



YOLO COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

11/17/2020 09:00 AM

ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING

Meeting ID: 530 668 6700 Password: countymtg

Open Session - 9:00 AM

AGENDA

The Yolo County Office of Education's vision is to be a model of excellence in educational service, innovation, and impact.



Scan the above QR code with your phone to view this meeting agenda on your phone.

BOARD MEMBERS

- Carol Souza Cole, President
- Matt Taylor, Vice President
- Melissa Moreno
- Shelton Yip
- Tico Zendejas

This meeting is being agendized to allow Board members, staff and the public to participate in the meeting via teleconference, pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order N-29-20 (March 17, 2020).

Teleconference options to join Zoom meeting:

OPTION 1: COMPUTER: Using a computer or Mobile Phone:

Click this link (this is the easiest and fastest): <https://ycoe.zoom.us/j/5306686700?pwd=SzMyZG1OenJhdWtnVnBtNnYreHYyZz09>

Join Zoom Meeting Here: <https://zoom.us/join>

...and enter Meeting ID: 530 668 6700 Password (If using Computer or Mobile Phone Zoom App): countymtg

OPTION 2: PHONE: Using a traditional phone or cell phone:

Dial by Phone: +1 669 900 6833 Meeting ID: 530 668 6700

Password: 877269007

1. OPENING PROCEDURES

- 1. Call to Order and Roll Call 4
- 1. Call to Order and Roll Call 5
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance 6
- 3. Approval of Agenda 7
- Motion to approve Agenda.

- 4. Public Comment 8
- Executive Order N-29-20 authorizes local legislative bodies to hold public meetings via teleconference and to make public meetings accessible telephonically or otherwise electronically to all members of the public. Members of the public are encouraged to observe and participate in the Zoom teleconference. For those individuals who wish to make a public*

comment, please do so in the following manner:


If you are joining the meeting via Zoom and wish to make a comment on an item, press the "raise a hand" button or Zoom chat.

You may also make public comment online by google form:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScxyl6GvazAzBA7nUY174MngxFpGGilkd6Jo2AiX5kQjiKuhg/viewform>

Please submit your google form by the Board meeting date. A moderator for the meeting will read your comments for the record.

Comments may not exceed three (3) minutes.

2. INFORMATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEM	9
1. 2020 Yolo County Grand Jury Report 	10
Discussion and possible action to approve YCOE's response to the 2020 Yolo County Grand Jury Report.	
3. ADJOURNMENT	30

AGENDA PACKETS ARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS:

- For disability related accommodations, please contact the Yolo County Office of Education - Superintendent's office at (530) 668-3702, at least 24 hours working days prior to the scheduled meeting.
- For translation services, if joining the meeting via Zoom, please check the box to Enable Language Interpretation for the meeting.
- One (1) calendar days prior to the meeting, a full Board packet is available for review on the Yolo County Office of Education website: www.ycoe.org



1. OPENING PROCEDURES



1. 1. Call to Order and Roll Call



1. 2. Pledge of Allegiance



1. 3. Approval of Agenda

Recommendation

Motion to approve Agenda.

1. 4. Public Comment

Quick Summary / Abstract

Executive Order N-29-20 authorizes local legislative bodies to hold public meetings via teleconference and to make public meetings accessible telephonically or otherwise electronically to all members of the public. Members of the public are encouraged to observe and participate in the Zoom teleconference. For those individuals who wish to make a make a public comment, please do so in the following manner:

If you are joining the meeting via Zoom and wish to make a comment on an item, press the "raise a hand" button or Zoom chat.

You may also make public comment online by google form:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScxyl6GvazAzBA7nUY174MngxFpGGilkd6Jo2AiX5kQjiKul>

Please submit your google form by the Board meeting date. A moderator for the meeting will read your comments for the record.

Comments may not exceed three (3) minutes.

2. INFORMATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEM

2. 1. 2020 Yolo County Grand Jury Report

Description

Attached is the 2020 Yolo County Grand Jury Report and YCOE's Response to the report.

Recommendation

Discussion and possible action to approve YCOE's response to the 2020 Yolo County Grand Jury Report.

Supporting Documents



[GrandJurySchools Libraries Report Final](#)



[Revised Yolo County Draft Grand Jury Response_Final](#)

Contact Person

Superintendent Garth Lewis will present this item.

Every School is Vulnerable: Staff and Students Must Feel Safe for Learning to Occur

SUMMARY

When it comes to public education, few issues command attention like school safety. As threats change and evolve, so, too, must the preparation and response. The 2016-2017 Yolo County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) investigated Comprehensive School Safety Plan (CSSP) compliance and found vulnerabilities that prompted changes in the school districts in Yolo County to make campus access more restricted and secure. Three years later, the current 2019-2020 Grand Jury sought to understand school safety from the perspective of those developing, training in, and carrying out safety protocols. The Yolo County Office of Education, providing alternative and special education to students throughout the county, was also included in this current investigation.

The Grand Jury found that all Yolo County school districts have made safety improvements in the past three years to “harden” their campuses, to include increased visitor signage, check-in procedures, and collaboration with first responders (e.g. police, fire department) to further secure each school. These measures also raise the prominence of the front office, creating additional responsibilities for those staff members.

