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July 30, 2018

Amended November 13, 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 Westminster School District

To the Honorable Charles Margines:

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

As per the letter received dated November 8, 2018 the District has amended R4 to provide the appropriate time frame for implementation.

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 Westminster School District agrees with this finding. School safety and security are a priority in Westminster School District.

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

Response to F.2.: The Westminster School District agrees with this finding. The extent to which our schools 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 Westminster School District disagrees partially with this finding. The Westminster School District strives to make our schools welcoming to students, parents, and the community. However, in the interest of student and staff safety, all our schools have upgraded exterior fencing and a single point of visitor entry through the school office once school begins.

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 Westminster School District disagrees wholly with this finding. The Westminster School District protocols require all visitors sign-in through the office at all school sites through a single-point of entry once school begins. The Westminster School District does not have knowledge of procedures among other districts.

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 Westminster School District disagrees partially with this finding. All staff have picture IDs assigned to them and workers, such as construction personnel, are required to be badged as well. Visitors must sign in through the office to receive a visitor's badge which is not a full ID badge and is used for a one-time visit.

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 Westminster School District disagrees partially with this finding. Middle School students are easily distinguished from older individuals and it is not necessary for them to wear an ID badge at school in comparison to high school students which are not as easily distinguished..

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 Westminster School District agrees with this finding. Office, Custodial and Supervision employees have hand-held radios provided by the district to support their duties but not all personnel have availability of communication devices for emergency situations outside of 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 Westminster School District agrees with this finding. As it pertains to our schools, there is not currently a formal reporting protocol for individual security incidents.

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 Westminster School District agrees with this finding. As it pertains to our schools, the Board of Education approved a Physical Threat Assessment of all school sites to be completed over the summer and the District implemented a School Safety Task Force to develop districtwide protocols and to focus on greater visibility and utilization of site safety plans.

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.: This recommendation is being implemented. The Westminster School District agrees that we should explore all possible funding resources that may be available in order to implement 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.: This recommendation has been implemented with each school utilizing a single point of entry after the beginning of the school day. The District is undergoing a facilities threat assessment review over the summer to determine any additional facility needs.

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.: This recommendation has been implemented with each school requiring all visitors to sign in at the office prior to obtain a visitors badge.

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.: This recommendation requires further analysis to determine the benefits of requiring a photo ID for each known visitor on a daily basis versus the currently utilized process of single-point of entry and sign-in for all visitors. The District is investigating programs such as Raptor for this purpose but has not defined the priority level of this service versus other security needs until a full needs assessment is completed by the end of the 2018 calendar year.

Added response November 13, 2018: The District conveyed a Safe Schools Committee that has met through the beginning of the school year and focused on best practices for all aspects of school safety. As a result of this committee and the priorities of the Board of Education the District is implementing the Raptor Visitor Management systems beginning in January 2019. This system will require a photo ID for each know visitor on a daily basis.

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 district plans to implement this protocol for 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.: This recommendation will not be implemented as it is deemed not warranted for middle school students who are more easily distinguished from students of similar age than are high school students..

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.: This recommendation has been implemented. The District will be doing an updated inventory of two-way radios in the fall to determine if any additional gaps are identified that require additional radios.

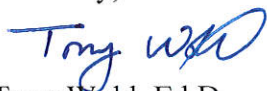
R.8.: School districts should consider requiring that all campus incidents of unauthorized access be recorded, tracked, and reported to the district office on a quarterly basis. All districts should share these reports with the Orange County Department of Education. (F.8.)

Response to R.8.: The recommendation requires further analysis as there has not been any guidance from the Orange County Department of Education regarding this issue nor is there a standard for reporting, making information difficult to utilize from one district to another. The Westminster School District does have sites report all incidents to the district office.

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.: This recommendation has been implemented. The District has contracted with our risk management provider to complete a physical site threat assessment report during the summer of 2018 with a report of recommendations and next steps presented to the Board of Education as part of our updated Facilities Master Plan during the 2018-2019 school year.

Sincerely,



Tony Wold, Ed.D.,
Assistant Superintendent, Business Services
Westminster School District

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