



CYPRESS SCHOOL DISTRICT

Office of the Superintendent

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September 14, 2023

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

To the Honorable Maria D. Hernandez:

RE: Cypress School District's Response to the 2022-23 Orange County Grand Jury Report entitled *School Shootings: How Prepared are Orange County Public Schools?*

The Cypress School District commends the Grand Jury for its time and attention devoted to studying this important issue and publishing the Grand Jury Report dated June 14, 2023, entitled *School Shootings: How Prepared are Orange County Public Schools?* The district is committed to ensuring the safety and security of its school campuses and recognizes the importance of being prepared and vigilant.

The district has thoroughly reviewed and considered the findings and recommendations in the report. In accordance with California Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the Grand Jury has requested that the district respond to the findings and recommendations contained therein. Following is the district's response.

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; the establishment of MOUs between law enforcement and school districts would strengthen this cooperation.

The Cypress School District agrees with this finding.

Finding 2: All Orange County public schools studied by the Grand Jury state 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.

The Cypress School District agrees with this finding.

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

The Cypress School District agrees with this finding.

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Board of Trustees: Candice Kern • Sandra Lee • Brian Nakamura • Lydia Sondhi, Ph.D. • Troy Tanaka
Superintendent: Anne Silavs

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

The Cypress School District partially disagrees with this finding.

The district does not have firsthand information concerning the safety plans of other Orange County school districts and whether or not on-campus before and after-school programs are adequately addressed. Therefore, the district cannot wholly agree or wholly disagree with this finding. The district partially disagrees with this finding because the safety procedures described in its Comprehensive School Safety Plans would also apply to before and after-school programs on its campuses. The district partially agrees with this finding because it does not currently conduct emergency drills during before or after-school programs on its campuses.

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

The Cypress School District agrees with this finding.

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

The Cypress School District partially disagrees with this finding.

The district does not have firsthand information on whether or not all schools in Orange County utilize a system for monitoring campus visitors and, therefore, cannot wholly agree or wholly disagree with this finding. The district partially disagrees with this finding because all of its schools utilize the Raptor system for monitoring campus visitors. The district also has Board Policies and Administrative Regulations in place that describe protocols for managing and monitoring 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.

The Cypress School District partially disagrees with this finding.

The district does not have firsthand information concerning the implementation of mental health counseling in Orange County school districts and, therefore, cannot wholly agree or wholly disagree with this finding. The district partially agrees with this finding because the level of funding and resources available to support mental health varies among school districts, which impacts the degree to which school districts can provide mental health counseling services. The district partially disagrees with this finding because, while it does not have the resources to employ school counselors, it does provide students with mental health counseling, as needed, using its school psychologists and through agreements with outside service providers.

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

The Cypress School District partially disagrees with this finding.

The district does not have firsthand information concerning how cities and school districts allocate funds for SROs and, therefore, cannot wholly agree or wholly disagree with this finding. The district partially agrees with this finding because SROs are a valuable resource for school safety. The district partially disagrees with this finding because most school districts do not typically hire SROs, law enforcement agencies do. School districts do not have control over how law enforcement agencies allocate funds.

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

The Cypress School District partially disagrees with this finding.

The district does not have firsthand information concerning the window tint or window coverings in all Orange County school districts and, therefore, cannot wholly agree or wholly disagree with this finding. The district partially disagrees with this finding because it utilizes window tint or window coverings to obscure the interior view of its classrooms from the outside.

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

The Cypress School District partially disagrees with this finding.

The district does not have firsthand information concerning the camera surveillance systems on all Orange County school campuses and, therefore, cannot wholly agree or wholly disagree with this finding. The district partially agrees with this finding because camera surveillance systems do require maintenance from time to time, and additional cameras would provide an increased safety benefit. However, the district partially disagrees with this finding because it utilizes camera surveillance systems to monitor the perimeter of all its school campuses and regularly maintains them to ensure they are functional.

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

The Cypress School District partially disagrees with this finding.