The California Education Code requires all school districts to prepare site-specific CSSPs. All school districts in Yolo County are current and in compliance with the requirements for preparing and filing CSSPs. The Grand Jury found that small districts, such as Esparto Unified School District (EUSD) and Winters Joint Unified School District (WJUSD), can prepare a district-wide CSSP. WJUSD includes individual campus school safety plans in its CSSP, whereas EUSD does not.

Tracking which teacher has or has not attended safety training is inconsistent between districts. Although there is an expectation that all teachers, substitute teachers, and school staff be able to respond to a variety of emergencies, substitute teachers or staff hired after the beginning of the school year may miss important training. Measures of the effectiveness of the safety training are lacking and missing from CSSPs.

The Grand Jury also found that past high-profile school shooting incidents put great pressure on school administrators to lockdown campuses when facing a variety of potential threats. Additionally, the increasing incidence of trauma-impacted students is presenting new challenges, prompting school staff to adjust their focus from instruction to providing student support.

The Grand Jury recommends: (1) the Esparto Unified School District develop individual safety plans for each school site for its CSSP submission, (2) all school districts identify further plans for hardening campuses, (3) all districts identify staff to engage in train-the-

trainer classes to build internal capacity and share resources across the county districts, (4) all districts require online, on-demand safety training modules be provided to school staff and particularly to staff hired after the beginning of the school year, (5) all districts identify safety training that all substitute teachers must complete before reporting to work, (6) all districts create a method or tool to assess safety training effectiveness, to include an annual survey of participants, and, (7) all districts develop an attendance record and tracking mechanism for safety training participation at each specific site.

On March 19, 2020 Governor Gavin Newsom issued Executive Order N-33-20, a statewide “stay home” order, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This investigation, the data gathered, and recommendations generated from it occurred prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing orders.

ACRONYMS

CDE	California Department of Education
CSSP	Comprehensive School Safety Plan
EC	California Education Code

BACKGROUND

The topic of school safety often triggers tragic images and headlines. As a society, we are conditioned to anticipate the worst – and with good reason. In 2019, there were 25 school shootings in the United States.¹ Two of those occurred in California, leaving four injured and two students dead.² Though reports of an active shooter at Woodland High School in May 2019 later proved false,³ the actions of first responders and the emotional responses among students and school personnel were no less real. Despite research reporting that school shootings are rare,⁴ schools must be prepared for any crisis, from accidents and broken bones, to power outages and wildfires – as well as the resulting trauma.

The 2016-2017 Yolo County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) reported on safety concerns related to the physical layout and ease of entry to school campuses.⁵ Following the report’s publication, each district within the county (Davis Joint Unified School District, Esparto Unified School District, Washington Unified School District [in West Sacramento], Winters Joint Unified School District, and Woodland Joint Unified School District) responded to the recommendations by making some structural changes and/or creating protocols that better secured their schools.⁶

In revisiting the topic of school safety, the 2019-2020 Grand Jury found improvements in visitor signage and check-in procedures, fencing, installation of new locks, collaboration with first responders, communication, and after-action debrief sessions following live incidents or practice drills.

Though each district is making tremendous strides in “hardening” efforts to further secure campus access, this year’s Grand Jury extended the previous investigation to examine safety beyond physical access to school grounds. The 2019-2020 Grand Jury wanted to understand what school safety looks like from the inside, from the perspective of those developing, training in, and/or carrying out new protocols. Again, the Grand Jury focused on the five school districts within Yolo County as well as the Yolo County Office of Education (YCOE). YCOE operates similarly to a school district by providing alternative and special education to students throughout the county.

APPROACH

The Yolo County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) reviewed the most recent Comprehensive School Safety Plans (CSSPs) from each of the school districts in Yolo County: Davis Joint Unified School District (DJUSD), Esparto Unified School District (EUSD), Washington Unified School District (WUSD) in West Sacramento, Winters Joint Unified School District (WJUSD), and Woodland Joint Unified School District (WJUSD) as well as from the Yolo County Office of Education (YCOE).

School officials, administrators, and/or representatives from each of these districts were interviewed. Protocols, procedures, checklists, and other public and internal documents specific to each district were requested and reviewed.

Additional references include the 2016-2017 Yolo County Grand Jury Report: “Are Yolo County Schools in Compliance with School Safety Plans?”⁷ and Responses to the 2016-2017 Yolo County Grand Jury Final Report: “Are Yolo County Schools in Compliance with School Safety Plans?”⁸

The California Education Code (EC), sections (§§) 32280-32289, the School Accountability Report Cards,⁹ and California School Dashboards¹⁰ for schools in Yolo County were also reviewed.

DISCUSSION

Based on interviews and documents reviewed, every indication is that school officials are fully aware of the challenges in making schools safe and are committed to taking the necessary steps to keep them that way. Given each school’s unique physical setting, structural features, community climate, and local laws, there is no one-size-fits-all

solution to school safety. Clearly, the challenges are vast, as documented in the Comprehensive School Safety Plans (CSSPs). Though school shootings demand attention and scrutiny, additional safety threats are experienced with far greater regularity and frequency. Safety drills and protocols intended to prepare students and staff to respond to an array of threats can also, according to witness interviews, have the adverse effect of heightening fear and anxiety.

