



# IRVINE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

5050 Barranca Parkway, Irvine, California 92604-4652 • 949/936-5000 • FAX 949/936-5259 • www.iusd.org

August 23, 2023

The Honorable Maria Hernandez  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
700 Civic Center Drive West  
Santa Ana, CA 92701

RE: 2022-2023 Orange County Grand Jury Report  
*School Shootings: How Prepared are Orange County Public Schools?*  
Response of Irvine Unified School District

To the Honorable Maria Hernandez:

In accordance with California Penal Code section 933.05, the Orange County Grand Jury has requested that Irvine Unified School District respond to findings and recommendations in the 2022-2023 Orange County Grand Jury report entitled: "*School Shootings: How Prepared are Orange County Public Schools?*"

## Findings:

**Finding 1: 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 to F1:** The Irvine Unified School District disagrees partially with this finding. The Irvine Unified School District cannot comment on the professional working relationship that other Orange County public schools may have with their law enforcement/fire partners, or with other stakeholder groups.

In the Irvine Unified School District, there is a strong collaborative working relationship with the Irvine Police Department at all levels of the organization to address violent intruder procedures and trainings on campus. Both the Irvine Unified School District and the Irvine Police Department have current MOUs in place so the police department can access the District's camera systems and student directory information.

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**Finding 2: All Orange County public schools studied by the Grand Jury stated that they conducted or have scheduled drills within the current school year on emergency procedures addressing intruders on campus, but not all have done so specifically regarding armed assailants.**

**Response to F2:** The Irvine Unified School District disagrees partially with this finding. The Irvine Unified School District cannot comment on any emergency drills that other Orange County public schools may have scheduled during the current school year or to the scope/depth of any such drills.

In the Irvine Unified School District, in the wake of the Uvalde, Texas school shooting, the Irvine Police Department recommitted their training resources to every school campus and facility in the District. At the start of the 2022-23 school year, all District schools received violent intruder training during the first half of the school year. Violent intruder trainings will continue into future school years.

**Finding 3: While all districts prioritize the safety of students and staff, the attention and resources devoted to active shooter preparedness and response vary from district to district.**

**Response to F3:** The Irvine Unified School District disagrees partially with this finding. The Irvine Unified School District cannot comment on the prioritization of student and staff safety at other Orange County public schools and therefore is unable to determine how active shooter preparedness and response vary from district to district.

In the Irvine Unified School District, student safety is one of the top priorities. The District allocates the necessary time and internal/external resources to prepare for, respond to, and recover from a violent intruder event.

**Finding 4: Safety and security plans for on-campus before and after-school programs are not adequately addressed by school districts.**

**Response to F4:** The Irvine Unified School District disagrees partially with this finding. The Irvine Unified School District does not have access to safety and security plans at other Orange County public schools and therefore is unable to establish if their plans adequately address before and after school programs.

In the Irvine Unified School District, the annual comprehensive school safety plan has a specific section titled *After-School/Extra Curriculum Emergency Protocol* (Section 1; Part 12) for school administrators or their designee to complete.

**Finding 5: While many Orange County public schools have installed fences, cameras, and other methods to address the issue of active shooters on a campus, there are still opportunities for improvement.**

**Response to F5:** The Irvine Unified School District disagrees partially with this finding. The Irvine Unified School District does not have direct knowledge of other Orange County public schools' safety and security systems and therefore are unable to establish if their plans adequately address violent intruders on campus. Nevertheless, the Irvine Unified School District agrees that there are still opportunities for improvement regarding planning for, responding to, and recovering from a violent intruder incident.

**Finding 6: Not all schools utilize a system for monitoring campus visitors.**

**Response to F6:** The Irvine Unified School District disagrees partially with this finding. If the question is focused on "all schools" in Orange County, the Irvine Unified School District cannot comment to security/safety protocols at other Orange County public schools for monitoring campus visitors.



In the Irvine Unified School District, the Raptor Technology - Visitor Management System is used at all schools, as one tool, to monitor campus visitors.

**Finding 7: While there is an increased awareness of the benefits of mental health counseling, not all school districts have implemented these programs in all schools.**

**Response to F7:** The Irvine Unified School District disagrees partially with this finding. The Irvine Unified School District cannot comment on mental health counseling and other related mental health programs that may or may not be occurring at other Orange County public schools.

