



Santa Ana Unified School District

Jerry Almendarez
Superintendent of Schools

August 30, 2023

The Honorable Maria D. Hernandez
Presiding Judge
Orange County Superior Court
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Re: Santa Ana Unified School District’s Response to the 2022-23 Orange County Grand Jury Report on School Shootings: How Prepared Are Orange County Public Schools?

Dear Honorable Judge Hernandez:

In response to the Grand Jury request, please refer below for the responses to each required finding and recommendation. Although Santa Ana Unified School District officially “disagrees” with all of the findings, please note that our position is based only on the fact that the findings refer to all school districts in Orange County, and that we do not have direct access to the source documentation for these school districts; we have including an explanation in the Response and Explanation column that provides details that related specifically to Santa Ana Unified School District.

| F # | Finding | Agree/ Disagree | Response And Explanation (if Required) |
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| 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. | Disagree. The Respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding (see right for explanation) | SAUSD does not have data for other school districts; as such, we are unable to wholly agree with the finding. As this relates specifically to SAUSD, the District has its own police force, and we already have a strong cooperative relationship with the Santa Ana Police Department. |
| F2 | 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. | Disagree. The Respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding (see right for explanation) | SAUSD does not have data for other school districts; as such, we are unable to wholly agree with the finding. As this relates specifically to SAUSD, the District mandates two lockdown drills per school year. These drills are specifically designed to address an armed intruder on campus. |

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| F # | Finding | Agree/ Disagree | Response And Explanation (if Required) |
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| F3 | 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. | Disagree. The Respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding (see right for explanation). | SAUSD does not have data for other school districts; as such, we are unable to wholly agree with the finding. As this relates specifically to SAUSD, the District has made significant investments in resources related to being prepared for an active shooter. These investments include infrastructure improvements related to single point of entry, as well as ongoing training and tabletop exercises. |
| F4 | Safety and security plans for on-campus before and after-school programs are not adequately addressed by school districts. | Disagree. The Respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding (see right for explanation). | SAUSD does not have data for other school districts; as such, we are unable to wholly agree with the finding. As this relates specifically to SAUSD, all of our District's safety plans address our after-school programs. |
| F5 | 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. | Disagree. The Respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding (see right for explanation). | SAUSD does not have data for other school districts; as such, we are unable to wholly agree with the finding. As this relates specifically to SAUSD, the District has already installed fences and cameras; and is continually evaluating physical security measures, as well as other measures, such as training, to address the issue. |
| F6 | Not all schools utilize a system for monitoring campus visitors. | Disagree. The Respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding (see right for explanation). | SAUSD does not have data for other school districts; as such, we are unable to wholly agree with the finding. As this relates specifically to SAUSD, the District utilizes the Raptor Visitor Management System. |
| F7 | While there is an increased awareness of the benefits of mental health counseling, not all school districts have implemented these programs in all schools. | Disagree. The Respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding (see right for explanation). | SAUSD does not have data for other school districts; as such, we are unable to wholly agree with the finding. As this relates specifically to SAUSD, the District employs school-based mental health providers and also contracts with external providers of mental health services. Referrals for mental health services are provided through Coordination of Services Team (COST) at the school sites to identify students and to initiate services, |

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| | | | including screening and assessment with a mental health provider. |
| 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. | Disagree. The Respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding (see right for explanation). | SAUSD does not have data for other school districts; as such, we are unable to wholly agree with the finding. As this relates specifically to SAUSD, the District maintains a POST accredited police department and employs sworn law enforcement personnel, including SROs. |
| F9 | Not all classrooms have window shades, tinted glass, or film to obstruct the interior view from the outside. | Disagree. The Respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding (see right for explanation). | SAUSD does not have data for other school districts; as such, we are unable to wholly agree with the finding. As this relates specifically to SAUSD, the District continues to implement the use of window coverings in order to obstruct the interior view from the outside. |
| F10 | The camera surveillance systems utilized on many campuses require repairs, replacement, or additions. | Disagree. The Respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding (see right for explanation). | SAUSD does not have data for other school districts; as such, we are unable to wholly agree with the finding. As this relates specifically to SAUSD, we acknowledge that there are significant costs associated with repairs, replacements, and additions. |
| F11 | Many schools do not have perimeter fencing completely enclosing their campus. | Disagree. The Respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding (see right for explanation). | SAUSD does not have data for other school districts; as such, we are unable to wholly agree with the finding. As this relates specifically to SAUSD, the District continues to enhance perimeter fencing and points of entry in order to enhance safety. |
| F12 | A number of school districts have school site administrative offices that remain unlocked on a daily basis. | Disagree. The Respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding (see right for explanation). | SAUSD does not have data for other school districts; as such, we are unable to wholly agree with the finding. As this relates specifically to SAUSD, the District continues to evaluate the feasibility of locking administrative office doors; and we maintain locked doors at sites in which other protective measures are not feasible. |