Interviews with personnel from each school district and the YCOE, and a review of school safety documents suggest that while improvements were made, the following areas warrant attention:

- Comprehensive School Safety Plans (CSSPs): Anticipating Change & Preparing for Ongoing Improvement
- Safety Training: Voids in Who Gets Trained and Measures of Effectiveness
- Trauma-Impacted Students & Staff: Increasing Incidence & Additional Support

A discussion of each of these topics follows.

CSSP: Anticipating Change & Preparing for Ongoing Improvement

California Education Code (EC) sections (§§) 32280–89 mandate that all schools and districts develop CSSPs for adoption by March 1 of each year. The CSSPs document how each campus will deal with safety issues and emergencies, ranging from an active shooter and crime on campus to explosions and earthquakes. Included in these plans are preparations, as well as actions during and in the immediate aftermath of a crisis.

The mandate to develop, update and certify CSSPs annually only applies to public schools, per EC §32280:

“It is the intent of the Legislature that all California public schools, in kindergarten, and grades 1 to 12, inclusive, operated by school districts, in cooperation with local law enforcement agencies . . . develop a comprehensive school safety plan”¹¹

Every year, the California Department of Education (CDE) notifies county superintendents and administrators of changes in EC §§32280-89 that need to be included in the following year’s CSSPs. In a letter dated February 18, 2020, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tony Thurmond, also encouraged schools to:

“...include policies and practices that go beyond EC sections 32280–32289 requirements, including but not limited to threat assessment protocols, mental health policies, bullying/cyberbullying prevention procedures, active

intruder/shooter protocols, lockdown and shelter-in-place procedures, family reunification plans, and regular drills and exercises for all staff and students.”¹²

Here, Dr. Thurmond speaks to safety concerns that are beyond the EC requirements and yet represent risks warranting attention. Interestingly, interviews with school officials conducted *prior to* the release of Dr. Thurmond’s letter brought up the same issues and priorities.

The CDE provides districts with a template¹³ to guide their development of CSSPs, and some districts engage consultants to assist them. The Yolo County Office of Education (YCOE) recently initiated efforts to standardize the CSSPs for all school districts within Yolo County. An initiative still in development, these templates are aligned to those provided by the CDE. Districts have the flexibility to develop their own plans and to “go beyond” the basic EC mandates. That flexibility allows school officials to tailor the CSSPs to their specific needs and to determine their own policies and procedures, training approaches, and protocols.

All CSSPs for schools within Yolo County are current and in compliance with EC mandates. Except for Esparto, the CSSPs include individual safety plans for each school site within a district. Designated as a “small school district” with 940 students,¹⁴ Esparto Unified School District has in place a district-wide safety plan that meets EC requirements for districts with fewer than 2,501 students.¹⁵

Some CSSPs have in place very detailed protocols that “go beyond” the mandates and address many of the areas called out by Dr. Thurmond. A review of the most recent CSSPs submitted by each school district within Yolo County might give the impression they are more boilerplate than tailored. There is more to school site safety planning than appears in the public document. To avoid disclosing sensitive information to potential wrongdoers, the details and tactics developed for the districts and their sites are restricted to school and first-responder personnel as an additional safety measure (as recommended in EC §32281).¹⁶

Several witness interviews credited the 2016-2017 Yolo County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) investigation on school safety as a catalyst for making signage more visible to visitors, for hardening access to campuses, and for collaborating with all stakeholders of the school community. These improvements were also documented in each school district’s response to the recommendations made by the 2016-2017 Grand Jury.¹⁷ In addition, the

Grand Jury found some of these actions were already underway when the initial report was published.

The increased prominence of the front office at each campus and tighter check-in procedures also present new vulnerabilities that may require additional safety improvements to make the physical office and the people who work there more secure.

The effectiveness of a CSSP is created in the process of its development, by making sure discussions include all stakeholders (e.g. principals, teachers, parents, students, first responders, community members), by continual re-assessment of new threats or potential threats and concerns, and the implementation of new strategies, protocols, and practices.

Critical, too, is a feedback mechanism for determining how well these changes are working. Such a metric is missing from all safety plans as well as from the CSSP template itself.¹⁸ Granted, there is no clear cause-and-effect methodology for evaluating these changes. However, that should not prevent each district from exploring other qualitative options, such as asking those responsible for carrying out the safety protocols and procedures for their feedback.

Safety Training: Voids in Who Gets Trained & Measures of Effectiveness

Creating a safe environment is fundamental for learning to occur. Yet, establishing and maintaining safety is becoming more difficult as schools must contend with a barrage of changing threats and conditions. Ensuring that teachers and staff are well-prepared to meet these challenges through effective training is vital to enabling schools to go beyond EC safety standards. Herein lies the dilemma: how to balance the mounting demands on the school community with limited resources – time, trainers, and money?

