



"100 Years of Excellence"

OCT 31 2011

CYPRESS SCHOOL DISTRICT

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October 24, 2011

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ORANGE COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT

ORANGE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS: ARE THEY PREPARED FOR EMERGENCIES/

RESPONSE SUMMARY FROM THE CYPRESS SCHOOL DISTRICT

In accordance with California Penal Code section 933.05, a response is required from the Cypress School District to Findings 1-7 and Recommendations 1-5.

Finding 1: With respect to reported constraints on emergency planning and preparation, over half of schools and almost three quarters of districts identified either limited time or funds.

The Cypress School District agrees with this finding. The Board of Trustees recognizes that students and staff have a right to a safe and secure campus where they are free from physical and psychological harm. Also, the Cypress School District is fully committed to maximizing school safety and to creating a positive learning environment. However, this has become a very challenging task these last few years given the severe cuts that have been made to public education since the 2007-08 school year.

Like all school districts in California, the Cypress School District has been faced with severe budget cuts. School districts are funded from a combination of local, state, and federal sources, all of which have been negatively impacted by the length and severity of the recession. Since the 2007-08 school year, the Cypress School District's revenue limit received by the state has been severely reduced. Last 2010-11 school year, by statutory law the Cypress School District should have received \$6,386 per student, however only received \$4,956 per student; a difference of \$5.6 million.

Since 2007-08, the Cypress School District has had its educational program budget cut by \$19-million. As a result, the District has made severe cuts to programs offered, including layoffs to teachers and other key personnel. Because of these layoffs, our District is doing more with less. We now have limited time to perform the same amount of task needed to efficiently lead and manage all District functions.

If school districts had more personnel and resources, districts would be able to move forward with stronger emergency planning and preparation. At present, limited state funds are available and a federal grant program to support emergency management planning will end in Fiscal Year 2012.

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Finding 2: Six (of 17) school districts have managed to apply for and receive relatively large grants from governmental agencies to greatly enhance their emergency planning efforts, while others have not.

The Cypress School District agrees that school districts should seek grant funding. In 2008/09, our District submitted a grant application with the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) program only to be turned down. This has not stopped us from pursuing other possible options.

In 2010-11, our District met with law enforcement representatives from Cypress Police Department to discuss how we might participate with the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) and the Orange County Intelligence Assessment Center, in vulnerability assessment program. Because the OCDE has been successful in attaining grant funding through REMS, we have an opportunity to compliment our current safety plan and receive better responses by our local law enforcement in dealing with gang-like events or random type shooter incidents. We are introducing this program incrementally to our District. Last April 2011, our first school was visited by a law enforcement team. This team spent time collecting data and taking several pictures of the campus (both inside and outside). From this they will produce a customized report that law enforcement will use to better understand the layout of the school campus in the event we should ever have an emergency type event. As we progress with modernization at the five other remaining schools, we will continue to work with this law enforcement team to help ensure our District is as safe as it can be. We understand that the existing federal grant program will be phasing out in 2012 and are hopeful that other grant programs will be identified.

Finding 3: Some schools anticipate responding to only a few emergency situations (e.g., earthquake and fire), while others have developed plans to respond to over a dozen different threatening situations.

The Cypress School District agrees with this finding. Our school district has developed information for the following emergency situations:

- Accident, Injury, Sudden Illness
- Hostile Parent/Adult
- Fire
- Earthquake
- Evacuation
- Lock Down
- Airplane Crash
- Extreme Weather

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- Utility Failure or Leak, Building Emergency, Crime
- Hazardous Materials Incident
- Terrorist Threat
- Active Shooter/Campus Siege
- School Fatality
- Emergency 911 Calls

Finding 4: School districts develop plans with respect to a number of different but overlapping regulations and standards, including those required by the county, state, and the federal government.

The Cypress School District agrees with this finding. The Board of Trustees recognizes that students and staff have the right to a safe and secure campus where they are free from physical and psychological harm. The Cypress School District is fully committed to maximizing school safety and to creating a positive learning environment that includes strategies for violence prevention and high expectations for student conduct, responsible behavior and respect for others.

In keeping with Education Code 32281, each school in Cypress School District is responsible for writing and development of a comprehensive school safety plan relevant to the needs and resources of that particular school. The plan takes into account the school's staff, available resources and building design, as well as other factors unique to the site. Each school's safety plan is typically reviewed annually. Last 2010-11 school year we did not formally review these plans because of limited time and resources. This is not to say that safety plans were not implemented and enforced. Each of our six schools did

School districts have developed school safety plans under the Education Code. School districts are also required to comply with state and federal emergency management standards, Standardized Emergency Management Systems (SEMS) and National Incident Management System (NIMS). Efforts should be made to make these requirements consistent with each other.

Finding 5: Some schools reported they have not adequately anticipated the needs of students taking prescription, medications, or with specialized medical needs, in the event of some emergencies, such as an extended lockdown.

The Cypress School District has attempted to anticipate the needs of students taking prescription, medications, and/or have other medical needs in the event of an emergency.

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The Cypress School District employs one nurse for its six schools served. Under the guidance of this nurse an attempt is made at the beginning of each school year to learn the needs of each student who takes prescription medication or who has other medical needs. This information is maintained at both the District office and the school site main office in a binder. Information about all students with a chronic health concern is maintained in this school office binder in alphabetical order. In addition, the District requires that we have a 3-day supply of medication in the school office area for any student with diabetes or epilepsy. In the event of an emergency (i.e., lockdown, earthquake, etc.), appropriate staff would be responsible for grabbing all medication and transporting in a special medical bag to the area of need. The Cypress School District agrees that this issue should be addressed by all schools/districts and will continue to be vigilant in assuring that the needs of students with medical needs are addressed during times of an emergency.

