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Quality education and opportunity for all students to succeed

Aug. 12, 2019

RECEIVED
AUG 15 2019
orig to L. Nicks

The Honorable Peter C. Deddeh
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
P.O. Box 122724
San Diego, California 92112

Re: Response to the Grand Jury Report: "School Safety in San Diego County"

Honorable Judge Deddeh:

In accordance with the requirements of Penal Code of California, Section 933(c), the San Ysidro School District has reviewed the Grand Jury's findings and recommendations and prepared the enclosed responses.

If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Dr. Gina Potter
Superintendent of Schools
San Ysidro School District

Enclosure

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Finding 01: Overall, the San Diego County schools studied are prepared to handle many kinds of emergencies, including active shooter situations, due largely to mandates from the State.

- a. *The San Ysidro School District agrees with Findings 01. The safety and security of schools is our top priority. All schools within the San Ysidro School District are well prepared to protect and support students in the event of an emergency. This state of readiness is the product of sustained effort and ongoing partnerships with community stakeholders, including law enforcement, fire, district attorney’s office, parent groups, Sandy Hook Promise, etc.*

Finding 02: Overall, law enforcement, first responders, parents and other stakeholders have shown interest to work cooperatively with San Diego County schools studied in the prevention of possible active shooter incident.

- a. *The San Ysidro School District agrees with Findings 02. San Ysidro School District schools benefit from outstanding partnerships with law enforcement, fire, district attorney’s office, parent groups and Sandy Hook Promise.*

The San Ysidro School District has established a District Safety Task Force Committee comprised of the San Diego Police Department, the San Diego County District Attorney’s Office, City of San Diego Councilmember Vivian Moreno’s Office, District Administration and School Site Principals.

Finding 03: At the site level, there appears to be some lack of interactive collaboration with community stakeholders on the actual development of the plans.

- a. *The San Ysidro School District agrees with Finding 03 as a general characterization for San Diego County schools. Developing meaningful stakeholder engagement in all aspects of our organization is a priority for San Ysidro School District, which is why as of 2018, all San Ysidro School District school sites engage stakeholders to include law enforcement, fire, district attorney’s office, parent groups and city council members in the process of annually reviewing and revising their Comprehensive School Safety Plans. The process is interactive and authentic.*

Finding 04: The Grand Jury found that some of the schools reviewed had conducted a vulnerability study of their premises.

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- a. *The San Ysidro School District agrees with Finding 04. Vulnerability assessments have been conducted for all San Ysidro School District schools in the past and as of 2019 all schools will have site assessment completed using the “Site Assessment” app.*

Finding 05: Valuable learning from the recent Florida and Texas shootings is not fully reflected yet in the existing CSSPs.

- a. *The San Ysidro School District agrees with Finding 05. It can take many months of study in the aftermath of an active shooter event before official findings and recommendations are published. The Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission’s initial report was published on Jan. 2, 2019, and no official report has been released on the attack on Santa Fe High School in Texas. The San Ysidro School District is committed to developing high quality emergency operations plans for active shooter events and works closely with law enforcement, the fire department and the San Diego County Office of Education and other stakeholder groups to update these plans as best practices emerge.*

Finding 06: Overall, school districts in San Diego County indicated a more focused approach to active shooter response through their efforts to improve communication, add site safety precautions and adopt guidelines for Options-Based Responses in this year’s or next year’s Comprehensive School Safety Plans/Emergency Operations Plans.

- a. *The San Ysidro School District agrees with Finding 06. The San Ysidro School District has made significant investments to prevent, respond to, and recover from an active shooter event.*
 - i. *The majority of the District’s administrative team have completed the San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE)’s “Options-Based Response” Training of Trainers course.*
 - ii. *All schools participate in lockdown drills yearly.*
 - iii. *We have been in contact with Sandy Hook Promise (SHP) on their “Know the Signs prevention programs” regarding a future partnership with the District.*
 - iv. *With the assistance of SDCOE and SHP, we plan to train Student Threat Assessment Teams for each of our sites.*

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- v. *District and site Mental Health Crisis Intervention Teams have been trained by SDCOE staff using the National Association of School Psychologists’ PREPaRE model.*

Finding 07: All San Diego County Schools in the Grand Jury study claimed to have conducted or have scheduled drills within the current school year on emergency procedures directed towards intruders on campus, but not specifically armed assailants.