Within this environment, each district is forced to make difficult but informed decisions that prioritize and accommodate for its unique needs. Contract agreements between the school district and its unions must also be considered. Most school districts have opted to prioritize the training of certificated personnel (e.g. teachers) in safety protocols and procedures but not classified employees (e.g. para-educators, noon / yard duty aides, and transportation workers). This year, some districts, such as the Washington Unified School District in West Sacramento, are training their classified staff in emergency and safety procedures.

Schools typically train teachers on safety drills and procedures just prior to the start of each school year. Supplemental refreshers and updates are incorporated into regular drills, tagged onto staff meetings, or discussed as part of an after-incident session throughout the year. Training is provided in many forms, ranging from in-service sessions, to online and practice drills at the school site. Arrangements are also coordinated with vendors who offer specific kinds of expertise (e.g. active shooter

training), when warranted. Teachers hired after the start of the school year typically miss these early opportunities, creating a potential vacuum in preparedness.

Another gap in training pertains to substitute teachers. Substitute teachers are a significant part of the educational community. However, districts do not require prospective substitute teacher applicants to participate in formalized safety training prior to reporting for work at any school. Among the largest school districts in the county (Davis Joint Unified School District, Washington Unified School District, and Woodland Joint Unified School District), there are, on average, a total of 155 substitute teachers working in a classroom on any given day. With more than 1,600¹⁹ teachers employed in Yolo County schools, substitute teachers represent nearly 10% of those providing in-class instruction – a significant daily presence.

Once checked in at the front office, substitute teachers typically receive a packet or binder that contains a class roster, lesson plan, daily schedule, and basic safety documents (e.g. floorplans and evacuation routes). Some schools may include posters or flipcharts in each classroom with instructions on what to do in specific emergency situations. Given the nature of this on-call type of work, substitutes may not have time to review the folder in its entirety before meeting with his/her class. If an emergency drill or incident occurs, substitute teachers by necessity may be required to look to other teachers and/or their students for direction in how to respond. Several of those interviewed described examples in which this occurred.

In some districts, inconsistencies in tracking attendance at training sessions add to uncertainty and makes it difficult to determine who has participated. Additionally, districts have no mechanism in place, other than occasional informal check-ins, for assessing the effectiveness of the training or level of confidence among the teachers and staff responsible for carrying out the drills.

Though safety or emergency drills can provide important refreshers and on-the-job-training for new hires and substitutes, the drills can also increase the stress level of an already anxious staff and student body.

Trauma-Impacted Students & Staff: Increasing Incidence & Additional Support

An integral component of the learning process is safety. If the school environment is perceived by students and/or staff as unsafe, learning will be inhibited. Though new fencing, visitor check-ins, and safety training can mitigate threats, the environment within and outside of the school can present ongoing challenges. In response, districts stated to the Grand Jury that they continually monitor and assess for the social/emotional impacts of these challenges and have in place a well-defined process for providing counselors and

emotional support for students and staff. The threats are real. So, too, are the emotional impacts related to the loss of life, neglect, bullying, and abuse.

News of any school shooting often generates fears throughout the school community and increases concern. This cycle repeats itself with every tragic occurrence and each time places pressure on school officials to treat all threats the same.²⁰ School officials and representatives interviewed described heightened concern for the emotional well-being of students and staff. They also spoke of several events that continue to impact members of the school community, expressed for some in the form of trauma. Trauma is an emotional response to a terrible event that can cause sufferers to experience extreme anxiety, sadness, anger, sleeplessness, physical pain, and headaches.²¹

When reports came in May 2019 of an active shooter at Woodland High School, first responders arrived in full force. The school went into lockdown, along with a nearby elementary school. Shelter-in-place orders were issued for yet another campus. For six hours, students and teachers waited while police conducted room-by-room searches until they were certain no threat existed. Though the initial call was later determined a false report, the experience, according to personnel interviewed, left some teachers and students visibly shaken and/or dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder.

More recently, the accidental off-campus shooting of a Davis High School senior,²² the killing of a 16-year-old who attended school within Woodland Joint Unified School District,²³ the unexpected death of a Davis elementary school teacher,²⁴ and reports of a “man covered in blood” who threatened a teacher and attempted to carjack her vehicle outside Esparto High School²⁵ have been covered by the local papers. Many other, similar incidents are shared by way of Facebook, Instagram, or other outlets. Whether accurate or rumors, word travels fast across social and virtual networks, further compounding the fear and anxiety.

Less publicized but nevertheless traumatic is the uptick in abuse, neglect, and domestic violence in Yolo County. The numbers are documented by several sources, including Yolo County Child Abuse Prevention Council,²⁶ the Yolo County Health Council,²⁷ and kidsdata.org²⁸ (a resource on children’s health in California). Interviewees also reported teachers are seeing more incidence of students dealing with homelessness and broken homes, and in turn, extreme acting out behaviors.

In recognition of these threats, as well as the injuries inflicted by bullying and misuse of social media, school officials and representatives are responding by making counseling more available to employees and students, providing training, and increasing awareness about the importance of mental health. Nurses, too, are available at some schools on a

regular basis. According to witness interviews, members of the school community are increasingly taking advantage of this support.

