

Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District

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October 17, 2011

Orange County Grand Jury
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

RE: Orange County Grand Jury Report – Emergency Preparedness

Orange County Grand Jury,

The Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District has reviewed and modified our prior responses to Findings 1-7 and Recommendations 1-5 of the Orange County Grand Jury Report entitled, "Orange County Public Schools: Are they Prepared for Emergencies?"

I hope that all documents are in order and have been answered thoroughly. If there are any questions or concerns, please contact my office at 714-985-8419.

Thank you,



Doug Domene
Asst. Superintendent, Business Services

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Orange County Grand Jury Report – Emergency Preparedness
Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District
October 17, 2011

In accordance with California Penal Code Section 933.05, a response is required from the Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District to Findings 1-7 and Recommendations 1-5.

Response to Findings:

F-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 Placentia Yorba Linda School District (PYLUSD) agrees with the findings of the Grand Jury. With the amount of budget reductions our district has had to make over the past seven years, it has become very difficult to dedicate funds to equip schools sites with the supplies needed. We continue to examine ways to generate additional funding including the pursuit of grants and donations. Parent groups and local community groups have provided some funds but much more is needed. However, our school staff continues to find time to plan, prepare and practice for emergency situations.

F-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.

PYLUSD continues to pursue grants that would enhance school preparation. However, we have been more successful in seeking funds from our local communities. PTSA-sponsored fundraisers have helped offset the loss of state funding.

F-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.

PYLUSD has identified various scenarios which may occur on a school campus. Each school site is provided with protocols for the following incidents: Accidents, Armed Student(s), Bomb Threat, Earthquake, Fire and/or Explosion, Fire – Vehicle, Flood, Hazardous Material Spill, Homicide, Hostage, Poisoning/Bites, Rape, Shooting, Suicide, Suspicious Circumstances, Terrorist Attack, Terrorism, Oral Rehydration

F-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.

PYLUSD has developed plans that comply with the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS). Each school site is provided with a template that adheres to the SEMS protocols. Schools are required to update their plan each year as well as provide two reports each year relative to their training activities.

F-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.

PYLUSD agrees that this is an important issue that needs further attention. In our district, students with critical health issues have special resources available to them should an emergency occur. This could include medicine or special food for dietary issues.

F-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.

Over the past several years, PYLUSD has improved their ability to communicate with outside agencies. Each year our emergency phone lists are updated and staff attends joint meeting with local community organizations to discuss responses to emergency situations.

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

PYLUSD has not prepared emergency information in languages other than English. Since, the plans are executed by staff who all speak English, we have not found this necessary.

Responses to Recommendations

R-1 Those districts which have yet to identify disaster grant opportunities, especially from governmental agencies, investigate the availability of potential resources. Forming inter-district 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.

PYLUSD has received state and federal grants for emergency preparation and will continue to pursue additional funding.

R-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.

Each school in PYLUSD has a comprehensive Crisis Response Plan that is reviewed at the beginning of each year. These plans are updated to reflect current staffing and school site changes. In addition, schools are required to complete a School Safety Plan which is due March 1.

R-3 Districts review their level of compliance with various existing codes, regulations, and liability insurance issues that pertain to emergency preparedness in public schools.

This recommendation has been followed for the past several years. In addition, PLYUSD Crisis Response Plans are reviewed by our Risk Management Division as well as insurance carriers.

R-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.

PYLUSD is currently reviewing its plans with respect to the special needs and prescription medication needs of all students and is expanding a plan to meet these needs in the event of an emergency.

R-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.

PYLUSD will survey campuses with respect to the needs of non- or limited-English-speaking parents and guardians and will develop a summary of critical emergency plan information that we may need to have published in alternative languages.