In the Irvine Unified School District, there are a variety of mental health counseling supports available to students. Tier 1 social/emotional learning (SEL) programs, including “Second Step,” are implemented in elementary school classrooms. Additionally, most elementary sites utilize data from the “Panorama” screener to determine where additional interventions are needed. All elementary sites will be utilizing Panorama for the 2023-24 school-year. Many of the secondary sites have begun implementing SEL activities, as well as the Panorama screener. Our district goal is to support all sites in using Panorama data to inform SEL at all tiers.

School sites also have access to Behavior Interventionists who are available to observe, consult, and coach staff on supporting students who exhibit Tier 3 behavioral challenges.

The District employs licensed Mental Health Therapists (MHS), Elementary Resource Counselors (ERC), and Educationally Related Mental Health Services (ERMHS) counselors for all tiers of support. Each elementary school is staffed with a full-time ERC. The larger elementary sites have additional ERC allocations. Additionally, some sites also have a part-time Guidance Assistant. Each middle school is assigned a full-time MHS and each high school is assigned two fulltime MHS, as well as Tier 2 Project Success support. ERMHS allocation at each site is determined by IEP-goals. These professionals provide short-term evidence-based mental health services to students in small group or individual settings. Additionally, each secondary student is assigned to a school counselor who, in addition to providing academic support, also provides socio-emotional counseling.

Any suicide screener also includes a preliminary screener for a possible threat. Depending on the student response, or supporting data, a threat assessment may also be required. In the event a threat assessment is required, a CSTAG-trained assessor would intervene as appropriate. Most of our sites have at least one person trained on the CSTAG model and the District will offer additional trainings for the 2023-24 school year, with the goal of having at least two people trained at each site. Any site that needs additional support can also contact Student Services and one of the trainers provides consultation.

The District has their own counseling center staffed by licensed clinicians to provide support to Irvine families. The Family Resource Center (FRC) offers short-term mental health services, case management, assists with resource linkage, and provides psycho-educational workshops on a variety on mental-health related topics. IUSD also contracts with “Care Solace,” which is a Mental Health concierge service, who offers support to families and students requiring longer-term care, to appropriate mental health providers outside of the school district. Starting with the 2023-24 school-year, all Irvine school families will also have access to free, personalized teletherapy through Hazel Health.

**Finding 8: School Resources Officers (SROs) are a valuable asset for school safety, yet many cities/districts do not allocate sufficient funds to hire needed officers.**

**Response to F8:** The Irvine Unified School District disagrees partially with this finding. The Irvine Unified School District cannot comment on budget discussions and allocation of resources at other Orange County cities and school districts to fund SROs at their public-school campuses.

In the Irvine Unified School District, there are eight (8) full-time Irvine police officers assigned to the middle and high schools; four (4) full-time Irvine police officers assigned to the DARE program at the elementary schools; and one (1) Irvine police sergeant assigned to the Youth Services Unit.

**Finding 9: Not all classrooms have windows shades, tinted glass, or film to obstruct the interior view from the outside.**

**Response to F9:** The Irvine Unified School District disagrees partially with this finding. If the question is focused on “all classrooms” in Orange County, the Irvine Unified School District cannot comment to classroom window shades, tinted glass, or security film at other Orange County public schools.

In the Irvine Unified School District, the overwhelming majority of exterior windows in a classroom have tint and/or window coverings that obstruct the interior view from the outside.

**Finding 10: The camera surveillance systems utilized on many campuses require repairs, replacement, or additions.**

**Response to F10:** The Irvine Unified School District disagrees partially with this finding. If the question is focused on “camera surveillance systems” in Orange County public schools, the Irvine Unified School District cannot comment as to the current state of repair, replacement, or additions of these systems.

In the Irvine Unified School District, there were 1,784 camera views throughout all District schools and facilities. In November 2022, the District implemented a Phase 3 installation of 542 additional cameras, increasing this number to 2,326 camera views. As a sustainable security and safety program, the District allocates annually a budget to repair and replace broken and outdated cameras and other equipment necessary to operate the surveillance system.

**Finding 11: Many schools do not have perimeter fencing completely enclosing their campus.**

**Response to F11:** The Irvine Unified School District disagrees partially with this finding. If the question is focused on “schools” in Orange County public schools, the Irvine Unified School District cannot comment as to perimeter fencing that may or may not completely enclose their school campuses.

