



WESTMINSTER  
SCHOOL  
DISTRICT

**Our Vision:**

*"High academic achievement for all  
Westminster School District students"*

July 23, 2007

Honorable Nancy Wieben Stock  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
700 Civic Center Drive  
Santa Ana, California, 92701

**Subject: Orange County Grand Jury Request for Information Related to  
Emergency Preparedness and Comprehensive School Safety  
Plans**

Dear Judge Stock:

The following information is submitted in response to the Orange County Grand Jury meeting held on May 8, 2007 at the Orange County Court House, regarding the Emergency Preparedness and Comprehensive School Safety Plans Report. This report is due by October 15, 2007 from all Orange County Superintendents.

**Findings**

**F-1** The over-all quality of the Westminster School District and their individual school's emergency preparedness plans are in need of much improvement.

*Response:* The Westminster School District Emergency and Disaster Committee met regularly during the 2005-06 school year to complete a comprehensive district needs assessment. This committee consisted of district administration, department heads, principals, teachers, program coordinators, PTA, and community members.

Immediate actions were implemented to ensure that schools had the equipment and resources needed to respond to emergencies. However, in response to the greater need to meet the state and federal requirement to be SEMS / NIMS / ICS compliant, the committee successfully wrote the federal Emergency Response and Crisis Management (ERCM) grant and were notified October 2006.

A Safety Specialist was hired in November 2006 to ensure that the our phases of the NIMS / ICS are fully implemented. Additionally, the district trained and certified twenty Crisis Intervention Stress

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Management (CISM) team members who are also registered to participate in the Orange County Crisis Response Network.

The WSD overarching emergency preparedness goals are outlined below:

- To enhance our emergency plans such that they reflect the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS), the Incident Command Structure (ICS) and the National Incident Management Structure (NIMS).
- To standardize our emergency plans such that each school and the district office manage emergencies and disasters in like manners.
- To strengthen our written plans to include site specific vulnerability assessments, comprehensive "all hazard" plans.
- To train all classified and certificated staff on the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS), the Incident Command Structure (ICS) and the National Incident Management Structure (NIMS).
- To train all classified and certificated staff on ICS function specific training.
- To standardize drills for all schools as well as a need to include functional and full scale exercises to our existing repertoire.

The WSD Safety Specialist collaborates with District Administration, Site Administration, and Emergency Responders in all four of the jurisdictions (Garden Grove, Westminster, Huntington Beach and Midway City) as well as Orange County responders in developing a comprehensive emergency plans.

The WSD emergency plans include the four components (mitigation/prevention, preparedness, response and recovery) of emergency and disaster planning. We have created hazard specific mitigation/preparedness checklists to ensure that we minimizing the impact any emergency or disaster may have on persons and property.

We have trained over fifty management level certificated and classified staff on the Incident Command Structure and an overwhelming majority of said staff earned a certificate in the National Incident Management System. Certificated and classified staff, from each school site, are scheduled to receive training in the Incident Command Structure (ICS), Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and National Incident Management System (NIMS) on October 24, 2007.

Site Administrators have assigned appropriate staff (including backup staff) to the various ICS positions. We shall coordinate ICS function specific training for staff in the fall of 2007.

We also developed comprehensive school site maps which identify the location of critical stations. We continue to assess our emergency supply needs; and we are actively searching for more resources to address this need.

We have also updated our portable radio communication system such that we are able to communicate with each school site as well as the Operational Area. We purchased first aid kits and a three day supply of food and water for each school site. We also purchased a GPS system for our buses. We shall continue to strengthen our drill procedures; and we shall include both functional and full scale drills.

District administrators met with each principal to identify local hazards and review mitigation checklists; a response plan for each need was written. The template for the comprehensive school safety was revised to integrate student and campus safety, emergency and disaster preparedness, school climate, discipline practices, crisis response, and all other safety concerns into a cohesive document. Progress will be monitored on a quarterly basis.

And finally members of the community collaborative and officers from the Westminster Police Department read and critiqued each plan to ensure best practices. Partners will meet quarterly.

The district received an excellent commendation during its first performance call from the federal ERCM grant monitor for its progress in meeting the grant goals and objectives.

- F-2** California Education Code 32288 requires that each school district or county office of education notify the State Department of Education, by October 15<sup>th</sup> of the year of discovery, of any schools that have not complied with section 32281

*Response:* A District Office administrator is responsible for monitoring this requirement. All Comprehensive Safety Plans will be created in collaboration with district support, site staff, parents and community members and submitted to the district office by October 1<sup>st</sup>. Annual action plans will also be submitted to specifically define the focus for each school year. We are prepared to submit them to the necessary organization as is required by current legislation.

**Recommendations**

**R-1** Individual schools submit a SEMS equivalent plan to Orange County Department of Education for review:

The Orange County Department of Education supports local districts with information, guidance, resources, training, and legislative requirements. They assist districts with compliance concerns. To ensure the preparedness and compliance of all districts, the state may consider including comprehensive school plans and emergency preparedness in the Coordinated Program Monitoring process.

**Required Responses**

**933.05**

- a. We agree with the Grand Jury findings that at the time of the request for information Westminster School District was "below expected" however, the district had acquired human and fiscal resources to address its needs assessment and will continue work toward the full implementation of the four phases of NIMS.
- b. The recommendation has been partially implemented and the goals and updated timeline have been attached.

Sincerely,



Sharon Nordheim, Ed.D.  
Superintendent