



WINTERS JOINT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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November 12, 2020

Yolo County Grand Jury
Hall of Justice
PO Box 2142
Woodland CA 95776

**RE: 2019-20 YOLO COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT
Winters Joint Unified School District Response**

Dear Grand Jury Representatives:

The Board of Trustees ("Board") of the Winters Joint Unified School District ("District") appreciates the time and effort taken by the Yolo County Grand Jury ("Grand Jury") to conduct its safety analysis of the District. The District has given the Grand Jury's findings serious consideration, and this response will identify several actions that will be implemented consistent with the Grand Jury's recommendations.

The District's responses to the Grand Jury's findings and recommendations are set forth below in accordance with the format required by Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05.

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

Sincerely,


Rudolph Muldong
Board President
Winters Joint Unified School District

Enclosure: Response to Findings/Response to Recommendations

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

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RESPONSE TO FINDINGS

Finding 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.

The District agrees that our District and other school districts in the County have made numerous safety improvements to campuses and facilities, and continue to plan for further action. At Winters JUSD we have especially improved in the areas of increased visitor signage and tighter check-in procedures, and new fencing and locks.

Finding 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.

The District agrees that these efforts create additional responsibilities for those working at entry points and the front office, potentially affecting levels of exposure to disruptive individuals seeking to gain entry to campus and facilities.

Finding F4: Tracking of who has or has not participated in safety training events is inconsistent in Yolo County schools.

The District agrees that tracking systems for those who have, or have not, participated in safety training may be inconsistent among our schools in Winters JUSD, and perhaps among schools in general County-wide.

Finding F5: Measures or approaches for assessing the quality or effectiveness of safety training are missing from the CSSPs.

The District agrees that measures for assessing after the fact the quality or effectiveness of safety training were not the focus of our Comprehensive School Safety Plans.

Finding 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.

The District agrees that there is an expectation that all teachers and substitute teachers have appropriate training and supports to enable them to respond to a variety of threats.

Finding 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.

The District agrees that any teachers or substitute teachers who do not attend safety training at the beginning of the year are not as well-equipped, as those who did attend, to handle situations

addressed in the safety training at the beginning of the year. Staff members and substitutes are expected to be aware of the District's safety plans and their role in ensuring safe school environments, including responding to emergency situations.

Finding 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.

The District agrees that 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.

Finding 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.

The District agrees that improving teachers' and staff's capabilities to support students affected by increasing incidents of trauma presents training challenges for school district, teachers, and staff.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 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.

The District agrees with this recommendation and intends to implement this recommendation, including taking steps to tighten down lock-down drills and debriefing procedures.

Recommendation 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.

The District agrees to identify administrative, certificated, and classified employees, tentatively to be drawn from the existing safety committees at each site, adding to the committees' purview a component on providing safety training to colleagues. The District agrees to cooperate with efforts of the County Office of Education to share resources across districts in Yolo County.

Recommendation 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.

The District intends to implement online safety training modules, looking to Keenan & Associates, which provides liability coverage and protection to the District. Keenan currently offers an online safety training designed for school employees through its program, Keenan SafeSchools.

Recommendation 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.

The District will implement means by which long-term substitutes, for whom advance training planning is possible, will be given safety training before beginning work in the District. Day-to-day substitutes present a different problem, as the need for them frequently is not known until the night before or even the morning of the regular employee's absence. We will look to augment this approach by partnering day-to-day substitutes with regular personnel, and also look to the County Office of Education for possible coordination of advance training, perhaps to be provided together with issuance of substitute certificates.

Recommendation 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.

The District will augment its procedures by which staff are already surveyed, to collect feedback on the safety of our campuses and facilities.

Recommendation 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.

The District will ensure attendance and tracking of safety training. Keenan SafeSchools incorporates a tracking system to ensure staff have received the requisite instruction.