

# Safety and Security in Ventura County High Schools

## Background

School safety and security became an issue brought to the forefront by the disruptive events occurring on school campuses throughout our country in the recent past.

On March 5, 2001 in Santee, California, a small upscale suburban community in San Diego County, an active shooter was on the campus of Santana High, even though “it could not happen here.” At 9:20A.M., a 15-year-old freshman entered the campus with a 22-caliber 8-shot revolver, killed two of his fellow students and wounded 13 others. It was the second worst shooting on our nation’s campuses. The Columbine High School assault remains the worst incident in the history of school violence.

The Columbine and Santee assaults, and the alarming hostage situation on the campus of one of our Ventura County high schools are several of the alarming episodes that seem to be occurring all too frequently. The most recent incident was in New York City where two students were injured by gunfire. The list grows!

“It could not happen here.”

In the interest of addressing school safety and security in Ventura County, the Grand Jury elected to visit all regular\* public high schools to develop findings to use as a comparison between these schools. The Grand Jury also wanted to determine if state mandated education codes and district policies and procedures were in place as well as any locally developed measures unique to a given school’s situation, i.e. location, demographics, etc.

The Education Code states, “Each school district and county office of education is responsible for the overall development of comprehensive school safety plans for its schools operating any kindergarten and any of grades 1 to 12 inclusive”. The Code further states, “The comprehensive school safety plan shall be evaluated and amended, as needed, by the school safety planning committee no less than once a year to ensure that the comprehensive school safety plan is properly implemented. An updated file of all safety-related plans and materials shall be readily available for inspection by the public”.

## Methodology

The Grand Jury visited the high schools focusing solely on school safety and security. Appointments were made with school administrators and a list of safety

*\* No continuation or specialty public schools were visited.*

related questions was sent to each school in advance of the Grand Jury visits. The Grand Jury requested that key school administrators responsible for school's safety plans, i.e. disaster plans, evacuation plans, etc., be present at the meetings. The Grand Jury requested that the School Resource Officers (SRO) and the school nurses be present also, if the schools had such staff positions and if the persons were available.

The meetings were held during school hours. Prior to the meeting time the Grand Jury attempted to enter each campus to observe security procedures and staff and to determine the accessibility of the campus to unauthorized persons.

In all, 20 high schools in 9 school districts and 1 school district office were visited by the Grand Jury over a period of approximately 12 weeks.

### **Procedural Findings**

- F-1. All high schools have the required School Safety manuals and are in compliance with the Education Code.
- F-2. All high schools have a condensed and localized safe school plan.
- F-3. Most high schools have an emergency evacuation/lockdown plan and conduct emergency practice drills; however not all schools detail in the plan the procedures to follow in the event that an incident occurs during a time when students are not in class, i.e. during lunch period or during passing periods.
- F-4. All high schools use a parent notification form that defines school and district policies, rules and regulations. This is distributed to parents at the start of the school semester.
- F-5. All high schools provide a student handbook that includes district and school policies, and rules and regulations. This is distributed to each student during the enrollment process.
- F-6. Of the 20 high school campuses visited by the Grand Jury, 5 were open with no security fences around the perimeters and 15 were closed and fenced, limiting access to school grounds during and after hours.
- F-7. Most high schools have a procedure to screen visitors entering or leaving the campus.
- F-8. One school district requires that the schools in the district do random weapon searches, maintain a log of the searches and report the results to the district on a scheduled basis.
- F-9. Some high schools use police K-9s, or a private company that provides dogs, to do random checks for weapons in lockers, student backpacks and cars in the parking lot and school perimeters. Students are not personally subjected to search by the dogs.
- F-10. Some high schools use a system of peer mediation or counseling to resolve student conflicts.
- F-11. Some high schools are involved in "Teen Court," a method whereby student offenders are required by the Juvenile Probation Agency to appear

before the Teen Court to participate in a “Peer Trial.” A panel of his or her peers then sentences the teen defendant. A judge or a judge pro-tem of the Superior Court presides over the trial and student participators serve as court staff and jury. The teen defendant must also agree to serve on a teen jury at a future date.

