



Centralia School District

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www.cesd.us

October 25, 2011

Stanley Ness
Chair, Continuity and Special Issues
Orange County Grand Jury
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Subject: Revised Response Summary
Orange County Public Schools – Emergency Preparedness

Dear Mr. Ness:

In response to your communication dated October 11, 2011, attached please find a revised response summary. We have included a more detailed and individualized response that addresses current budget issues in relation to emergency planning and preparedness at Centralia School District.

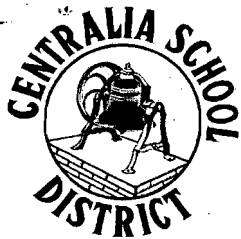
Recently, on October 20, 2011, our Districtwide Disaster Drill was conducted wherein all students and staff are evacuated and teams are deployed to conduct Sweep & Rescue, set up First Aid stations and fully activate Emergency Operations Centers. Centralia School District has had a disaster preparedness program in place for many years and is also registered with the Great California ShakeOut program.

If you have any questions, please let me know at (714) 228-3154.

Sincerely,

David Giordano
Assistant Superintendent
Business & Administrative Services

cwn
oc grand jury



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ORANGE COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT

ORANGE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS: ARE THEY PREPARED FOR EMERGENCIES?

REVISED RESPONSE SUMMARY FROM THE CENTRALIA SCHOOL DISTRICT

In accordance with California Penal Code section 933.05, a response is required from the Centralia 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.

Centralia School District agrees with this finding. Insufficient funding, relative to emergency planning and preparation, has been problematic for many years. At present, there are minimal State funds and resources available for disaster planning. If adequate funding was available, school districts could provide the necessary resources to move forward with emergency management planning. Unfortunately, the State fiscal crisis has had severe impacts on school district operations during the last four years. At Centralia School District, our operating funds have been reduced by over \$5 million annually, or roughly 20 percent, due to the current fiscal crisis.

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.

Centralia School District agrees that school districts should seek grant funding. An existing federal grant program will be phasing out in 2012 and other grant programs will need to be identified. If more information were made available relative to grant and/or funding opportunities, districts could pursue these funding opportunities as additional resources become available. Due to the State fiscal crisis, Centralia School District has eliminated roughly 20 percent of Management, Classified, and Certificated personnel. As a result, limited resources are currently available to pursue potential grant and/or funding opportunities. Some of the additional actions required by the District in recent years include:

- Restructured and consolidated District and school site operations
- Negotiated 10 Furlough Days in 2010/11 for all District staff
- Negotiated up to 10 Furlough Days in 2011/12 for all District staff
- Implemented 5 Furlough Days in 2009/10 for all Management staff
- Negotiated elimination of teacher release days in 2010/11 and 2011/12
- Reduced the school year by five (5) days in 2010/11 and 2011/12
- Maximized State Categorical Flexibility options
- Increased class sizes to State approved maximum in most cases
- Spent funds earmarked for facility improvements on general operations
- Closed one (1) elementary school
- Cut programs and services
- Minimized travel, conference, supply & equipment purchases
- Eliminated most home-to-school transportation routes
- ~~Negotiated lower service fees with vendors~~
- Restructured Print Shop & negotiated new equipment maintenance agreements
- Installed energy saving thermostats and sensors
- Eliminate District paid dues for employee professional groups

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 Centralia School District agrees with this finding, and has developed procedures to include the following emergency situations in addition to earthquakes and fires: civil disturbances, biological hazards, lockdowns, evacuations, bomb or terrorist threats, hazardous materials, chemical spills, airplane crashes, hostage situations, intruders on campus, and extreme weather related emergencies.

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 Centralia School district agrees with this finding, and has developed school safety plans pursuant to Education Code. School districts are also required to comply with State and Federal emergency management standards, Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and National Incident Management System (NIMS).

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.

Centralia School District schools keep important medical information on file and encourages parents (as well as staff) to keep an extra supply of medications in the Health Office in case of an emergency situation or extended stay on campus as the result of a disaster situation.

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.

The Centralia School District agrees that different districts access different resources and it is our understanding that school districts communicate in a variety of ways with first responders, local agencies, and other agencies to support matters of emergency management.

Finding 7:

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

The Centralia School District has emergency information available in the required languages, including English, Spanish and Korean.

Recommendation 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.

The Centralia School District has not received grants for emergency preparedness. However, the District intends to request identification of disaster grant opportunities and investigate the availability of potential resources.

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.

Each of the schools in Centralia School District has a written school safety plan which is reviewed and updated as needed by March 1st of each year.

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 Centralia 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. Our 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.

Centralia School District schools keep important medical information on file for students. In addition, the District encourages parents (as well as staff) to keep an extra supply of medications in the Health Office in the case of an emergency situation or an extended stay on-site as the result of a disaster.

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.

Centralia School District has not recently surveyed campuses with respect to the needs of non or limited English speaking parents/guardians relative to emergency planning and preparation, however does have a quantity of emergency planning information available in Spanish and Korean, the two threshold languages in our community. As grant or funding opportunities and available resources become available, the Centralia School District will evaluate surveying campuses with respect to the needs of non or limited English speaking parents/guardians.

cwn
disaster preparedness - grand jury rpt upd 10-2011