The district does not have firsthand information concerning the perimeter fencing around all Orange County Schools and, therefore, cannot wholly agree or wholly disagree with this finding. The district partially disagrees with this finding because it has perimeter fencing that fully surrounds its school campuses.

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

The Cypress School District agrees with this finding.

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 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)

This recommendation has been implemented.

The district annually provides its Comprehensive School Safety Plans to local law enforcement agencies for review and is currently in the process of scheduling an annual school safety inspection for each of its campuses. However, completion of the inspection is dependent upon the availability of local law enforcement officers. Therefore, the timeline for completion of the annual inspection may vary from year to year.

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)

This recommendation has been implemented.

The district uses a web filtering system that alerts staff when a student enters inappropriate or threatening search terms while online. Each student is assigned a device and provided with a Google account that enables district staff to identify which student conducted the search. In these instances, school staff is notified and intervenes by conducting a threat assessment of the student involved to determine appropriate action, which includes contacting the parents and, when necessary, local law enforcement. The district does not have the capacity to monitor social media for potential student threats, but local law enforcement agencies do. However, as an elementary school district, the majority of enrolled students are not on social media because they do not meet the minimum age requirement for opening an account without parental permission.

Recommendation 3: Each Orange County school district, in conjunction with local law enforcement, should develop and implement tabletop exercises to be conducted in district schools by December 31, 2023, and annually thereafter. (F2)

This recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented by June 30, 2024.

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)

This recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented by July 1, 2024.

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 trimester of the 2023-24 school year and provided annually thereafter. (F3)

This recommendation has been implemented. Each school has an identified First Aid Team that has been trained to provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation and basic first aid services in the event of an emergency. By June 30, 2024, casualty care will be included in First Aid Team training.

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)

This recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented by July 1, 2024.

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)

This recommendation has been implemented.

The district has perimeter camera surveillance systems at all of its schools. The district has investigated cameras that incorporate Artificial Intelligence (AI) for threat detection and prevention and found them to be expensive. As a result, the district will acquire AI surveillance technology over time as funding permits.

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 a single point of entry, and the use of a buzzer and camera system for entry into the main/administrative offices. (F5, F12)

This recommendation has been implemented.

The district has established school entry procedures at each of its schools that include a perimeter camera surveillance system, perimeter fencing, a single point of campus entry, main office panic buttons, and a visitor monitoring system. However, the main office doors remain open for parents and the community to support a welcoming school environment and stakeholder engagement.

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 similar identification procedures to be implemented by July 1, 2024. (F6, F11, F12)

This recommendation has been implemented.

The district maintains a single point of entry at each of its schools through the main office. All visitors must present identification which is cross-referenced with various databases using the Raptor System. Approved visitors are required to wear a computer-generated badge with their picture, date, and time of entry. Visitors are also required to check out through the main office and surrender their temporary badge.

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)

This recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented by September 30, 2024.

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)

This recommendation has been implemented.

The district provides mental health counseling using its school psychologists and through agreements with Phoenix House of Orange County and Hazel Health. Student mental health supports are included as part of the district's Local Control and Accountability Plan which is updated and approved by the Board of Trustees annually.

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)

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is neither warranted nor reasonable.

The district has six elementary schools that are supported by local law enforcement agencies. The La Palma Police Department has a designated SRO who serves all schools within its jurisdiction. While the Cypress Police Department does not have a designated SRO for elementary schools within its jurisdiction, it has assigned a designated officer for each elementary school to respond to school safety needs. Having a designated officer for each school supports the development of productive and effective relationships and ensures continuity in providing school support.


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)

This recommendation has been implemented.

The district has either window shades or tinted windows that obstruct the interior view of its classrooms. Furthermore, the district is investigating bullet-resistant window coverings for school offices. The district will acquire and install bullet-resistant window coverings for school offices over time as funding permits.

Please accept the information provided herein as the district's responses to the Orange County Grand Jury's Factual Findings and Recommendation in its report entitled *School Shootings: How Prepared are Orange County Public Schools?* We appreciate the time and attention that the Grand Jury devoted to this important issue.

Sincerely,



Anne Silavs
Superintendent