

14121 Cedarwood Avenue

Westminster

Ca: 92683

**FROM**

**TO**

Name: Debi Castro

Phone: 1062

Fax: 7148997068

817148345555

E-mail: dcastro@wsd.k12.ca.us

Sent: 10/18/11

at: 10:28:06 AM

12 page(s) (including cover)

Subject: Grand Jury Report Response Revision - Westminster School District

Comments:

**RECEIVED**  
OCT 18 2011

Please find attached the revised version of the Grand Jury Report for Westminster School District.

Thank you,

Debi Castro  
Staff Secretary

| **Debi Castro** | Safe Schools, Healthy Students | **Westminster School District** |  
| 14121 Cedarwood Ave. Westminster, CA 92683 | ☎ direct (714) 894-7311 x1060 | 📠 fax (714) 899-7068 |  
*To acquire knowledge, one must study; but to acquire wisdom, one must observe.*  
- Marilyn vos Savant



WILLIAM M. HABERMEHL  
County Superintendent of Schools

200 Kalmus Drive - P.O. Box 9050  
Costa Mesa, CA 92628-9050

(714) 966-4220  
(714) 434-4945 FAX

## SCHOOLS LEGAL SERVICE

RONALD D. WENKART  
General Counsel

CLAIRE Y. MOREY  
LYSA M. SALTZMAN  
KAREN T. MEYERS  
Counsel

NORMA GARCIA  
Paralegal

### ORANGE COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT

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

#### RESPONSE SUMMARY FROM THE WESTMINSTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

In accordance with California Penal Code section 933.05, a response is required from the Westminster 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 Westminster School District agrees with this finding; however, our district leadership encouraged the Safe Schools, Healthy Students Department staff to acquire federal funding to plan, train, implement, and sustain the highest level of disaster and emergency preparedness according to the NIMS criteria. Our Superintendent(s) directed all department and school site leadership to prioritize this need and to allocate significant time and resources to accomplish the goals and objectives as determined by numerous community partners and emergency responders.

##### **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 Westminster School District was extremely fortunate to receive two consecutive federal grants, the Emergency Response Crisis Management (ERCM) grant and the Readiness for Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) (see attachments). Since Westminster is located near many identified hazards, the federal government doubled our requested funding allocation, so that we could successfully create a comprehensive response to mitigate all possible disasters. Accordingly, from 2006 – 2011, the grants provided nearly \$500,000 to achieve the highest outcomes.

The *ERCM April 2010 Executive Summary*, prepared by our grant evaluator, describes WSD's progress in developing comprehensive responses for emergency preparedness.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES ACHIEVED (2006 – 2009)**

Westminster School District (WSD) received the Emergency Response Crisis Management (ERCM) grant in October 2006. The district has spent the last two years of the grant laying a new foundation district wide for emergency preparedness that is aligned with NIMS. The list below highlights accomplishments toward this task and toward meeting the goals and objectives of the grant. All activities have been made possible through ERCM funds and have assisted WSD to move toward sustainability.

- Hired a full time Safety Specialist in October of 2006.
- Revised school safety plans to align with NIMS, including ICS positions and Incident Action Plans.
- Addressed four top priority hazards: 1) earthquake, 2) fire, 3) intruder on campus; and 4) pandemic emergency plans.
- Addressed four additional hazards: 1) student violence; 2) after school program vulnerability; 3) bus or on-campus accidents; and 4) airborne hazards.
- Updated site maps at all (17) WSD schools to include location of hallways, stairwells and utilities as well as critical staging areas.
- Trained 55 WSD employees in a NIMS/ICS training provided by the Orange County Department of Education.
- Completed a district wide infectious disease plan that is aligned with the World Health Organization's alert stages. Participated in several meetings with Orange County Health Care Agency to review the plan. Created a Level 1 and Level 2 alert stage letter to parents.
- Provided three Internet Safety/Cyber-bullying to a total of 59 district parents.
- Provided CPR/First Aid training to 186 WSD staff.
- Conducted a small scale earthquake tabletop with district administrators.
- Conducted a large scale multi-agency intruder on campus drill at a WSD middle school.
- Standardized evaluation and recording of site practice drills and improved quality and response time.
- Assigned and trained staff on EOC positions and conducted two simulations (one in partnership with the Orange County Department of Education).
- Purchased portable emergency and OA2 radios and established protocol for monthly district wide tests.
- Purchased 15 Global Positioning Systems (GPS) for all WSD buses. Conducted GPS trainings for bus drivers. Demonstrated system to two other school districts and received a write up in the county newspaper.
- Completed Helicopter ID Spray on 15 buses.
- Completed four bus safety trainings on various emergency situations.
- Participated in monthly meetings with Orange County Emergency Managers Organization (focus on state, county and city emergency management including grant updates, terrorism updates, exercise dates, communications updates, and NIMS updates), and participated in OCEDO School Subcommittee meetings (focus on emergency and disaster related topics pertaining to schools).
- Hosted quarterly community partner meetings with first responders and district leadership.
- Developed a district Model Emergency Plan.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Managing emergencies using NIMS/SEMS/ICS was initially a challenge. Although the goal of NIMS was to create a universal language among first responders and educators, the language was new to the school district and the process somewhat technical. SEMS is language developed by the fire and emergency service industry and though the differences between it and NIMS are few, it took more time than originally planned to incorporate those differences into the existing school system. Because the district was highly committed to incorporating NIMS and making the emergency response plans a well-known and understood document at each school site, the incorporation was successful. School staff has learned the language of NIMS and the positions/roles of the ICS in order to effectively communicate with first responders. The result of this has been increased response times in an organized manner. Furthermore, there continue to be several lessons learned in activating the EOC. Each exercise allows for a higher level of preparation and a greater awareness of communication procedures that are needed.

