



July 30, 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 Fountain Valley School District

To the Honorable Charles Margines:

In accordance with California Penal Code section 933(c), the Orange County Grand Jury has requested that Fountain Valley 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 Fountain Valley School District agrees with this finding. School safety and security are a priority in Fountain Valley School District.

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

Response to F.2.: The Fountain Valley School District agrees with this finding.

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 Fountain Valley School District agrees with this finding.

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.: Fountain Valley School District disagrees with this finding to the extent it pertains to this District. All ten District schools have a process where visitors sign in via the main office. Within the District, there is procedural consistency regarding the campus visitor sign-in process.

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 Fountain Valley School District agrees with this finding.

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 Fountain Valley School District agrees with this finding, which is not limited to Orange County schools. We note that students in most schools are not required to wear ID badges.

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 Fountain Valley School District partially agrees with this finding. As it pertains to our schools, staff members have various available means of communication (e.g., direct line phones, cell phones, computers, and two-way radios) during emergency situations. Some of these communication devices are available outside the classroom (e.g., cell phones and two-way radios) during emergency situations. With regard to volunteers, they are not provided with a communication device when on campus.

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 Fountain Valley School District partially agrees with this finding. As it pertains to our schools, there is not a formal reporting protocol of individual security incidents to the district office. However, all safety incidents are communicated via phone call to the Superintendent or his designee to determine the support needed at the site. In addition, incidents at the school sites involving students are tracked in the District's student information system.

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 Fountain Valley School District agrees with this finding. However, as it pertains to our schools, the District consults with local law enforcement on school safety on an annual basis. Local law enforcement reviews school safety plans and makes recommendations, as needed.

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. Student safety is a top priority for Fountain Valley School District and funding is a critical issue to implementing new practices and safeguards. Over the last few years, through our Local Control and Accountability Plan (“LCAP”) process and in direct engagement with our parents and community, we have added: health related services (more school nurses); mental health services (additional school counselors at the middle schools and counseling services at the elementary level); new safety resources for classrooms (emergency backpacks, items in emergency storage bins, flip-charts); the Raptor Visitor Management System (anticipated in November 2018); and ID badges for all staff members (anticipated in November 2018).

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 not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. Specifically, the Fountain Valley School District has evaluated the lack of fencing on school campuses. The District’s Board of Trustees is aware that not all schools within the District have secure fencing. In light of this recommendation, the District will present a report to the Board of Trustees detailing each school’s status with respect to secure fencing by December 31, 2018. The District will also convene a School Safety Task Force (“SSTF”) in fall of 2018. Based upon the findings and recommendations of the SSTF, as well as a study of potential funding sources, a detailed report on school safety and a proposal to make campuses more secure, including an evaluation of the addition of secure fencing, will be presented to the Board of Trustees by June 2019.

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 Fountain Valley School District will implement Raptor Visitor Management System, an electronic visitor and volunteer log, beginning in November 2018 at all ten schools in the District. This system will be used to log the entry and exit of every volunteer and visitor at each school site, daily, excluding program events such as awards ceremonies or stage or musical productions. Data from this system will be maintained as necessary for purposes of school safety and security. All ten District schools already have a non-electronic process where visitors sign in on a visitor log in the main office prior to entering campus, except when visitors are present for program events.

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 Fountain Valley School District will ensure that a photo identification is required from all campus visitors and volunteers, beginning in November 2018 at all ten schools in the District. Photo identification is a requirement of the Raptor Visitor Management System.

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 not been implemented, but Fountain Valley School District will ensure that all faculty and staff wear a visible photo ID badge while on campus, beginning in November 2018.

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 has been considered but not implemented. Fountain Valley School District has considered using student ID cards in a format to be worn as student ID badges while on campus. The District does not currently require students to wear an ID badge while on campus. The District is not currently aware of any safety incidents at any of its school sites that could have been prevented had students been wearing ID badges. The District also notes the anticipated difficulty of monitoring and enforcing such a requirement for all students without a corresponding increase in student discipline matters. The School Safety Task Force, discussed above, will reconsider this issue.

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 already been implemented. Fountain Valley School District provides two-way radios, computers, a school-wide PA system, cell phones, and direct phone lines are in every classroom, all providing 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 recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. Specifically, Fountain Valley School District, through its School Safety Task Force, discussed above, will be reviewing methods by which to document all campus incidents of unauthorized access. At this time, we do not have an identified system by which to document the above incidences. Visitors are required to sign-in when visiting each campus. Sign-in occurs in the main office, with the exception of

program events, for which no sign-in is required. The District is not aware of any specific campus security incident as a result of unauthorized access.

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 has already been implemented. By way of the Director of Student Support Services and site principals, the Fountain Valley School District consults with local law enforcement on school safety on an annual basis. Local law enforcement reviews school safety plans and makes recommendations, as needed. The School Safety Task Force, discussed above, will consider whether additional security assessments are warranted.

Sincerely,



Mark Johnson, Ed.D.
Superintendent

cc: Orange County Grand Jury
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