### **Personnel Findings**

- F-12. All high schools have an administrator in charge of school safety.
- F-13. Most high schools have either a school nurse, nurse’s assistant or health aide on staff full or part time.
- F-14. At one school the school nurse has compiled information on how many of the school’s staff are current in first aid and CPR training and which are not currently certified. This information is then used to provide training for staff in need of certification.
- F-15. Most high schools have a local law enforcement SRO assigned to the school during school hours.
- F-16. All high schools employ full or part time campus security personnel who work staggered schedules for added campus security.
- F-17. All high schools have increased supervision at home athletic events.

### **Security Equipment Related Findings**

- F-18. Some high schools have replaced older fencing with newer, more attractive, and taller iron fences surrounding portions of the campus.
- F-19. Some high schools use metal detectors to do random weapons checks.
- F-20. Some high schools use breathalyzer type equipment to detect alcohol use by students.
- F-21. All high schools use hand held radios for communication and in some school districts the radios are able to be tuned to a district-wide frequency enabling inner district communication should the need arise.
- F-22. Some high schools have security surveillance cameras installed however not all cameras are of the newer digital type.
- F-23. Some high schools use electric carts to enable security staff to patrol large areas more efficiently.
- F-24. At one high school, some of the security staff and an administrator use bicycles to cover the school’s large campus.
- F-25. At least two school districts are in the process of having all of the buildings at schools in their districts identifiable by aircraft surveillance.
- F-26. Several high schools have digital camera equipment and computer software that is used to produce student picture ID badges. This eliminates the use of an outside photographer and the system eventually pays for itself. The system also allows the school to maintain a “mug shot” type file for security or emergency use by the school or local law enforcement as needed.

- F-27. Some schools maintain an “Emergency Disaster Bin” stocked with emergency supplies i.e., food packs, water, sanitary supplies, first aid supplies, rope, tools, etc., for use in the event of a major disaster. In addition, some schools have small disaster packs located in classroom areas.

### **Specific Findings By School Or District**

- F-28. Members of the Grand Jury were able to drive their vehicles onto the school grounds of Oak Park High School with no restriction or detection.
- F-29. Members of the Grand Jury were able to walk onto the school grounds of Nordhoff, Buena, and Ventura High Schools during school hours with no detection. A staff person at Ventura High School eventually challenged us.
- F-30. Ventura, Buena, Oak Park and Nordhoff High Schools have no programs established for conducting random checks for weapons.
- F-31. Nordhoff High School does not have a school nurse or medical aide/assistant on staff.
- F-32. Simi Valley and Royal High Schools in Simi Valley, in partnership with the Simi Valley Police Department, have taken the attitude of “we are Columbine”, and have prepared accordingly.
- F-33. The fence surrounding Rio Mesa High School is not tall enough to be effective.

### **Conclusions**

- C-1. All high schools the Grand Jury visited have Safe Schools plans in place and do the required notification of parents and students of the school’s and district’s rules and regulations. (F-1, F-2, F-4, F-5)
- C-2. Although all visited high schools have the required evacuation, lock down, and disaster plans, some of these schools need to factor into their plans specifically what students and staff are to do in the event of an incident happening during lunch or a passing period. (F-2)
- C-3. Emergency or disaster drills held and evaluated by the school’s safety committee at various times throughout the school year help to prepare for the “real thing”. (F-3)
- C-4. Although all visited high schools have procedures in place to screen visitors and restrict campus entry by unauthorized persons, some of the schools the Grand Jury visited were open campus schools with no fencing and were not as secure from unauthorized entry as schools with a closed or fenced campus. (F-6, F-7, F-29)
- C-5. Effective perimeter fencing surrounding school property enables the campus to be more secure from unauthorized entry both during and after school hours. (F-6, F-18, F-28, F-29)
- C-6. Schools in locations that are perceived to be safer locations by both school administration, school district and the community are not as safe as schools where the school administration, district, local law enforcement and community have taken the attitude of “we are Columbine,” and have prepared accordingly. (F-28, F-29, F-33)

