



# Centralia School District

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## ORANGE COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT

### ORANGE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS: ARE THEY PREPARED FOR EMERGENCIES?

#### RESPONSE SUMMARY FROM THE CENTRALIA SCHOOL DISTRICT

In accordance with California Penal Code section 933.05, a response is required from the Centralia School District to Findings 1-7 and Recommendations 1-5.

#### **Finding 1:**

**With respect to reported constraints on emergency planning and preparation, over half of schools and almost three quarters of districts identified either limited time or funds.**

The Centralia School District agrees with this finding. If school districts had more personnel and resources, districts would be able to move forward with emergency management planning. At present, limited state funds and personnel are available.

#### **Finding 2:**

**Six (of 17) school districts have managed to apply for and receive relatively large grants from governmental agencies to greatly enhance their emergency planning efforts, while others have not.**

The Centralia School District agrees that school districts should seek grant funding. An existing federal grant program will be phasing out in 2012 and other grant programs will need to be identified. If more information were made available relative to grant and/or funding opportunities, districts could pursue these opportunities.

#### **Finding 3:**

**Some schools anticipate responding to only a few emergency situations (e.g., earthquake and fire), while others have developed plans to respond to over a dozen different threatening situations.**

The Centralia School District agrees with this finding. Our school district has developed information to include the following emergency situations in addition to earthquakes and fires: civil disturbances,

biological hazards, lockdowns, evacuations, bomb or terrorist threats, hazardous materials, chemical spills, airplane crashes, hostage situations, intruders on campus, and weather related emergencies.

**Finding 4:**

**School districts develop plans with respect to a number of different but overlapping regulations and standards, including those required by the county, state, and the federal government.**

The Centralia School District agrees with this finding. School districts have developed school safety plans under Education Code. School districts are also required to comply with state and federal emergency management standards, Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and National Incident Management System (NIMS). Efforts should be made to make these requirements consistent with each other.

**Finding 5:**

**Some schools reported they have not adequately anticipated the needs of students taking prescription medications, or with specialized medical needs, in the event of some emergencies, such as an extended lockdown.**

Schools in our District keep important medical information on file and parents (as well as staff) are encouraged to keep an extra supply of medications for students in the Health Office to utilize in the case of an emergency or extended disaster situation.

**Finding 6:**

**School districts are in communication with a variety of local and county departments, agencies, and systems to help them prepare for and respond to disasters or emergencies; not all districts access the same resources.**

The Centralia School District agrees different districts access different resources and it is our understanding that districts communicate in a variety of ways with first responders, local agencies, and other agencies to support matters of emergency management.

**Finding 7:**

**Few schools have plans or emergency preparation information available in languages other than English.**

Our District has emergency information in the following languages: English, Spanish and Korean.

**Recommendation 1:**

**Those districts which have yet to identify disaster grant opportunities, especially from governmental agencies, investigate the availability of potential resources. Forming inter-district collaboratives, learning from districts in the county that have been successful, pooling resources, and asking for consultation from the Orange County Superintendent of Schools/OCDE may help in these efforts.**

The Centralia School District has not received grants for emergency preparedness, however in the future, our District intends to implement Recommendation 1 by requesting identification of disaster grant opportunities and investigating the availability of potential resources.

**Recommendation 2:**

**Districts review their plans, and the plans specific to each of their campuses, with respect to emergencies or possible disaster situations they have not anticipated.**

Each of our school sites has a written school safety plan submitted by March 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. The plan is reviewed each year and updated annually.

**Recommendation 3:**

**Districts review their level of compliance with various existing codes, regulations, and liability insurance issues that pertain to emergency preparedness in public schools.**

The Centralia School District has implemented this recommendation by developing a school safety plan for each of its schools and working with federal, state and local emergency management agencies. The school district has sufficient liability insurance with respect to emergency preparedness.

**Recommendation 4:**

**Districts review their plans, and the plans specific to each of their campuses, to ascertain whether the special medical and/or prescription medication needs of all students are adequately anticipated, especially during an extended disaster situation.**

Centralia School District schools keep important medical information on file for students. The District encourages parents to keep an extra supply of medications in the Health Office for students in the case of an emergency or extended disaster situation.

**Recommendation 5:**

**Districts survey their campuses with respect to the needs of non- or limited-English-speaking parents and guardians, and develop outlines or summaries of critical emergency planning information in Spanish, Vietnamese, and other threshold languages prevalent in their local communities.**

Centralia School District has assessed campuses with respect to non or limited English speaking parents/guardians relative to this topic and has emergency planning information available in Spanish and Korean, the two threshold languages in the community we serve.