In the Irvine Unified School District, some schools do have perimeter fencing around certain areas of concern but perimeter fencing in general do not enclose entire school campuses.

**Finding 12: A number of school districts have school site administrative offices that remain unlocked on a daily basis.**

**Response to F12:** The Irvine Unified School District disagrees partially with this finding. The Irvine Unified School District cannot comment as to the site operations of every school district in Orange County and whether school site administrative offices remain unlocked or remain locked on daily basis.



In the Irvine Unified School District, school site administrative offices are monitored by camera systems and are unlocked during the normal school hours. In the event of an emergency, each school site administrative office has the ability to lock the front door(s) by pushing an emergency door lock button located at the front office desks.

**Recommendations:**

**Recommendation 1: 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. (F1, F10, F11)**

**Response to R1:** The recommendation requires further analysis.

Collaboration between the Irvine Unified School District and the Irvine Police Department will need to occur during the 2023-24 school year to further define what a “safety inspection” actually entails at each school campus and whether certain aspects of an inspection is already being performed as part of the annual Comprehensive School Safety Planning process. In regards to law enforcement reviewing safety plans and policies, the Irvine Police Department annually reviews all submitted school safety plans as part of the overall evaluation process.

**Recommendation 2: All Orange County school districts should establish a threat identification and assessment system for all school sites to monitor social media, screen for messages of concern, and manage information received in coordination with local law enforcement using MOUs, if necessary, by July 1, 2024. (F1, F3)**

**Response to R2:** The recommendation has been implemented.

In November 2019, the Irvine Unified School District entered into a multi-year agreement with the Sandy Hook Promise Foundation to utilize, at no cost, their *Say Something Anonymous Reporting System* for the community to report life-safety and non-life safety tips. In collaboration with the Irvine Police Department, life-safety tips are immediately reported simultaneously to school administrators, district officials, and school resource officers. If the life-safety tip involves threats of violence or other concerning behaviors after normal school hours, the Irvine Police Department dispatches police officers to the location of concern to conduct an assessment.

The Irvine Police Department’s Criminal Intelligence Unit monitors daily open source social media platforms for messages of concern and also receives pertinent information from the Orange County Intelligence Assessment Center. Any threats toward Irvine schools are communicated timely to district officials.

**Recommendation 3: 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. (F2)**

**Response to R3:** The recommendation has been implemented.

In March 2017, the Irvine Unified School District developed the *Emergency/Safety Partnership* (E/SPAR). The purpose of E/SPAR was to bring together representatives from each of the District’s schools and facilities on an ongoing basis to discuss “boots on the ground” emergency plans and procedures. During the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years, E/SPAR conducted, in conjunction with the Irvine Police Department, tabletop exercises with this group to plan for, respond to, and recover from violent intruders and mass casualty incidents.

District schools, as part of their emergency planning, have also extended an invitation to the Irvine Police Department over the years to conduct individual violent intruder tabletop exercises at their campus using aerial maps of their school and surrounding community.

**Recommendation 4: 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. (F2)**

**Response to R4:** This recommendation has been implemented.

The Irvine Unified School District has a long standing practice that each school will undergo violent intruder training with members of the Irvine Police Department every two (2) years. Furthermore, the Irvine Unified School District requires each school to conduct a lockdown drill each school year.

**Recommendation 5: All Orange County school districts should develop a casualty care training program for each school in their district, to be in place by the end of the first semester of the 2023-24 school year and provided annually thereafter. (F3)**

**Response to R5:** The recommendation has been partially implemented with further analysis required.

The Irvine Unified School District launched its Stop-the Bleed (STB) Program in August 2018. Each District school has an 8-person STB kit in every school administrative office. Furthermore, each occupied classroom throughout the District has one individual STB kit inside their emergency backpack or carrying case. Staff is trained and retrained annually by the District's nursing staff and/or by a contracted emergency manager.

As part of each school's Incident Command System, there is a group of staff assigned to the medical/triage section. Additional advanced discussion and training is available to this assigned group to ensure these non-medically trained personnel feel comfort in their role treating injured students and staff members.

In regards to the *Tactical Emergency Casualty Care (TECC)* training course outlined in the Orange County Grand Jury Report (page 25), the District will require time to properly examine this training course to determine feasibility and appropriateness to implement the training in a school setting.