- C-7. High schools where safety and security are a lower priority are located in areas where demographics and location make them “seem safer”. (F-28, F-29)
- C-8. Some high schools that are of older construction lack the equipment necessary to come to the same degree of safety as other schools in the same school district and need funding to be brought up to parity. (F-18, F-22, F-23, F-34)
- C-9. The presence of a law enforcement SRO on a high school campus on a full time basis, serves to be not only a deterrent to inappropriate conduct but also tends to have students be willing participants in maintaining a safe and secure school environment. (F-15)
- C-10. The employment of campus security personnel, in addition to administrators, performing security tasks prior to, during and after school hours, with the ability to rapidly deploy when necessary, is a must in maintaining a safe and secure school environment. (F-16, F-23)
- C-11. Schools that staff a school nurse, nurse’s assistant, or health aide and have adequate staff certified in first aid and CPR, and know who needs to be certified, are better prepared to handle emergencies. (F-13, F-14)
- C-12. Peer counseling or mediation is an effective way to resolve student conflicts. (F-10)
- C-13. The “Teen Court” program is an effective way of dispensing justice to student offenders while familiarizing participating classes and students with the judicial system. (F-12)
- C-14. Hand held radios become more effective when all schools in a district are able to tune to a district-wide frequency. (F-21)
- C-15. School buildings that are numbered or somehow identified on rooftops are much easier for law enforcement to locate when aircraft surveillance or response becomes necessary. (F-25)
- C-16. Schools or districts that perform regular but random checks for weapons have found this to be an effective way of both detection and deterrence. However districts and schools that rely on observation of student behavior or student informants and conduct no other procedures of detection are at risk. (F-8, F-9)
- C-17. Schools that use private security company dogs or local law enforcement K-9 units to perform searches for weapons in and around a school’s campus offer both better detection of, and deterrence of the possession of such items. (F-9)

## **Recommendations**

- R-1. All high schools should have perimeter fencing enclosing the entire school campus. (C-4, C-5)
- R-2. All high schools should have a full time law enforcement SRO present on campus during school hours. (C-9)

- R-3. All high schools should staff campus entrances with campus security personnel. (C-10)
- R-4. All high schools should have regular emergency practice drills with some drills occurring during a lunch or passing period, and evaluate the efficiency of such drills. (C-2, C-3)
- R-5. All high schools and districts should have in place procedures for conducting random searches of school property for weapons. (C-16, C-17)
- R-6. All high schools should have an up to date security camera system. (C-8)
- R-7. All school districts, high schools, and local law enforcement, should adopt the attitude of “we are Columbine”, and prepare accordingly. (C-6)
- R-8. All districts with high schools should implement the “Teen Court or Peer Court” program in at least one of the high schools. (C-13)
- R-9. All school districts should have school buildings in their districts identified on each building’s rooftop to facilitate easier identification by law enforcement air surveillance. (C-15)
- R-10. All high schools should have a certified school nurse, nurse’s assistant, or health aide on duty during school hours. (C-11)
- R-11. Where school districts lack the funds to make their schools as safe as other schools within their district, or within Ventura County, these districts should align their budgets to accomplish parity by July 1st 2004. (C-5, C-6, C-10, C-11, C-15)

### **Responses Required**

- Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Office,  
County Superintendent of Schools (R-1 through R-11)
- Conejo Valley Unified School District (R-1 through R-11)
  - Newbury Park High School (R-1 through R-10)
  - Thousand Oaks High School (R-1 through R-10)
  - Westlake High School (R-1 through R-10)
- Fillmore Unified School District (R-1 through R-11)
  - Fillmore Senior High School (R-1 through R-10)
- Moorpark Unified School District (R-1 through R-11)
  - Moorpark High School (R-1 through R-10)
- Oak Park Unified School District (R-1 through R-11)
  - Oak Park High School (R-1 through R-10)
- Ojai Unified School District (R-1 through R-11)
  - Nordhoff High School (R-1 through R-10)

Oxnard Union High School District (R-1 through R-11)  
    Adolfo Camarillo High School (R-1 through R-10)  
    Channel Islands High School (R-1 through R-10)  
    Hueneme High School (R-1 through R-10)  
    Oxnard High School (R-1 through R-10)  
    Pacifica High School (R-1 through R-10)  
    Rio Mesa High School (R-1 through R-10)

Santa Paula Union High School District (R-1 through R-11)  
    Santa Paula High School (R-1 through R-10)

Simi Valley Unified School District (R-1 through R-11)  
    Royal High School (R-1 through R-10)  
    Simi Valley High School (R-1 through R-10)

Ventura Unified School District (R-1 through R-11)  
    Buena High School (R-1 through R-10)  
    Ventura High School (R-1 through R-10)

