



**ORANGE COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT  
OF EDUCATION**

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**AL MIJARES, Ph.D.**  
County Superintendent  
of Schools

September 14, 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 Orange County Department of Education

To the Honorable Charles Margines:

In accordance with California Penal Code section 933.05, the Orange County Grand Jury has requested that the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) respond to findings and recommendations in the 2017 – 2018 Orange County Grand Jury report entitled: "Safer Schools – What Can We Do?"

Enclosed are the responses as requested from the Orange County Grand Jury letter dated August 16, 2018.

Sincerely,

Al Mijares, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

AM/cl

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

Enclosure

**ORANGE COUNTY  
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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Orange County Department of Education  
**RESPONSE TO THE**  
**2017 – 2018 ORANGE COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT**  
*“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 Orange County Department of Education agrees with this finding. School safety and security is a priority for all Orange County school districts and schools.

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

**Response to F.2.:** The Orange County Department of Education agrees with this finding. The extent to which any Orange County district/school can implement 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 Orange County Department of Education agrees with this finding. The Orange County districts/schools reflect an “open and inviting” atmosphere however; as schools are modernized, updated security measures are being taken into consideration.

**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 Orange County Department of Education disagrees partially with this finding. Each school district has their campus visitor sign-in process, and the majority of school districts have the same procedure for all of their schools. For example, when a visitor reports to the office, their driver’s license is scanned. Their picture and name is printed on the badge and must be worn at all times when on campus. The visitor must check out and return their badge so the school staff knows the individual has left and is no longer on campus.

**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 Orange County Department of Education agrees with this finding. School districts are currently looking into ID badge options.

**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 Orange County Department of Education agrees with this finding. Middle and high school students are not required to wear ID badges. There are not enough resources on campuses to check every student.

**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 Orange County Department of Education disagrees partially with this finding. There are many school districts that have consistent usage or availability of communication devices for emergency situations for campus personnel.

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

**Response to F.8.:** The Orange County Department of Education disagrees partially with this finding. Multiple school districts/school within the county have documentation or reporting protocols in place.

**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 Orange County Department of Education agrees that Orange County schools develop school safety plans however disagrees partially that few schools have used an individual school security assessment to identify deficiencies or to develop the required plan. Starting in 2013, the Orange County Department of Education and the Orange County Intelligence Assessment Center collaborated on the School Safety Assessment Project. This project was designed to assess vulnerabilities and identify deficiencies on school campuses.

## **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 for all Orange County school districts to explore possible funding resources is being implemented or in the process of review. Each district is unique with funding opportunities. These include, but are not limited to, Measure Bonds, PTA, state and or federal funding or, general funds.

**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 Orange County Department of Education maintains a collaborative relationship with the school districts and understands that the majority are implementing the recommendations by identifying improvements on fencing through annual facilities master plans, reviewing single points of entry and presenting reports to their respective boards of trustees to discuss.

**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 production. (F.4.)

**Response to R.3.:** All school districts in Orange County mandate some form of check in/check out of visitors and volunteers. Implementation of such procedures are evidenced by sign in and sign out logs, visitor stickers and web based visitor management system i.e., Raptore. This system scans an individual's driver's license, which prints an ID badge that includes their photo. The visitor or volunteer must also check out as they leave through the Raptore system.

**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.:** All school districts in Orange County mandate some form of check in/check out of visitors and volunteers, which includes photo identification. A large number of school districts have implemented the Raptore System, which scans the valid identification and prints a photo onto a visitors pass.

**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 in many Orange County districts, with other districts looking to implement during the new school year, 2018 – 2019.

**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.:** With each school district being autonomous, at a minimum, they all have a requirement for middle and high school student identification cards. Any other considerations are reviewed by their respective boards, superintendents and school safety teams.

**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.:** School districts continually monitor their safety protocols and procedures. Two-way radios are used at the school sites to communicate with others throughout the school.

**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.:** Whether it is a visitor check in procedure or working with local school resource officers and law enforcement agencies, campus incidents of unauthorized access are identified and reported to the site administrator or the district superintendent.

**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.:** Comprehensive Safe School plans are reviewed annually. Districts and schools have taken an additional step by looking at school security assessments and working with their local law enforcement and the Orange County Intelligence Assessment Center, which includes Orange County Department of Education staff. In addition, the United States Department of Homeland Security has a K-12 School Security Assessment tool that has been utilized in districts.