Grand Jury  
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