**Recommendation 6: Safety and security plans for on-campus before and after-school programs need to be addressed more thoroughly by school districts, by July 1, 2024. (F4)**

**Response to R6:** The recommendation has been partially implemented with further implementation by July 1, 2024.

As previously stated in the Response for Finding #4, the annual comprehensive school safety plan has a specific section titled *After-School/Extra Curriculum Emergency Protocol* (Section 1; Part 12) for school administrators or their designee to complete. The information is somewhat limited to names and contact information for those programs that use school facilities before and after normal hours.

In regards to the Orange County Grand Jury Report (page 13), before and after school programs that have a long-standing relationship with the District do receive violent intruder training conducted by the Irvine Police Department. These trainings may be conducted alongside school staff or may be conducted independently.



**Recommendation 7: Each Orange County school district should obtain and incorporate perimeter camera systems in all district schools by July 1, 2024, or earlier if financially able to do so, and investigate the potential use of cameras that incorporate Artificial Intelligence to enhance threat detection and prevention. (F5, F10)**

**Response to R7:** The recommendation has been implemented.

To date, the Irvine Unified School District has invested approximately \$3.7 million dollars in camera (surveillance) systems. This financial investment over the past 8 years has resulted in 2,326 camera views. The purpose of the District's camera system is to provide general supervision of campus activities. One priority of the camera system is to see and capture views of the perimeter of the schools and those areas that are not actively monitored by school personnel. Live and captured video can be immediately accessed by school district officials, school administrators, campus security aides, campus safety personnel, and the Irvine Police Department.

**Recommendation 8: All Orange County school districts should review entry procedures on all campuses with an eye toward the use of perimeter fencing, the use of single point entry, and the use of a buzzer and camera system for entry into the main/administrative offices. (F5, F12)**

**Response to R8:** The recommendation has been implemented. The Irvine Unified School District, on an annual basis, provides school representatives with information regarding procedures for securing exterior classroom doors in order to route visitors to the main office for a single point of entry. There are general supervision cameras placed inside the main office and cameras outside adjacent to the office for visitors who enter the campuses.

**Recommendation 9: Each Orange County school district should identify and implement a parent and visitor management system for each school site within the school district. This is to include identified access points, badges, or a similar identification procedure to be implemented by July 1, 2024. (F6, F11, F12)**

**Response to R9:** The recommendation has been implemented.

In 2016, the Irvine Unified School District implemented a web-based electronic management system to track campus visitors at all District schools.

**Recommendation 10: Each Orange County school district should implement training for all staff to identify threat-related behaviors and provide a procedure for reporting the behavior by the beginning of the 2024-25 school year. (F7)**

**Response to R10:** The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented by the beginning of the 2024-25 school year. The Irvine Unified School District will explore a variety of options to ensure that all staff are adequately trained on identifying and reporting threat-related behaviors.

**Recommendation 11: All Orange County school districts should develop a plan to implement or enhance mental health counseling for all schools by December 31, 2024. (F7)**

**Response to R11:** The recommendation has been implemented. The Irvine Unified School District offers a variety of social/emotional support and mental health counseling, which was described in detail in the Response to F7.

**Recommendation 12: 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. (F8)**

**Response to R12:** The recommendation has been implemented.

The Irvine Unified School District and the Irvine Police Department meet during the *Public Safety Quarterly* meetings to discuss issues that impact both entities. Discussions include school resource officer's assignments and allocation, as needed. Internally, the Irvine Police Department evaluates and ultimately funds the school resource officer program.

**Recommendation 13: All Orange County school districts should investigate and consider bullet resistant or tinted film covering for school windows by December 31, 2023. (F9)**

**Response to R13:** The recommendation has been implemented.

In response to the 2017-2018 Orange County Grand Jury report (*Safer Schools – What Can We Do*) and Recommendation #2, the Irvine Unified School District conducted an in-depth safety study with the Board of Education on September 5, 2018. Part of that safety study was the examination and discussion of bullet resistant film to be placed over existing classroom windows. As stated previously in the Response for Finding #9, the overwhelming majority of exterior windows in a classroom have tint and/or window coverings that obstruct the interior view from the outside.

Sincerely,



Terry L. Walker  
Superintendent of Schools  
Irvine Unified School District

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