

ESPARTO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Dr. Christina Goennier, Superintendent



"Serving Yolo County since 1868"

26675 Plainfield Street
Esparto, California 95627

Tel.: (530) 787-3446
Fax: (530) 787-3033

January 23, 2024

Dear Grand Jury Representatives,

Thank you for your inquiry and following up on the 2022-23 Grand Jury report concerning school safety. The following is a response to the report "ARE WE THERE YET?" On the road to school Safety. The response is submitted pursuant to Penal Code 933 and 933.05.

Response to Findings:

F-1

Each school district has implemented school hardening measures to some degree in addition to those discussed in the 2019-20 Yolo County Grand Jury report. The measures in place at school sites vary and can be improved. While some schools in each district have their sites enclosed or have security cameras, others do not. Fences may not be high enough to prevent students or intruders from jumping over them. In addition, gates at schools are sometimes not closed, locked, or in disrepair.

The District partially agrees with this finding. While the District agrees additional hardening measures are needed, all of our school campuses and facilities have security cameras in place. These cameras are regularly inspected to ensure they are in appropriate working order. All campuses have security fencing installed around the campuses. Where the fencing is not high enough security cameras and staff are located to ensure strangers do not have access to the campus.

Additionally, in August of 2023, the district worked with RTAC to review all of the school sites and received a Vulnerability Assessment of the school sites. This assessment is being used to implement physical, cyber, and other security measures.

F-2

Each school district conducts California Healthy Kids Surveys, while some use additional methods for assessing student mental health. The response rate of students completing such surveys, however, may not be enough to generate reliable conclusions about student mental health.

The district partially agrees with this finding. Research states a good response to a survey is 5-30% and an excellent response is 50%. Our responses over time have been over 50% per grade level. In addition, each school site has a mental health clinician and a social-emotional para educator who works with our students and collects additional data on student mental health.

F-3

California Education Code mandates that all school districts require visitors to go to a school's office upon arrival and wear identification while on site. At some Yolo County schools, however, the location of the school's office is not clear. Better signage is needed to direct visitors to the office. This is particularly important for schools, such as in the Davis, Winters, and Woodland school districts, where sharing open spaces or parking lots can make clear signage and prevention of intruders from entering school grounds more challenging.

Esparto Unified partially agrees with this finding. All of our parking lots and sites have signage directing visitors where they need to enter and that they must sign in before entering campus. We continually walk and review the need for additional signage on an annual basis via our surveys and school safety committee meetings.

F-4

Each school district appropriately uses a web-based third-party provider for safety training modules. Annual training related to violent threats, such as active shooter, is not required at this time by the Davis, Esparto, Washington, and Woodland school districts, although Esparto and Woodland plan to add such training at the start of the 2023-24 school year. Ensuring staff are trained in how to respond appropriately to threats of violence would lessen the chances of another tragedy similar to that in Uvalde, Texas.

Esparto Unified partially agrees with this finding. Starting in 2022-23 Esparto Unified provided staff training for all school site personnel on active shooter training. In 2023-24 Esparto Unified in partnership with all of our first responders provided an in-person active shooter and first aid training event for all staff members. Additional training will be provided as per the recommendation of our safety committee.

F-5

The Esparto and Woodland school districts have assessed the effectiveness of their school safety training through surveys, as recommended by the 2019-20 Yolo County Grand Jury, while the Davis, Washington, and Winters districts have not. Assessing effectiveness based on quantifiable data can provide more accurate guidance for decisions about training.

The District agrees with this finding and continues to gather feedback on safety training through the use of annual surveys.

F-6

Each school district has contracted with a web-based third-party provider to notify parents of emergencies. The providers report on how many parents or guardians were reached per technology (e.g., email, text, app, or voice/phone). All school districts' providers, except Washington, reach 90% or more of their student's parents or guardians. Ensuring that virtually all parents or guardians can be reached when needed is desirable

The District agrees with this finding and continues to work diligently to communicate and accurately record up-to-date contact and emergency contact information for all students. The District strives to increase its connectivity with families and will work to improve from its current overall 97.2% connectivity rate to above that for the 2024-25 school year.