Please see below for the responses to each required Recommendation as requested in the Orange County Grand Jury report and attached cover letter dated June 14, 2023.

| R # | Recommendation | Implementation | Response And Explanation (if Required) |
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| 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. | Recommendation has been implemented | The SAUSD Police Department provides this service to all SAUSD school sites. |
| R2 | 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. | Recommendation has been implemented | SAUSD utilizes a threat monitoring system called Gaggle. The system is monitored, and all level II threats are immediately forwarded to the SAUSD PD Detective Bureau for follow up. |
| 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. | Recommendation has been implemented | The District's Risk Management Department, in conjunction with the SAUSD Police Department, is conducting quarterly tabletop exercises. |
| R4 | Each Orange County school district should work with local law enforcement to | Recommendation has been implemented | The SAUSD Police Department conducts an annual multi-agency Active Shooter Response Exercise with multiple local |

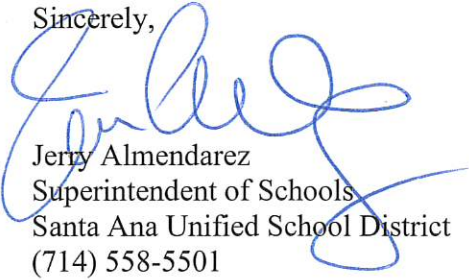
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| | plan and conduct a district-wide active shooter drill by July 1, 2024, and at least every other year thereafter. | | agencies, the OC Sheriff's Dept. and OC Fire Authority, as well as regional law enforcement experts. This exercise has taken place annually since 2017. |
| R5 | 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. | Recommendation has been implemented | SAUSD is conducting quarterly tabletop casualty care trainings. |
| R6 | 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. | Recommendation has been implemented | All SAUSD's Safety Plans address our After School Program. |
| R7 | 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. | Recommendation has been implemented | SAUSD has more than 900 physical camera with more than 1500 views installed at our 53 school sites. |
| R8 | 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. | Recommendation has been implemented | SAUSD has completed its review of entry procedures, and all schools have perimeter fencing. The District is transitioning to single point of entry protocol for all schools, and will complete this transition no later than May of 2024. |

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| R9 | 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. | Recommendation has been implemented | SAUSD utilizes the RAPTOR Visitor Management System to screen, document, and track all visitors. |
| R10 | 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. | Recommendation has been implemented | SAUSD currently has a Threat Assessment Policy and Procedure in place to address threat-related behaviors. During the 2023-2024 school year, SAUSD will be training all school administrators, counselors, psychologist, mental health providers in Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines (CSTAG) and implementing the use of CSTAG threat assessment and recommended protocol. SAUSD utilized the CSTAG threat Assessment Model. Training has been provided to 50% of all District Police Department Officers with additional training scheduled in September and October of 2023 for Police Officers, Principals, Assistant Principals, Psychologists, Social Workers, Counselors, Nurses and Risk Management. Additionally, by the end of the 2023-2024 school year, the district will train several dozen staff in the use of CSTAG as a Threat Assessment tool (Train the Trainers). |
| R11 | All Orange County school districts should develop a plan to implement or enhance mental health counseling for all schools by December 31, 2024. | Recommendation has been implemented | SAUSD has developed a school based mental health plan that includes the Multi-Tiered System of Supports Model (MTSS), policies and procedures for mental health services, budgeting and hiring of school-based mental health providers, staff training, and coordination of services with community partners. |
| R12 | Each Orange County school district should assess the need for SROs or additional SROs, reaching out to | Recommendation has been implemented | SAUSD has its own School Police Department, and it employs School Resource Officers. |

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| | appropriate community partners to facilitate funding by July 1, 2024. | | |
| R13 | All Orange County school districts should investigate and consider bullet resistant or tinted film covering for school windows by December 31, 2023. | Recommendation will not be implemented (see right for explanation) | Although the District continues to analyze the feasibility of tinted windows or bullet resistant film for school windows, the analysis will not be completed by the December 31, 2023 deadline. The District is committed to completing the analysis as quickly as possible. |

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Jerry Almendarez
Superintendent of Schools
Santa Ana Unified School District
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