School safety encompasses far more than installing new locks, fencing, and check-in procedures. School districts within Yolo County also recognize the emotional health and well-being of students and staff as yet another critical resource to protect.

FINDINGS

- F1. The California Education Code requires, with the exception of small districts, that individual safety plans be developed for each school site. Esparto Unified School District qualifies as a small district, and has a single district-wide Comprehensive School Safety Plan (CSSP) that applies to all school sites in the district, not individual plans for each school site.
- F2. Districts made safety improvements, including increased visitor signage and tighter check-in procedures, installed new fencing and locks, collaborated with first responders, engaged in after-action debrief sessions to further secure (i.e. “harden”) school campuses and facilities, and continue to plan for further actions.
- F3. Increased efforts to harden schools and direct visitors to the front office with improved signage creates additional responsibilities for those working this vital gateway and exposes them to more safety threats.
- F4. Tracking of who has or has not participated in safety training events is inconsistent in Yolo County schools.
- F5. Measures or approaches for assessing the quality or effectiveness of safety training are missing from the CSSPs.
- F6. There is an expectation that all teachers and substitute teachers have a depth and breadth of safety training that enables them to respond to a variety of threats.
- F7. Because substitute teachers and teachers hired after the start of the school year are not present for the launch of safety training, their ability to respond to emergency situations is compromised.
- F8. In the wake of past high-profile school shootings, school officials face great pressure to react to any threat of potential violence by locking down schools.
- F9. Increasing incidence of trauma-impacted students call on teachers and staff to shift focus from instruction mode to providing support they may not be fully trained to offer.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. Prior to the start of the 2021-2022 school year, Esparto Unified School District should develop individual safety plans tailored to each school site's particular needs and environment (as opposed to a district-wide Comprehensive School Safety Plan [CSSP]) to enhance the overall value of the CSSP.
- R2. Prior to the start of the 2021-2022 school year, District officials should identify additional approaches in their CSSPs for hardening access to areas of schools that remain vulnerable.
- R3. Prior to the start of the 2021-2022 school year and each subsequent school year, District officials should identify administrative, certificated, and classified employees to engage in train-the-trainer classes to build internal capacity and share resources across districts.
- R4. Prior to the start of the 2021-2022 school year, District officials should require online, on-demand safety training modules be provided and completed by all staff, particularly those hired after the start of the school year, to assure consistency in and breadth of training in safety protocols and procedures.
- R5. Prior to the start of the 2021-2022 school year and each subsequent school year, District officials should identify safety training that all substitute teachers must complete before reporting for work in any district.
- R6. Prior to the start of the 2021-2022 school year and each subsequent school year, District officials should identify a method and/or tool for measuring the effectiveness of safety training, including an annual survey of all staff.
- R7. Prior to the start of the 2021-2022 school year and for use in each subsequent school year, each school principal or designee should develop an attendance and tracking mechanism for determining who has or has not participated in safety training offerings.

COMMENDATIONS

All school officials and representatives recognize the value of maintaining the emotional health and well-being of students and staff. School districts are to be commended for their ability to mobilize resources quickly and provide onsite counseling support following a tragic incident (e.g. sudden loss of teachers, students, and alumni).

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code section 933.05, the Grand Jury requests responses as follows:

From the following individuals:

- Superintendent of Schools, Yolo County Office of Education – F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8, F9; R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7

From the following governing bodies:

- Board of Education/Trustees, Davis Joint Unified School District – F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8, F9; R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7
- Board of Education/Trustees, Esparto Unified School District – F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8, F9; R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7
- Board of Education/Trustees, Washington Unified School District – F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8, F9; R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7
- Board of Education/Trustees, Winters Joint Unified School District – F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8, F9; R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7
- Board of Education/Trustees, Woodland Joint Unified School District – F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8, F9; R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7
- Board of Education/Trustees, Yolo County Office of Education – F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8, F9; R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7

Note: The governing bodies indicated above should be aware that the comment or response of the governing body must be conducted subject to the notice, agenda, and open meeting requirements of the Brown Act.

INVITED RESPONSES

From the following individuals:

- District Superintendent, Davis Joint Unified School District – F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8, F9; R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7
- District Superintendent, Esparto Unified School District – F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8, F9; R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7
- District Superintendent, Washington Unified School District – F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8, F9; R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7
- District Superintendent, Winters Joint Unified School District – F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8, F9; R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7
- District Superintendent, Woodland Joint Unified School District F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8, F9; R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7

