



CITY OF ORANGE

CITY MANAGER

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September 6, 2023

The Honorable Maria Hernandez
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Re: City of Orange Response to Grand Jury Report: “School Shootings: How Prepared Are Orange County Public Schools?”

Dear Honorable Judge Hernandez:

The following is the City of Orange’s response to the findings and recommendations contained in the Grand Jury’s Report, *“School Shootings: How Prepared Are Orange County Public Schools?”* The City of Orange was asked to respond to Findings F1 and F8, as well as Recommendations R1, R3, R4, and R12.

FINDINGS:

F1. Law enforcement, first responders, and other stakeholders have demonstrated a strong interest in working cooperatively with Orange County public schools to mitigate the risk of an active shooter incident; establishment of MOUs between law enforcement and school districts would strengthen this cooperation.

City’s Response: Respondent agrees with the finding. The City of Orange agrees with this finding insofar that the City of Orange is relying on the information and examples detailed in the subject grand jury report. The City of Orange Police Department already works collaboratively with the school district, including but not limited to participating in trainings, meetings, and assigning School Resource Officers to various schools. As part of their customary duties, the City of Orange Police Department’s School Resource Officers routinely consult with school district personnel regarding active shooter protocols.

F8. School Resource Officers (SROs) are a valuable asset for school safety, yet many cities/districts do not allocate sufficient funds to hire needed officers.

City’s Response: Respondent agrees with the finding. The City of Orange agrees with this finding insofar that the City of Orange is relying on the information and examples detailed in the subject grand jury report. The City of Orange Police Department assigns School Resource Officers to various schools in the district. The School Resource Officers work proactively with the school district’s administration regarding handling matters, communication, and prevention. The City cannot, however, opine as to whether other cities and/or school districts have allocated sufficient funding for their respective programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. Each Orange County school district should arrange for local law enforcement to do an annual safety inspection of each school. The written safety checklist should include an audit of the integrity of site boundaries and a review of safety plans and policies. To be implemented by October 1, 2023, and annually thereafter. (F1, F10, F 11)

City's Response: This recommendation has been implemented on an ongoing basis. The City of Orange Police Department School Resource Officers conducted an evaluation of safety protocols and are physically at the various schools in the school district. They are constantly evaluating safety protocols and collaboratively communicating with the school district's third-party vendors regarding school safety and training.

R3. Each Orange County school district, in conjunction with law enforcement, should develop and implement tabletop exercises to be conducted in district schools. To be implemented by December 31, 2023, and annually thereafter. (F2)

City's Response: This recommendation has been implemented. The City of Orange Police Department does not develop the tabletop exercises but participated in a school district developed tabletop exercise during Summer 2023.

R4. Each Orange County school district should work with law enforcement to plan and conduct a district-wide active shooter drill. To be implemented by July 1, 2024, and at least every other year thereafter. (F2)

City's Response: This recommendation has been implemented. The City of Orange Police Department does not develop the active shooter drill but participates multiple times a year in school district developed drills.

R12. Each Orange County school district should assess the need for SROs or additional SROs, reaching out to appropriate community partners to facilitate funding. To be implemented by July 1, 2024. (F8)

City's Response: This recommendation has been implemented. The need for additional resources is reviewed on a continuous basis. The City of Orange Police Department seeks to fund additional full-time School Resource Officers. It collaboratively works with community partners such as Gang Reduction Intervention Partnership (GRIP) to positively improve academics, increase school attendance, and improve students' attitude.

Sincerely,



Thomas C. Kisela
City Manager

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

BCC: Michael Vigliotta, City Attorney