Ventura County Sheriff's Department (R-2, R-7, R-9)

Oxnard Police Department (R-2, R-7)

Santa Paula Police Department (R-2, R-7)

Simi Valley Police Department (R-2, R-7)

Ventura Police Department (R-2, R-7)

Ventura County Probation Agency (R-8)

**Conejo Valley Unified School District**  
**INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES DIVISION**  
 1400 E. Janss Road, Thousand Oaks, California 91322-2198  
 Telephone (805) 497-9511 • FAX (805) 379-5756

*WOWOKA 5/16/02*  
*5/16/02*  
**RECEIVED**  
 VENTURA COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT  
**MAY 21 2002**  
**OFFICE OF THE**  
**PRESIDING JUDGE**

Neil Schmidt, Ph.D.  
*Interim Superintendent*

May 16, 2002

Richard W. Simpson, Ed.D.  
*Assistant Superintendent*  
*Instructional Services*

**RECEIVED**  
**MAY 28 2002**  
*RLS*

Honorable Bruce A. Clark  
 Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
 Ventura County Hall of Justice  
 800 South Victoria Avenue  
 Ventura, CA 93009

Dear Judge Clark:

We are writing in response to a Grand Jury report entitled "Safety and Security in Ventura County High Schools." The letter we received from Mr. Reeber indicated that we are required to respond to the findings and recommendations of the Grand Jury report.

Attached is a copy of the required response from the Conejo Valley Unified School District.

Sincerely,

  
 Richard W. Simpson, Ed.D.  
 Assistant Superintendent, Instructional Services

cc: Neil Schmidt, Interim Superintendent  
 Instruction Division Directors  
 High School Principals

HIGH EXPECTATIONS → HIGH ACHIEVEMENT

Response 1 - Conejo Valley School District

**Conejo Valley Unified School District  
Instructional Services Division**

**Response to Grand Jury Report  
"Safety and Security in Ventura County High Schools"**

**Findings:**

The Conejo Valley Unified School District has been asked to respond to the Findings listed in a recent Grand Jury Report titled "Safety and Security in Ventura County High Schools." The District has been asked to state whether we concur, concur in part, or disagree with the Grand Jury's findings. Specific responses are listed below. In general, the District has no way of knowing whether the findings of the Grand Jury are accurate or not. District personnel were not included in the Grand Jury's review of high schools throughout Ventura County. Therefore, responses are limited to high schools within the Conejo Valley Unified School District.

F-1: *All high schools have the required School Safety manuals and are in compliance with the Education Code.*

Response: Concur for high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District.

F-2: *All high schools have a condensed and localized safe school plan.*

Response: Concur for high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District.

F-3: *Most high schools have an emergency evacuation/lockdown plan and conduct emergency practice drills; however not all schools detail in the plan the procedures to follow in the event that an incident occurs during a time when students are not in class, i.e. (sic) during lunch period or during passing periods.*

Response: High schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District do have emergency/lockdown plans and procedures.

F-4: *All high schools use a parent notification form that defines school and district policies, rules and regulations. This is distributed to parents at the start of the school semester.*

Response: Concur for high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District.

F-5: *All high schools provide a student handbook that includes district and school policies, and rules and regulations. This is distributed to each student during the enrollment process.*

Response: Concur for high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District.

F-6: *Of the 20 high school campuses visited by the Grand Jury, 5 were open with no security fences around the perimeters and 15 were closed and fenced, limiting access to school grounds during and after hours.*

Response: High schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District have secured perimeters.

*Response 1 - Conejo Valley School District (continued)*

F-7: *Most high schools have a procedure to screen visitors entering or leaving the campus.*

Response: Concur for high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District.

F-8: *One school district requires that the schools in the district do random weapon searches, maintain a log of the searches and report the results to the district on a scheduled basis.*

Response: Concur in part for high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District. Weapons searches are conducted when appropriate. Trained dogs are used in random searches for firearms/explosives.

F-9: *Some high schools use police K-9's, or a private company that provides dogs, to do random checks for weapons in lockers, student backpacks and cars in the parking lot and school perimeters. Students are not personally subjected to search by the dogs.*

Response: Concur for high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District.

F-10: *Some high schools use a system of peer mediation or counseling to resolve student conflicts.*

Response: Concur for high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District.