Finding 6: School districts are in communication with a variety of local and county departments, agencies, and systems to help them prepare for and respond to disasters or emergencies; not all districts access the same resources.

In order to provide a safe environment for our students, staff and community, Cypress School District has taken steps to ensure safety and security issues are being met. In conjunction with local Law Enforcement, Fire Services, Emergency Services, State of California, Orange County Office of Education and our school's staff, parents, and neighborhood, we have developed a comprehensive plan that takes a proactive position, instead of a reactive one. Our staff participates in on-going training for disaster prevention, crisis response, and post-crisis.

Through this plan, our primary goal is to provide and maintain a safe learning environment for our students so they can receive the education they deserve. Education Code 48900 identifies and defines which behaviors are inappropriate in a school setting. Depending on the type of infraction committed by a student, the District utilizes a work sheet which identifies when an offense is to be reported to California Safe Schools Assessment (CSSA).

At the beginning of each school year each supervisory staff member is responsible for addressing several disaster preparedness items which include knowing who to call in the event of an emergency. For most emergency type situations, Board Policy identify which outside agency should be called. One example of this is when a fire is discovered in any part of the school, the principal (or designee) is to call 911 after the fire bell signal is initiated. In the event of a bomb threat, any employee who receives a bomb threat is to immediately call 911 and also report the threat to the principal.

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The Cypress School District is continually working to improve its Comprehensive School Safety Plan. This improvement effort includes annual review with each of our six different school sites in identifying which outside agencies should be called and when. In addition, the District works daily in maintaining good relationships with local law enforcement and fire departments.

Finding 7: Few schools have plans or emergency preparation information available in languages other than English.

The Board of Trustees recognizes the District's responsibility to keep the public informed regarding the goals, programs, achievements, and needs of the schools and district and to be responsive to the concerns and interests expressed by members in our community. Currently, the District employs one Korean translator to help assist us in meeting this need. Also, the District utilizes Spanish translators as needed. However, our district has not prepared emergency information in languages other than English, but it is our intention to do so in the near future.

Recommendation 1: Those districts which have yet to identify disaster grant opportunities, especially from governmental agencies, investigate the availability of potential resources. Forming interdistrict collaboratives, learning from districts in the county that have been successful, pooling resources, and asking for consultation from the Orange County Superintendent of Schools/OCDE may help in these efforts.

In 2010-11, our District did pursue an opportunity presented by the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE). We met with law enforcement representatives from Cypress Police Department to discuss how we might participate with the OCDE and the Orange County Intelligence Assessment Center, in vulnerability assessment program. Because the OCDE has been successful in attaining grant funding through REMS, we have an opportunity to compliment our current safety plan and receive better responses by our local law enforcement in dealing with gang-like events or random type shooter incidents. We are introducing this program incrementally to our District. Last April 2011, our first school was visited by a law enforcement team. This team spent time collecting data and taking several pictures of the campus (both inside and outside). From this they will produce a customized report that law enforcement will use to better understand the layout of the school campus in the event we should ever have an emergency type event. As we progress with modernization at the five other remaining schools, we will continue to work with this law enforcement team to help ensure our District is as safe as it can be. We understand that the existing federal grant program will be phasing out in 2012 and are hopeful that other grant programs will be identified.

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Recommendation 2: Districts review their plans, and the plans specific to each of their campuses, with respect to emergencies or possible disaster situations they have not anticipated.

It is a district requirement that each of our school sites has a written safe school plans drafted and submitted by March 1st of each year. Currently the District has the following emergency response and crisis management procedures (in no particular order):

- Accident, Injury, Sudden Illness
- Hostile Parent/Adult
- Fire
- Earthquake
- Evacuation
- Lock Down
- Airplane Crash
- Extreme Weather
- Utility Failure or Leak, Building Emergency, Crime
- Hazardous Materials Incident
- Terrorist Threat
- Active Shooter/Campus Siege
- School Fatality
- Emergency 911 Calls
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Recommendation 3: Districts review their level of compliance with various existing codes, regulations, and liability insurance issues that pertain to emergency preparedness in public schools.

The Cypress School District has implemented this recommendation by developing a school safety plan for each of its schools and working with federal, state and local emergency management agencies. The school district has sufficient liability insurance with respect to emergency preparedness.

Recommendation 4: Districts review their plans, and the plans specific to each of their campuses, to ascertain whether the special medical and/or prescription medication needs of all students are adequately anticipated, especially during an extended disaster situation.

The Cypress School District has attempted to anticipate the needs of students taking prescription, medications, and/or have other medical needs in the event of an emergency.

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The Cypress School District employs one nurse for its six schools served. Under the guidance of this nurse an attempt is made at the beginning of each school year to learn the needs of each student who takes prescription medication or who has other medical needs. This information is maintained at both the District office and the school site main office in a binder. Information about all students with a chronic health concern is maintained in this school office binder in alphabetical order. In addition, the District requires that we have a 3-day supply of medication in the school office area for any student with diabetes or epilepsy. In the event of an emergency (i.e., lockdown, earthquake, etc.), appropriate staff would be responsible for grabbing all medication and transporting in a special medical bag to the area of need. The Cypress School District agrees that this issue should be addressed by all schools/districts and will continue to be vigilant in assuring that the needs of all students with medical needs are addressed during times of an emergency.

Recommendation 5: Districts survey their campuses with respect to the needs of non- or limited-English- speaking parents and guardians, and develop outlines or summaries of critical emergency planning information in Spanish, Vietnamese, and other threshold languages prevalent in their local communities.

The Cypress School District is developing a survey with respect to the needs of non or limited English speaking parents and guardians to develop a summary of critical emergency planning information in their native language.

Sincerely,



Beverly M. Hempstead
Superintendent



Tim McLellan, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent,
Business Services