F-7

Some high school students in the Davis, Esparto, Winters, and Woodland school districts are allowed to go off-campus during lunch breaks. Should an emergency arise on campus, it is not possible for the schools to know how safe those students are, and the students may not receive timely emergency notifications if their school is on lockdown or evacuated.

Esparto Unified partially agrees with the finding of the grand jury regarding the off-campus lunch break for high school students. Our district utilizes a comprehensive communication system called Parent Square, which we have now enabled to instantly notify both students and parents in case of an emergency.

This proactive measure will ensure that our students are notified in case of an emergency. In addition, our community members are also able to be a part of our communication via Parent Square. Additionally, we have staff that patrol both on and off campus and carry school walkie-talkies in order to communicate what is happening both on and off campus.

Esparto Unified will remain committed to the health and safety of our students both on and off campus. We will review and adjust based on input from our community and first responders.

R-1

The Grand Jury recommends that, prior to the start of the 2024-25 school year, each school district identify additional hardening approaches and develop a plan to further protect areas of its schools that remain vulnerable.

The recommendation has been implemented. In August of 2023-24 each of the school sites underwent a Vulnerability assessment. After the assessment, the safety committee reviewed the findings and created a prioritized recommendation plan for each site.

R-2

Prior to the start of the 2024-25 school year, each school district should develop a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound) plan to encourage all students to complete the California Healthy Kids Survey and similar surveys to produce meaningful data.

Each school district should act on survey findings, especially those related to potentially violent actions.

Esparto Unified did not receive the recommendations prior to the school year. However, we already have a high student completion rate. Students are provided time within the school day to complete the survey. Teachers explain the importance of the students providing the information. We also discuss the findings and changes that are made based on their information.

R-3

Prior to the start of the 2024-25 school year, each school district should evaluate and improve signage for all of its schools, so that visitors can easily find the school's office to register upon their arrival.

Esparto Unified currently has signage at all of their parking lots and school sites directing visitors to the office to sign in before entering the campus.

R-4

Prior to the start of the 2024-25 school year, each school district should require and document that training related to threats of violence is completed by its teachers (regular and substitute), staff, and administrators every year.

Esparto Unified requires and documents that training related to threats of violence is completed by teachers (regular and substitute), staff, and administrators every year.

R-5

Prior to the start of the 2024-25 school year and each subsequent school year, Davis, Washington, and Winters school districts should identify and document a statistically reliable method or tool for measuring the effectiveness of school safety training, including an annual survey of teachers, staff, and administrators.

Not applicable to Esparto Unified.

R-6

Prior to the start of the 2024-25 school year and each subsequent school year, each district should achieve and maintain an emergency notification contact rate of at least 95% with parents or guardians, as verified by their third-party emergency notification providers.

Esparto Unified maintains an emergency notification contact rate of at least 95% with parents and guardians. Staff is notified immediately after a notification is sent about how many notifications were received. District-level administrators receive a weekly report on how many notifications were sent and how many were received per site and the district.

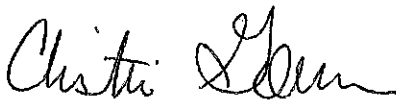
R-7

Prior to the start of the 2024-25 school year, Davis, Esparto, Winters, and Woodland school districts should develop, implement, and maintain a plan for contacting at least 95% of students who may be off-site if an emergency occurs during regular school hours.

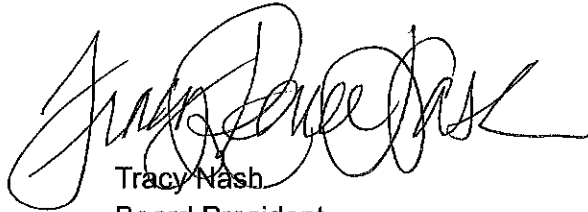
Esparto Unified has already implemented this through the use of Parent Square. Students are notified immediately through e-mail.

The health and safety of our students and staff is paramount to the district and Board of Trustees. The district has made strides in school safety and will continue to work collaboratively with our first responders and staff to continue to review, revise, repair and update our facilities and practices.

Sincerely,



Christina Goennier Ed.D.
Superintendent



Tracy Nash
Board President