F-11: *Some high schools are involved in "Teen Court," a method whereby student offenders are required by the Juvenile Probation Agency to appear before the Teen Court to participate in a "Peer Trial." A panel of his or her peers then sentences the teen defendant. A judge or a judge pro-tem of the Superior Court presides over the trial and student participators serve as court staff and jury. The teen defendant must also agree to serve on a teen jury at a future date.*

Response: Concur for two high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District.

F-12: *All high schools have an administrator in charge of school safety.*

Response: Concur for high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District.

F-13: *Most high schools have either a school nurse, nurse's assistant or health aide on staff full or part time.*

Response: Concur for high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District.

F-14: *At one school the school nurse has compiled information on how many of the school's staff are current in first aid and CPR training and which are not currently certified. This information is then used to provide training in need of certification.*

Response: The District has specific positions in each high school that require first aid and CPR training.

*Response 1 - Conejo Valley School District (continued)*

<p>F-15: <i>Most high schools have a local law enforcement SRO assigned to the school during school hours.</i></p> <p>Response: Concur in part for high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District. The Ventura County Sheriff's Department has designated personnel assigned as school liaison officers. These officers are available to all schools during school hours but are not assigned to any specific school.</p> <p>F-16: <i>All high schools employ full or part time campus security personnel who work staggered schedules for added campus security.</i></p> <p>Response: Concur for high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District.</p> <p>F-17: <i>All high schools have increased supervision at home athletic events.</i></p> <p>Response: Concur for high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District.</p> <p>F-18: <i>Some high schools have replaced older fencing with newer, more attractive, and taller iron fences surrounding portions of the campus.</i></p> <p>Response: Concur for high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District.</p> <p>F-19: <i>Some high schools use metal detectors to do random weapons checks.</i></p> <p>Response: Concur in part for high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District. Metal detectors are available at each high school for use as determined appropriate by the school administrative staff.</p> <p>F-20: <i>Some high schools use breathalyzer type equipment to detect alcohol use by students.</i></p> <p>Response: Concur for high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District.</p> <p>F-21: <i>All high schools use hand held radios for communication and in some school districts the radios are able to be tuned to a district-wide frequency enabling inner district communication should the need arise.</i></p> <p>Response: Concur for high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District.</p> <p>F-22: <i>Some high schools have security surveillance cameras installed however not all cameras are of the newer digital type.</i></p> <p>Response: Concur in part for high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District. There is some, limited use of surveillance cameras.</p> <p>F-23: <i>Some high schools use electric carts to enable security staff to patrol large areas more efficiently.</i></p> <p>Response: Concur for high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District.</p>
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Response 1 - Conejo Valley School District (continued)

F-24: *At one high school, some of the security staff and an administrator use bicycles to cover the school's large campus.*

Response: This is not true for high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District.

F-25: *At least two school districts are in the process of having all of the buildings at schools in their district identifiable by aircraft surveillance.*

Response: Concur for high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District.

F-26: *Several high schools have digital camera equipment and computer software that is used to produce student picture ID badges. This eliminates the use of an outside photographer and the system eventually pays for itself. The system also allows the school to maintain a "mug shot" type file for security or emergency use by the school or local law enforcement as needed.*

Response: Concur for high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District.

F-27: *Some schools maintain an "Emergency Disaster Bin" stocked with emergency supplies i.e. (sic) food packs, water, sanitary supplies, first aid supplies, rope, tools, etc., for use in the event of a major disaster. In addition, some schools have small disaster packs located in classroom areas.*

Response: Concur for high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District.

F-28 through F-33: None of these findings apply to high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District.

*Response 1 - Conejo Valley School District (continued)*

**Recommendations:**

The Conejo Valley Unified School District has been asked to respond to the Recommendations listed in a recent Grand Jury Report titled "Safety and Security in Ventura County High Schools." The District has been asked to state whether each applicable recommendation has been implemented, will be implemented (with expected date of implementation), will not be implemented (with an explanation of the reason), or requires further study. Specific responses are listed below.

R-1: *All high schools should have perimeter fencing enclosing the entire school campus.*

Response: All high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District have secure perimeters.

