

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 Saddleback Valley 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 Saddleback Valley 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 measures are priorities in every school district in the Orange County public school system.

Response to F.1.: The Saddleback Valley Unified School District agrees with this finding. School Safety and security are a priority in the Saddleback Valley Unified School District.

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

Response to F.2.: The Saddleback Valley Unified School District disagrees partially with this finding. All of our school sites have protocols for controlling school access, visitor policies and procedures, audit tools, and all secondary staff and secondary students are issued ID badges. Additionally, all of our schools have an emergency communications plan.

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 Saddleback Valley Unified School District agrees with this finding. Of the schools within our district, twenty-six can be considered to reflect an “open and inviting” atmosphere.

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 Saddleback Valley Unified School District disagrees wholly with this finding. As it pertains to our schools, all 35 sites utilize a consistent 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 Saddleback Valley Unified School District disagrees partially with this finding. As it pertains to our schools, all volunteers and substitute teachers must be identified and badged prior to commencing their service.

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 Saddleback Valley Unified School District disagrees partially with this finding. As it pertains to our schools, all middle and high school students are issued ID badges yearly and are required to carry with them at all times while on 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 Saddleback Valley Unified School District disagrees partially with this finding. As it pertains to our schools, all campus personnel, while on duty outside the classroom, have consistent availability of communication devices (two-way radios, cell phones) for emergency situations.

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 Saddleback Valley Unified School District disagrees wholly with this finding. As it pertains to our schools, all security incidents are required to be electronically documented through an "Unusual Incident Report" and submitted to the appropriate school and district personnel.

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 Saddleback Valley Unified School District disagrees wholly with this finding. As it pertains to our schools, all 35 sites develop their school safety plan annually. Additionally, all schools utilize the Great American Shakeout disaster drill as a time to assess the plan. Many of our schools have also employed the assistance of OC Sheriffs during lockdown drills for further feedback and support.

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. Saddleback Valley Unified School District is working with a variety of partners to identify available funds for implementations of desired security measures.

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 will not be implemented because it is not warranted. The Saddleback Valley Unified School District will re-evaluate secure fencing on all school campuses through our Facility Master Plan process and share with the Board when appropriate. Adding fencing to the many campuses in SVUSD is not possible without additional funding.

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 been implemented. All school sites in the Saddleback Valley Unified School District are required to maintain a daily log of visitors and volunteers entering and exiting the campus, excluding program events such as awards ceremonies or stage or musical productions.

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 been partially implemented. Photo identification is recommended of all campus visitors and volunteers before a visitor's badge is issued.

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 yet been implemented, but will be implemented during the 2018-2019 school year.

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 will not be implemented because it is not reasonable. The Saddleback Valley Unified School district does not have available staff to monitor this recommendation, however, all middle and high school students are issued a student ID and are required to carry with them at all times 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 recommendation has been implemented. At all schools in the Saddleback Valley Unified School District, custodial staff, supervisory personnel (campus supervisors), as well as School Resource Officers and playground supervisors carry two-way radios with them at all times. Additionally, all coaches are required to carry two-way radios or cell phones with them.

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 will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable. The Saddleback Valley Unified School District conducts our own monitoring of campus incidents of unauthorized access through the electronic submission of Unusual Incident Reports immediately following any incident.

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 been implemented. All schools in the Saddleback Valley Unified School District evaluate their school safety plan annually with their School Site Councils and School Resource Officers and submit to the district office. Additionally, all schools utilize the Great American Shakeout disaster drill as a time to assess the plan. Many of our schools have also employed the assistance of the Orange County Sheriff's Department during lockdown drills for further feedback and support.

Sincerely,



Crystal Turner, Ed.D.
Superintendent

cc: Orange County Grand Jury
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701