- a. *The San Ysidro School District agrees with Finding 07. All San Ysidro School District schools conducted lockdown drills during the 2018-2019 school year.*

Finding 08: Drills (conducted or planned) center mainly on the presentation of procedures but are progressing toward becoming more realistic and dynamic, which helps create a “mental model” for preconditioning staff and students to act with immediacy.

- a. *The San Ysidro School District agrees with Finding 08. Staff and students at all San Ysidro School District schools participate in training and drills that are dynamic and intended to create a mental model that pre-conditions them to act with immediacy in response to active shooter events.*
 - i. Dynamic drills that the San Ysidro School district conduct yearly are as follows:
 1. Earthquake
 2. Fire
 3. Lockdown

These drills are conducted at different times of the day to make drills dynamic.

Finding 09: As a note of recognition, Sweetwater Union High School District has gone above and beyond state requirements for safety training by demonstrating excellent and thorough levels of preparation.

- a. *The San Ysidro School District agrees with Finding 09. The San Ysidro School District joins the Grand Jury in its praise of the SUHSD.*

Finding 10: Funding for active shooter response and preparedness is given high priority for some districts.

- a. *The San Ysidro School District agrees with Finding 10. Providing funds for active shooter response and preparedness is a high priority for the San Ysidro School*

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District. Threat assessment team training, single point of entry at campuses and active shooter/armed assailant training and drills.

At a time of rising pension and special education costs, as well as declining enrollment putting pressure on school district budgets, additional state funding specifically for safety improvements would help the San Ysidro School District finance additional school safety.

Finding 11: Before and after school programs need to be better addressed in safety plans.

- a. *The San Ysidro School District agrees with Finding 11. The planning cycle we use to create, and revise school safety plans has continuous improvement as its goal.*

Finding 12: Many districts expressed a need to train all adults on campus in safety procedures.

- a. *The San Ysidro School District agrees with Finding 12. The San Ysidro School District agrees that all adults who work on a school campus should be trained in campus safety procedures. The district and all our school sites have plans in place to ensure all regular and temporary employees, and contracted service providers, are trained in school safety procedures within 90 days as of 09/01/2019 beginning work on a school campus.*

The 2018/19 Grand Jury recommends that by March 1, 2020 San Ysidro School District:

19-01: Increase the priority of funding in school budgets for training, equipment and infrastructure improvements to handle active shooter crisis as a matter of security for staff and student safety.

Recommendation 19-01 requires further analysis. The Governing Board of the San Ysidro School District will consider staff recommendations to address the district’s safety needs and funding on or before 11/21/19. In preparation, district staff will study school site safety needs, conduct site safety assessments and analyze potential funding sources.

At a time of rising pension and special education costs, as well as declining enrollment putting pressure on school district budgets, additional state funding specifically for

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safety improvements would help address the Grand Jury’s recommendations regarding enhancing school safety measures.

19-02: Explore alternate or creative sources of funding to supplement the school’s needs to enhance safety measures regarding active shooter situations, including possible grants or community fund-raising efforts.

Recommendation 19-02 has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future. The district is exploring partnerships that can provide additional resources to support school safety initiatives:

- *We are in discussions with Sandy Hook Promise to provide our sites with their “Know the Signs” suite of trainings and services at no cost to the district.*
- *We are also exploring the use of Sandy Hook Promise’s “Say Something” and Crime Stoppers’ “P3Tips” reporting apps to determine which will be the best fit for our district.*
- *Currently the district also actively searches for grant and partnership opportunities to supplement our investment in school safety.*

19-03: Conduct vulnerability studies at all school and use this data to guide the development of the CSSP and EOP.

