



CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH

100 Civic Center Drive
Newport Beach, California 92660
949 644-3004 | 949 644-3039 FAX
newportbeachca.gov

Mayor

Noah Blom

Mayor Pro Tem

Will O'Neill

Council Members

Brad Avery

Robyn Grant

Lauren Kleiman

Joe Stapleton

Erik Kenneth Weigand

August 22, 2023

Honorable Maria Hernandez
Presiding Judge
Superior Court of California, Orange County
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Re: Response to Grand Jury Report, "School Shootings: How Prepared are Orange County Public Schools?"

Dear Honorable Judge Hernandez

In accordance with Penal Code 933.05 (a) & (b), the City of Newport Beach and the Newport Beach Police Department respond as follows in regard to "Findings" F1 and F8 and "Recommendations" R1, R3, R4, and R12 as detailed in the 2022-2023 Orange County Grand Jury report, "School Shootings: How Prepared are Orange County Public Schools?"

FINDINGS

F1 "Law enforcement, first responders, and other stakeholders have demonstrated a strong interest in working cooperatively with Orange County public schools to mitigate the risk of an active shooter incident; establishment of MOUs between law enforcement and school districts would strengthen this cooperation."

RESPONSE:

In the case of the City of Newport Beach, the Newport Beach Police Department and the Newport-Mesa Unified School District, a formal School Resource Officer Program MOU already exists. All involved parties review the agreement on an annual basis. While not specifically included in the agreement referenced above, the Newport Beach Police Department routinely conducts active shooter training for its personnel at both public and private school sites within Newport Beach and the department's School Resource Officers routinely consult with school district personnel regarding active shooter protocols.

F8 “School Resource Officers (SROs) are a valuable asset for school safety, yet many cities/districts do not allocate sufficient funds to hire needed officers.”

RESPONSE:

The City agrees that School Resource Officers are valuable, and currently have sufficient funds allocated for its School Resource Officer program and the need for additional resources is reviewed on a continual basis. The City cannot, however, opine as to whether other cities and/or school districts have allocated sufficient funding for their respective programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1 “Each Orange County school district should arrange for local law enforcement to do an annual safety inspection of each school. The written safety checklist should include an audit of the integrity of site boundaries and a review of safety plans and policies. This annual safety audit should commence with the 2023-24 school year by October 1, 2023, and annually thereafter.”

RESPONSE:

This recommendation has been partially implemented in Newport Beach. The Newport-Mesa Unified School District maintains and renews a Comprehensive Safe School Plan for each school year. The Comprehensive School Safety Plan is reviewed by school staff and the Newport Beach Police Department. During the 2022-2023 school year, in anticipation for the following school year, the Newport-Mesa Unified School District had the Orange County School Mobile Assessment and Response Team (SMART) conduct safety inspections at its schools. The safety inspections included a written safety checklist. The Newport Beach Police Department does not currently do site safety inspections for the schools within its jurisdiction, however the department plans to consult with OC SMART to develop its own school site assessment and written safety checklist. The Newport Beach Police Department intends to have its school site assessment checklist and training completed by December 31, 2023.

R3 “Each Orange County school district, in conjunction with law enforcement, should develop and implement tabletop exercises to be conducted in district schools by December 31, 2023, and annually thereafter.”

RESPONSE:

This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but it will be implemented in the future. The Newport Beach Police Department, in conjunction with the Newport-Mesa Unified School District, will develop and conduct a tabletop exercise at district school prior to December 31, 2023.

R4 "Each Orange County school district should work with local law enforcement to plan and conduct a district-wide active shooter drill by July 1, 2024, and at least every other year thereafter."

RESPONSE:

This recommendation has been partially implemented. The Newport-Mesa Unified School District conducts lockdown drills at all of its schools. The drills do not currently include law enforcement personnel. The Newport Beach Police Department, in conjunction with the Newport-Mesa Unified School District, will coordinate to plan and conduct a district-wide active shooter drill by July 1, 2024.

R12 "Each Orange County school district should assess the need for SROs or additional SROs, reaching out to appropriate community partners to facilitate funding by July 1, 2024."

RESPONSE:

"R12" has been implemented. In 2018, the Newport Beach Police Department added a third SRO position. The Newport Beach Police Department now has three officers assigned as School Resource Officers. One SRO is assigned to Corona del Mar High School and Middle School. One SRO is assigned to Newport Harbor High School. The third SRO is assigned to Ensign Middle School and covers the elementary schools in the City as needed. The need for additional resources is reviewed on a continuous basis.

Should you or any members of the Grand Jury have questions about our response, please contact Police Chief Joe Cartwright at jcartwright@nbpd.org or 949-644-3701.

Sincerely,



Noah Blom
Mayor