## EVALUATION RESULTS

WSD ERCM major outcomes include full incorporation of NIMS, an increased number of hazards addressed and reflected in school safety plans, preparation for an infectious disease outbreak, increased safety training for district staff, improved response time and quality of response to practice drills (per site, with other agencies and in the EOC), increased critical incident practice, improved capacity for district to school site communication, improved monitoring of school buses, and enhanced partnerships with first responders. The impact of these accomplishments is a vast expansion of emergency preparedness and an increased quality and response time to save lives in the event of a natural or man-made crisis. Furthermore, an unanticipated outcome of the grant work is the shift in priority the district cabinet members and other district leadership have put on emergency readiness.

Below is a partial list of resources acquired with grant funding:

### Required Training Meeting #1:

Two participants for up to three nights and four days in a major U.S. city.	2,670
Funds include \$ 1,100 for transportation, \$1,050 for two nights of lodging	
\$520 per diem (\$65/day = \$260 per participant)costs for two participants.	
\$250 Registration fee for each participant (\$250 x 2 participants = \$500	\$500

### Required Training Meeting #2:

Two participants for up to three nights and four days in a major U.S. city.	
and \$520 per diem (\$65/day = \$260 per participant)costs for two participants.	\$2,670
\$250 Registration fee for each participant (\$250 x 2 participants = \$500 registration	\$500

## EQUIPMENT

*The following items detail the needed equipment for an OA2 radio w/ extender allowing portable UHF radios to talk on the OA2 channel, UHF portable radios to support damaged radios at school sites, radios for EOC operation, support equipment, installation, and programming to match existing equipment. Quotes and needs were provided by a company that specializes in preparing school districts for crises.*

**Radio and Communications Equipment**

Vertex 37-50 MHz 70 Watt VHF Radio (Qty - 1)	\$505
68397 Base Station Power Supply (Qty. - 1)	\$112
VXR-1000 Vertex Mobile Radio Extender UHF (Qty. - 1)	\$458
461815 RFS Low-Band Base Antenna (Qty. - 1)	\$730
LMR600 Times LMR600 Antenna Feed Line (Qty. - 50 @ \$1.60)	\$80.00
EZ-600 Times EZ-600 N Connector (Qty. 2 @ \$23)	\$46
40468 Maxrad UHF Base Antenna (Qty. - 1)	\$74
MISC Antenna Mounts (Qty. 2@ \$75)	\$150
LMR400 Times LMR400 Antenna Feed Line (Qty. 50 @ .80)	\$40
EZ-400-NMH LMR-400 N Male Antenna Connector (Qty. 2 @ \$10)	\$20
VX-900UD Vertex 512 Channel UHF Radio w/ display (Qty. - 5 @ \$516)	\$2,580
FBA-27 AA Battery Case for Vertex VX-600/900 Radio (Qty. 5 @ \$32.50)	\$162.00
VH-225M Dual Speaker Headset for Vertex VX -600/900 Radio (Qty.5 @ \$137)	\$685
VX-210AUD Vertex VX-210 UHF Portable Radio (Qty. 5 @ \$210)	\$1,050
VAC-800B Vertex 1-Hour Charger (Qty. 5 @ \$64)	\$320
MISC Engraving for Portable Radios (Qty. 10 @ \$12)	\$120
Installation, Labor, & Misc Parts	\$450
Sales Tax 7.75%	\$588

**Zonar Global Positioning System (GPS)**

\$17,400

The GPS is \$800 per bus for 15 buses = \$12,000. There is also a \$20 monthly fee for each bus.

\$20 x 15 buses = \$300 per month in GPS fees. \$300 x 18 months = \$5,400.