Recommendation 19-03 has been implemented. The district will conduct vulnerability assessments on all its schools using the SITE ASSESS mobile application from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Safe and Supportive Schools Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance (REMS TA) Center. Site teams will be assisted in this effort by district staff and members of our local police and fire departments. All schools will be assessed by 12/31/2019.

19-04: Provide more safety precautions against active shooters, including threat awareness training/reporting, and site physical improvements.

Recommendation 19-04 has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future.

- *As of 08/12/2019, the district can confirm that all, perimeter fencing for all school sites is no less than a height of 6 feet.*
- *The district is working towards a General Obligation Bond for the 2020 election. The long range master facility plan will address all school safety and security measures.*

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- *By October 1, 2020, all students in grades 4 – 12 will receive Sandy Hook Promise’s “Say Something” training. This training will be conducted annually prior to October 1 in subsequent years.
Additional safety precautions will be evaluated in response to data collected from vulnerability assessments conducted with each of our school sites as a part of the annual revision of their Comprehensive School Safety Plans.*

19-05: Monitor individual school’s planning meetings to develop the CSSP and EOP to ensure collaboration of multi-disciplinary partners (staff, parents, students, first responders, fire department and law enforcement, community agencies) at the *local school level*.

- Recommendation 19-05 has not been implemented. The district will develop a written procedure that establishes the following on or before January 1, 2020:*
- *Roles and responsibilities for district and site administrators*
 - *Specific benchmarks and dates on which progress will be reviewed.*
- Composition of school safety teams and roles of stakeholder groups.*

19-06: Include “Active Shooter” response language in the school’s Comprehensive School Safety Plan and dedicated sections in the Emergency Operations Plans.

Recommendation 19-06 will be implemented. All school site CSSPs will include emergency operations plans specific to Active Shooter prevention, mitigation, response and recovery on or before January 1, 2020.

19-07: Promote the use of tip hotlines and tip apps by students and parents.

Recommendation 19-07 has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future. Not later than March 1, 2020, the district and school sites will actively promote the use of a safety tip like “Say Something”.

19-08: Include substitute teachers and all other adult workers in the training and practice provided to regular staff on active shooter awareness and responses specific to each school.

Recommendation 19-08 has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future. Not later than Aug. 15, 2020, the district will implement a system to train all adults including substitute and contracted service providers who work

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with students on our campuses, in active shooter responses specific to each school site. The training will be provided within 30 days of the start of work.

19-09: Conduct active shooter drills with staff that are dynamic and produce “immediacy” of response consistent with the school’s approved safety plan.

Recommendation 19-09 has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future. The San Ysidro School District is working closely with the San Diego Police Department to plan active shooter drills for all our sites for the 2019-20 school year. The drills will be dynamic and will prepare staff to quickly evaluate the response options (Run, Hide or Fight) and choose the response that is best suited to protect their students. Training will focus on developing heightened situational awareness and a safety mindset. District management and staff participated in San Diego County Office of Education’s “Options-Based Response” Training of Trainers course. Drills for active shooter will be conducted at least as often as other emergency drills. These drills are conducted at different times of the day to make drills dynamic.

19-10: Use age-appropriate training methods in conducting lockdown and active shooter drills with students.

Recommendation 19-10 has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future. The district will form a workgroup to consider age appropriate training methods using the “Best Practice Considerations for Schools in Active Shooter and Other Armed Assailant Drills” which was published jointly by the National Association of School Psychologists and the National Association of School Resource Officers. Workgroup members will include teachers, classified staff, school psychologists, school counselors, school nurses, parent representatives, district and site administrators and law enforcement representatives. The workgroups recommendations will be available for implementation as soon as possible, but not later than Aug. 15, 2020.

19-11: Coordinate detailed emergency plans for school programs held on campus outside of normal school hours, inform all participants and involve the community’s support.

Recommendation 19-11 requires further analysis. While the San Ysidro School District agrees with the need to implement Recommendation 19-11, there are challenges (logistical and financial) which must be considered. In addition to

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creating safety plans for these programs, the district will need frequency and methods of training program staff, if any additional resources are required and the costs that will be required to implement this recommendation. Staff will present recommendations to the district Governing Board no later than January 31, 2020.