ENDNOTES

- 1 Education Week, “The School Shootings of 2019: What’s Behind the Numbers,” EdWeek.org, December 18, 2019, <https://www.edweek.org/ew/section/multimedia/school-shootings-of-2019-behind-the-numbers.html> (Accessed: May 17, 2020)
- 2 Hannah Fry, et al., “Saugus High Shooter Opened Fire on Crowded Quad in 16-second Attack That Left 2 Dead and 3 Wounded, Sheriff says,” *LA Times*, November 14, 2019, <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2019-11-14/shooting-reported-at-saugus-high-school-in-santa-clarita-police-searching-for-teen-suspect> (Accessed: May 17, 2020)
- 3 Lauren Keene, “Woodland High Locked Down After Suspicious Calls,” *Davis Enterprise*, May 12, 2019, <https://www.davisenterprise.com/local-news/woodland-high-locked-down-after-suspicious-call/> (Accessed: May 17, 2020)
- 4 Allie Nicodemo & Lia Petronio, “Schools Are Safer Than They Were in the 90s, and School Shootings Are Not More Common Than They Used To Be, Researchers Say,” February 26, 2018, News@Northeastern, Northeastern University, <https://news.northeastern.edu/2018/02/26/schools-are-still-one-of-the-safest-places-for-children-researcher-says/> (Accessed: May 17, 2020)
- 5 2016-2017 Yolo County Grand Jury Report: “Are Yolo County Schools in Compliance with School Safety Plans?” (pp. 51-75), <https://www.yolocounty.org/home/showdocument?id=43338> (Accessed: May 17, 2020)
- 6 2017-2018 Yolo County Grand Jury Final Report. Responses to the 2016-2017 Yolo County Grand Jury Recommendations: “Are Yolo County Schools in Compliance with School Safety Plans?” Appendix, pp. 1-30, <https://www.yolocounty.org/home/showdocument?id=49779> (Accessed: May 17, 2020)
- 7 2016-2017 Yolo County Grand Jury Report: “Are Yolo County Schools in Compliance with School Safety Plans?” (pp. 51-75), <https://www.yolocounty.org/home/showdocument?id=43338> (Accessed: May 17, 2020)
- 8 2017-2018 Yolo County Grand Jury Final Report. Responses to the 2016-2017 Yolo County Grand Jury Recommendations: “Are Yolo County Schools in Compliance with School Safety Plans?” Appendix, pp. 1-30, <https://www.yolocounty.org/home/showdocument?id=49779> (Accessed: May 17, 2020)
- 9 California Department of Education, School Accountability Report Cards, www.cde.ca.gov, March 5, 2020, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/sa/> (Accessed: May 29, 2020)
- 10 California Department of Education, California School Dashboard, www.cde.ca.gov, May 15, 2020, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/index.asp> (Accessed: May 29, 2020)
- 11 California Legislative Information, California Education Code §32280, School Safety Plans, January 1, 2019, https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=EDC&division=1.&title=1.&part=19.&chapter=2.5.&article=5 (Accessed: May 27, 2020)
- 12 Tony Thurmond, “Reminder to Update and Adopt Comprehensive School Safety Plans, Legislative Updates, and Resources,” California Department of Education, February 19, 2020, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/el/e/yr20ltr0218.asp> (Accessed: May 17, 2020)
- 13 California Department of Education, “Compliance Tool for a Comprehensive School Safety Plan,” cde.ca.gov, January 2019, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/lr/ss/vp/documents/schoolsafetyplancklist.docx> (Accessed: May 17, 2020)

- 14 California Department of Education, “District Profile: Esparto Unified,” cde.ca.gov, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sdprofile/details.aspx?cds=57726860000000> (Accessed: May 17, 2020)
- 15 The “small school exception,” per California Education Code §32281(d)(2). As used in this article, “small school district” means a school district that has fewer than 2,501 units of average daily attendance at the beginning of each fiscal year.
- 16 California Education Code §32281(f)(1): “The school district or county office of education may elect not to disclose those portions of the comprehensive school safety plan that include tactical responses to criminal incidents.”
- 17 2017-2018 Yolo County Grand Jury Final Report, Responses to the 2016-2017 Yolo County Grand Jury Recommendations: “Are Yolo County Schools in Compliance with School Safety Plans?” Appendix, pp. 1-30, <https://www.yolocounty.org/home/showdocument?id=49779> (Accessed: May 17, 2020)
- 18 California Department of Education, “Compliance Tool for a Comprehensive School Safety Plan,” cde.ca.gov, January 2019, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/lr/ss/vp/documents/schoolsafetyplancklist.docx> (Accessed: May 17, 2020)
- 19 Learning Policy Institute, “Understanding Teacher Shortages in California: A District- and County-Level Analysis of the Factors Influencing Teacher Supply and Demand (interactive map),” December 5, 2019, Palo Alto, CA, <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/interactive-map-understanding-teacher-shortages-california> (Accessed: May 17, 2020)
- 20 Clare Lombardo, “After Parkland, Schools Grapple With Threats — And The Best Ways To Respond,” April 14, 2018, National Public Radio, <https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2018/04/14/601461879/after-parkland-schools-grapple-with-threats-and-the-best-ways-to-respond> (Accessed: May 17, 2020)
- 21 “What is Trauma?” *Psychology Today*, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/trauma> (Accessed: May 17, 2020)
- 22 Lauren Keene, “Update: Davis High School Student Dies From Shooting Injuries,” *Davis Enterprise*, February 6, 2020, <https://www.davisenterprise.com/local-news/police-respond-to-gunfire-incident/> (Accessed: May 17, 2020)
- 23 “Suspect Arrested in Woodland Shooting That Killed Teen, Injured Two Others,” Fox40 Web Desk, October 25, 2019, <https://fox40.com/news/local-news/suspect-arrested-in-woodland-shooting-that-killed-teen-injured-two-others/> (Accessed: May 17, 2020)
- 24 “Obituary: Eva Maria Dopico Serante,” *Davis Enterprise*. December 1, 2019, <https://www.davisenterprise.com/?s=Eva+Maria+Dopico+Serante&submit=Search> (Accessed: May 17, 2020)
- 25 Lauren Keene, “Covered in blood: Lake County Man Arrested After Yolo Crime Spree,” *Davis Enterprise*, February 28, 2020, <https://www.davisenterprise.com/local-news/covered-in-blood-lake-county-man-arrested-after-yolo-crime-spree/> (Accessed: May 17, 2020)
- 26 Anne Ternus-Bellamy, “Child Welfare Continues to be a Concern in Yolo County,” *Davis Enterprise*, December 30, 2018, <https://www.davisenterprise.com/local-news/child-welfare-continues-to-be-concern-in-yolo-county/> (Accessed: May 17, 2020)
- 27 “Health Council Annual Report: 2015-16,” Yolo County Health Council, <https://www.yolocounty.org/home/showdocument?id=38913> (Accessed: May 17, 2020)
- 28 “Summary: Yolo County,” Kidsdata.org, 2018, <https://www.kidsdata.org/region/340/yolo-county/summary#1/child-and-youth-safety> (Accessed: May 17, 2020)