\$12,000 x \$5,400 = \$17,400

**Helicopter ID Spray for Buses**

\$6,800

This will allow WSD buses to have painted on their roof "WSD" and a 5-digit identification number.

This will cost \$400 per bus and is needed for 17 buses. \$400 x 17 = \$6,800

**SUPPLIES**

**START II First Aid and Trauma Kit** ( 2 kits @ \$120 each for each of the 16 sites) \$3,840

(These kits will be stored in site storage containers and will allow for triage & rapid treatment.)

**Aqua Blox Water Boxes**

\$8,720

This will provide one extra water box per student. Currently, the district has the minimum

amount of water supply, which is 8 ounces per student per day for 3 days.

Each box cost \$1.09. \$1.09 x 8,000 = \$8,720

**CONTRACTUAL**

**Link 2 Life Training** ( \$44/person, 4 people from each site (4 x 17 sites = 68) \$4,400

and 25 employees from WSD Food Services and 7 district administrators (EOC staff).

100 WSD employees to be trained @ \$44 each = \$4,400 skills necessary to save a life

**External Evaluator** \$7,500  
 Completed ERCM evaluations for other school districts. This rate includes fees for the 18-month period, including data collection, program monitoring, recommendations, and submission of all required reports.

**NIMS Training - IS-700** \$2,000  
 This 3 hour course explains the purpose, principles, & key components of NIMS. A consultant will be hired at the flat rate of \$2,000 to provide this introductory NIMS course to district & school personnel. (The Safety Coordinator will provide a basic NIMS training for all staff at each of the 17 sites.)

The *Executive Summary for the 2009-2011 REMS Grant* prepared by the district's external evaluator demonstrates WSD's continued progress in preparing schools and our community in emergency preparedness:

#### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES ACHIEVED**

Westminster School District (WSD) received the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) grant in August 2009 and applied for a No-Cost Extension through July 2011. This is the district's second REMS grant. All grant activities have been made possible through REMS funding and have assisted WSD to move toward sustainability by enhancing emergency plans, training staff and implementing staff knowledge through drills. The list below highlights accomplishments toward this task and toward meeting (and at times exceeding) 100% of the project objectives and performance measures of the grant.

- Hired a full time Safety Secretary in August 2009 and will sustain the position beyond the grant period.
- Trained five targeted key personnel in 13 NIMS courses (GPRA indicator met).
- Trained 638 WSD staff members, certificated and classified, in eight function specific trainings.
- Developed a manual for the eight function specific trainings to be used as a Train-the-Trainer resource.
- Trained PTA Presidents in emergency procedures and parent reunification.
- Enhanced the WSD Model Emergency Plan including a published Emergency Response Reference Guide (response procedures for 18 hazards) and 685 flip charts (one for each WSD classroom).
- Enhanced School Safety Plans for drill protocol, hazard assessment and NIMS compliance.
- Developed a Food Defense Plan and trained appropriate staff.
- Developed an Infectious Disease Business Continuity Plan and trained appropriate staff.
- Developed a Parent Reunification Plan and trained appropriate staff.
- Enhanced emergency procedures for the evacuation of special needs students.
- Completed three Tabletops: Pandemic Flu, Evacuation of Special Needs Students, and Parent Reunification.
- Completed a large scale multi-agency earthquake drill.
- Trained district EOC staff and conducted two EOC drills.

- Conducted two District Office drills (Lockdown and Severe Weather).
- Created a WSD Mobile EOC Van and conducted a training drill using the van.
- Participated in quarterly meetings with Orange County Emergency Managers Organization (focus on state, county and city emergency management including grant updates, terrorism updates, exercise dates, communications updates, and NIMS updates), and participated in OCEMO School Subcommittee meetings (focus on emergency and disaster related topics pertaining to schools).
- Hosted community partner meetings with first responders.

### **LESSONS LEARNED**

WSD's REMS grant and emergency management mitigation, data gathering, staff training, drills and staff input have provided invaluable lessons learned from small to big. Major lessons learned are detailed below.

- WSD established the understanding that consistency in emergency procedures throughout the district was imperative. Although sites must tailor efforts to specific school scenarios, the language and general protocol in handling an emergency needs to be consistent and practiced often.
- A large part of the success of the grant was providing district key players the training and drill experience that allowed them to internalize district emergency procedures and initiate on their own the necessary improvements.
- The grant funding was a necessary catalyst to improving emergency management. Funds provided a full-time staff member dedicated to school safety and emergency preparedness.
- Working toward meeting the goals of the grant made developing partnerships with emergency responders a high district priority. The in-kind consultation partners have and will continue to provide the district is key to quality sustainability of emergency practice drills.