Reports issued by the Civil Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Civil Grand Jury.

[ON YCOE LETTERHEAD]

VIA EMAIL (grandjury@yolocounty.org)
& U.S. MAIL

[Date]

Grand Jury, County of Yolo
P.O. Box 2142
Woodland, CA 95776

RE: 2019-2020 YOLO COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT
Superintendent of Schools and Board of Education, Yolo County Office of Education: Responses to “Every School is Vulnerable: Staff and Students Must Feel Safe for Learning to Occur”

Dear Grand Jury Representatives:

On behalf of the Yolo County Board of Education and the Yolo County Office of Education (“YCOE”) (collectively “Respondents”), I want to thank you for the time and effort taken by the Yolo County Grand Jury (“Grand Jury”) to conduct its safety analysis of schools within Yolo County.

Our collective responses to the Grand Jury’s findings and recommendations are set forth below in accordance with the format required by Penal Code section 933.05.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further information.

Sincerely,

Garth Lewis
Superintendent of Schools
Yolo County Office of Education

cc: Honorable Sonia Cortés, Judge, Superior Court of California, Yolo County

Response to Findings

Finding F-1: The California Education Code requires, with the exception of small districts, that individual safety plans be developed for each school site. Esparto Unified School District qualifies as a small district, and has a single district-wide Comprehensive School Safety Plan (CSSP) that applies to all school sites in the district, not individual plans for each school site.

The Respondents agree with this finding.

Finding F-2: Districts made safety improvements, including increased visitor signage and tighter check-in procedures, installed new fencing and locks, collaborated with first responders, engaged in after-action debrief sessions to further secure (i.e. “harden”) school campuses and facilities, and continue to plan for further actions.

The Respondents agree with this finding as it applies to the operations of YCOE. YCOE has implemented additional safety improvements designed to harden campuses, including installation of a controlled access gate system at Greengate School and updating many of its sites to require access cards. In addition to other safety measures, YCOE has also installed high security keyways at its sites and engaged in after-action safety meetings to improve the safety of its facilities.

Finding F-3: Increased efforts to harden schools and direct visitors to the front office with improved signage creates additional responsibilities for those working this vital gateway and exposes them to more safety threats.

The Respondents agree with this finding.

Finding F-4: Tracking of who has or has not participated in safety training events is inconsistent in Yolo County schools.

The Respondents agree with this finding.

Finding F-5: Measures or approaches for assessing the quality or effectiveness of safety training are missing from the CSSPs.

The Respondents agree with this finding as it applies to the operations of the YCOE.

Finding F-6: There is an expectation that all teachers and substitute teachers have a depth and breadth of safety training that enables them to respond to a variety of threats.

The Respondents partially agree with this finding. YCOE expects its teachers and substitute teachers to have a sufficient combination of safety training, knowledge, and experience to respond to a variety of threats. However, the statement “depth and breadth of safety training” is

vague and ambiguous, and YCOE is therefore unable to unequivocally agree with that portion of Finding F-6.

Finding F-7: Because substitute teachers and teachers hired after the start of the school year are not present for the launch of safety training, their ability to respond to emergency situations is compromised.

The Respondents partially agree with this finding. As a general matter, we understand certain districts within Yolo County, including the Davis Joint Unified School District, require substitute teachers and teachers hired after the school year to participate in safety training, including participation in online training modules at or around the time they are employed. YCOE is also reviewing the inclusion of safety training for its employees as part of staff orientation and requiring such training for both newly hired staff and substitute teachers. Nevertheless, the teachers' presence at the launch of safety training in and of itself does not inherently compromise their ability to respond to emergency situations. YCOE conducts safety drills throughout the year and provides teachers with safety materials and emergency procedures, and many teachers received safety training in the past despite not attending YCOE's annual launch of safety training. As a result, YCOE cannot agree that all teachers and substitute teachers hired after the start of the launch of school year have a compromised ability to respond to emergency situations.