### **EVALUATION RESULTS**

WSD staff has worked diligently to meet the project objectives and performance measures of the grant. One hundred percent of the nineteen performance measures were met. The GPRA goal of an average of 2.8 NIMS courses completed by key personnel was exceeded with the average course count at 3.4 by the end of the grant period. On evaluation surveys, staff has indicated significant percentages of increased knowledge following trainings and has also indicated a high value in practicing drills frequently. One of the most significant changes in the two year grant period is the priority all district administrators have placed on emergency preparedness. The REMS grant was utilized to build capacity within the district so that quality emergency management could continue beyond the grant period. Although the magnitude of this change cannot be fully captured quantitatively, it is evidenced by the sustaining of the Safety Secretary and the plans for future drills with emergency responders. Furthermore, the following list of resources developed through the REMS grant will provide key materials for future emergency management efforts:

- Complete Model Emergency Plan



- Enhanced School Safety Plan Template
- Food Defense Plan
- Infectious Disease Business Continuity Plan
- Parent Reunification Plan
- Inclusion of Special Needs Student Plan
- Function Specific Training Manual
- Emergency Response Reference Guide
- 685 Flip Charts (mini reference guides for each WSD classroom)
- EOC Notebook with position responsibilities and checklists
- Emergency Drill Booklet with scenarios, position responsibilities, checklists and evaluation forms
- Mobile EOC Van

### **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.**

While this finding may be true for many districts, the Westminster School District updated and created additional detailed responses for numerous hazards including the ones listed below:

1. Plane crash on campus
2. Child Abuse and Neglect
3. Bus Incident
4. Hostage Situation
5. Weapons at School/Armed Student/School Shooting
6. Bullying and Cyberbullying
7. Suicide
8. Intruder/Trespassing/Animal Disturbance
9. Earthquake/Drop, Cover and Hold On
10. Accidents/Medical Emergencies
11. Fire/Explosion
12. Bomb Threat
13. Severe Weather
14. Shelter in Place
15. Evacuation
16. Utilities Failures
17. Chemical Spill and/or Explosions
18. Lock-Down
19. Assessment Level of Student Threat Checklist
20. School Office Safety Protocols

The district contracted with an expert company to design a bright RED “Emergency Response Reference Guide” for each ICS Commander, every department and classroom in the district, all busses and district vehicles, and afterschool program partners. All classroom “Emergency

Response Reference Guides” were placed on clipboards with a copy of the school ICS chart, the school emergency map, the job specific description of staff responsibilities, and were mounted by the classroom door.

**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 Westminster School District integrated the State and Federal regulations for disaster and emergency preparedness according to CA Education Codes, Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and National Incident Management System (NIMS). WSD utilized the REMS Technical Assistance website and attended all conferences which provided substantial training, resources and expert guidance in the regulations. WSD will continue to monitor and sustain the structures and practices that have been fully implemented

**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.**

The Westminster School District agrees that this issue is challenging; however, all sites were equipped with carts with large wheels that move through the grass and are designed to hold all the medications of our students. Thus, when students are evacuated outside, each will have their necessary medication and equipment. Nurses, health aides and specialized staff have been trained in evacuation procedures. The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) team are grappling with the need for medications in the classroom for an extended lockdown (beyond a day).

**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.**

Westminster School District has a long history of collaborating with numerous emergency responders within four separate communities that comprise our district’s demographics. Drills are planned to include representation from each community including their police, fire, and CERT members. WSD continues to expand their partnerships and build relationships to ensure the highest level of support and response in the event of any disaster or emergency.

**Finding 7:**

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

Westminster School District prepares its communication in English, Spanish and Vietnamese. Our emergency plans will be added to our website, which has the capacity to translate all information into the seeker's primary language. Additionally, our school sites translate information that is sent home in Spanish and Vietnamese as required by our local board policies.

**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.**

Westminster School District nurtures relationships and partnership on a regular basis with resources within four communities. We participate in the county OCEMA meetings and attend collaborative meetings with American Red Cross, CERT, and other community meetings. WSD exchanges information and resources with other school districts as requested or when attending mutual meetings. WSD has effectively utilized the grant funding received to create, cross - train, and develop an active EOC team to ensure sustainability.

**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 Safe School Plan which is revised and submitted by March 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. Our schools also submit an annual Action Plan in which they define three or more explicit goals related to school climate, bullying prevention, and emergency preparedness. Each goal includes several objectives to be completed within the school year.

**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 Westminster 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.**

The Westminster School District is currently reviewing its plans with respect to the special medical and prescription medication needs of all students and is monitoring the implementation of its response plans to meet these needs, in the event of an emergency.

**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.**

Westminster School District has surveyed campuses with respect to the needs of non or limited English speaking parents and guardians and has developed a summary of critical emergency planning information in their native language. We are in the process of completing our model emergency plan and will post it on the district and school websites, as well as, in the school offices in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

RDW:las