Finding F-8: In the wake of past high-profile school shootings, school officials face great pressure to react to any threat of potential violence by locking down schools.

The Respondents agree with this finding. Safety is YCOE's highest priority. As a result, YCOE stresses the importance of taking all potential threats seriously and requires all staff to immediately react accordingly. As a result, YCOE has contracted with Everbridge to implement a County-wide interoperability safety plan. Everbridge is a company that provides platforms to immediately publish safety notices to staff in emergency situations. The County-wide interoperability safety plan enables staff to use their mobile devices to access a panic button feature which provides for immediate communication with local law enforcement in the event of an emergency.

Finding F-9: Increasing incidence of trauma-impacted students call on teachers and staff to shift focus from instruction mode to providing support they may not be fully trained to offer.

The Respondents disagree with this finding. YCOE's Positive Behavioral Supports and Interventions ("PBIS") Consortium currently includes 26 Yolo County school sites. PBIS is a three-year initiative that began in 2019. PBIS training is provided to school site teams composed of teachers, administrators, school counselors, and classified employees and is based on a train-the-trainer model in which the site teams ultimately train the school site's entire staff. PBIS training is split into two tiers, with Tier 1 and Tier 2 each consisting of four six-hour interactive training sessions. Site teams also meet with PBIS coaches between official training sessions no less than monthly. PBIS training helps school site administrators and staff to understand their

roles in maintaining safe campuses and supporting students' emotional needs. YCOE also obtained a \$100,000 grant to host a social and emotional learning network that assists Yolo County districts in preparing their staff to provide additional social and emotional support to their students.

In addition to this training, each Yolo County district employs and/or contracts with mental health professionals to provide support to trauma-impacted students. Moreover, Yolo County Health and Human Services and YCOE have secured a grant through the California Mental Health Student Services Act to provide additional on-site services that are expected to begin in January 2021.

Response to Recommendations

Recommendation R-1: Prior to the start of the 2021-2022 school year, Esparto Unified School District should develop individual safety plans tailored to each school site's particular needs and environment (as opposed to a district-wide Comprehensive School Safety Plan [CSSP]) to enhance the overall value of the CSSP.

This recommendation will not be implemented by YCOE because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. YCOE does not have the authority to require Esparto Unified School District to develop CSSP's for each of its school sites. However, YCOE will assist Esparto Unified School District with the development of any such plan as requested.

Recommendation R-2: Prior to the start of the 2021-2022 school year, District officials should identify additional approaches in their CSSPs for hardening access to areas of schools that remain vulnerable.

This recommendation will be implemented prior to the 2021-2022 school year and YCOE will share the recommendation with all Yolo County school districts. YCOE will also recommend that districts perform Threat and Physical Security assessments to ensure any necessary additional approaches are included in the districts' CSSPs.

Recommendation R-3: Prior to the start of the 2021-2022 school year and each subsequent school year, District officials should identify administrative, certificated, and classified employees to engage in train-the-trainer classes to build internal capacity and share resources across districts.

This recommendation will be implemented. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, implementation of this recommendation will need to be postponed. Specifically, YCOE plans to host and/or have its staff attend train-the-trainer courses in the future, and it will inform district administrators of those opportunities once the training is available. However, due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, YCOE does not expect to be able to implement the training prior to the start of the 2021-2022 school year.

Recommendation R-4: Prior to the start of the 2021-2022 school year, District officials should require online, on-demand safety training modules be provided and completed by all staff, particularly those hired after the start of the school year, to assure consistency in and breadth of training in safety protocols and procedures.

This recommendation will be implemented as it pertains to YCOE operations prior to the start of the 2021-2022 school year pending YCOE examining available resources and selecting options to provide online training modules.

Recommendation R-5: Prior to the start of the 2021-2022 school year and each subsequent school year, District officials should identify safety training that all substitute teachers must complete before reporting for work in any district.

This recommendation will be implemented as it pertains to operations at YCOE after further analysis regarding what training should be required and how to include such training in the onboarding process for both newly hired staff and substitute teachers.

Recommendation R-6: Prior to the start of the 2021-2022 school year and each subsequent school year, District officials should identify a method and/or tool for measuring the effectiveness of safety training, including an annual survey of all staff.

This recommendation will be implemented following YCOE's review and development of a survey process to evaluate the effectiveness of safety training as it pertains to operations at YCOE.

Recommendation R-7: Prior to the start of the 2021-2022 school year and for use in each subsequent school year, each school principal or designee should develop an attendance and tracking mechanism for determining who has or has not participated in safety training offerings.

This recommendation will be implemented following YCOE's review of available online systems to track these metrics. Following YCOE's implementation, and for consideration, it will provide information to Yolo County school districts regarding YCOE's method of tracking attendance.

3. ADJOURNMENT