R-2: *All high schools should have full time law enforcement SRO present on campus during school hours.*

Response: The District does not intend to implement this recommendation. There is no evidence or research to support this type of expense. A review of the major incidents of school violence which generated this Grand Jury Report will show that several of the schools had an SRO and it was not an effective deterrent. Columbine is a particularly poignant example of this. In addition, the presence on one SRO on campuses of 50+ acres builds in a false sense of security. Those intent on creating this type of havoc can easily avoid the SRO as they gain access to a campus.

This topic has been discussed by each School Site Council, the District Advisory Council, and the Board of Education. We strongly support the current working relationship with the Ventura County Sheriff's department and their assigned school liaison officers.

R-3: *All high schools should staff campus entrances with campus security personnel.*

Response: Already implemented for high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District.

R-4: *All high schools should have regular emergency practice drills with some drills occurring during a lunch or passing period, and evaluate the efficiency of such drills.*

Response: Already implemented for high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District.

R-5: *All high schools and districts should have in place procedures for conducting random searches of school property for weapons.*

Response: Already implemented for high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District.

*Response 1 - Conejo Valley School District (continued)*

R-6: *All high schools should have an up to date security camera system.*

Response: Partially implemented for high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District. "Full implementation" is not defined by the Grand Jury Report. The District does not intend to install a security camera system that would cover 50+ acres per high school plus all interior spaces.

R-7: *All school districts, high schools, and local law enforcement, should adopt the attitude of "we are Columbine," and prepare accordingly.*

Response: Already implemented for high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District. The Ventura County Sheriff's department has used our secondary schools on weekends for training designed specifically for these types of incidents.

R-8: *All districts with high schools should implement the "Teen Court or Peer Court" program in at least one of the high schools.*

Response: Already implemented in the Conejo Valley Unified School District at Newbury Park High School and Thousand Oaks High School.

R-9: *All school districts should have school buildings in their districts identified on each building's rooftop to facilitate easier identification by law enforcement air surveillance.*

Response: Being implemented for high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District. Staff have been working with the Ventura County Sheriff's Department. However, the District has been informed that the addition of building identification on the roofs will nullify the warranty provided by private contractors who have installed roofing in the District. The District is working with the contractors to overcome this obstacle.

R-10: *All high schools should have a certified school nurse, nurse's assistant, or health aide on duty during school hours.*

Response: Already implemented for high schools in the Conejo Valley Unified School District.

R-11: *Where school districts lack the funds to make their schools as safe as other schools within their district, or within Ventura County, these districts should align their budgets to accomplish parity by July 1, 2004.*

Response: The District believes that there is parity in resources for safety and security among the high schools in the District. There is not sufficient information in the Grand Jury report to know whether the District's high schools are any more or less secure than other high schools in Ventura County. Actual data from the State Crime Report would substantiate that the District's high schools are as safe or safer than high schools throughout Ventura County.

*Response 1 - Conejo Valley School District (continued)*



## SANTA PAULA UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Superintendent  
William J. Brand, Ed.D.

500 East Santa Barbara St.  
Santa Paula, CA 93060  
(805) 525-0900  
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Director of Business and Administrative Services  
Francine Tonigiani  
Director of Educational Services  
Carol Ramnarine, Ed.D.

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BOB F

**RECEIVED**  
VENTURA COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

MAY 14 2002

OFFICE OF THE  
PRESIDING JUDGE

May 10, 2002

Honorable Bruce A. Clark  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
Ventura County Hall of Justice  
800 S. Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, Ca. 93009

Dear Judge Clark:

Enclosed is the response to findings and recommendations of the Ventura County Grand Jury report entitled *Safety and Security in Ventura County High Schools*, for the Santa Paula Union High School District.

*Response to R-2, and R-7 from our School Resource Officer, representing the Santa Paula Police Department;*

R-2= Agree. There are numerous ways the school involves me in daily duties.

R-7= Agree. (Self-explanatory)

*Response to R-1 through R-11 from our Chief Campus Security Operations Officer, representing Santa Paula High School, and the Santa Paula Union High School District;*

R-1= Concur. Our perimeter fencing encloses much of our campus, but cannot enclose the entire area due to two public streets that divide the High School.

R-2= Concur. Our School Resource Officer works part-time for the Elementary school district, and part-time for the High school district. We are currently working with the local police department to hire a full-time School Resource Officer for each school district, for the 2002 / 2003 school year.

R-3= Concur. Already implemented.

R-4= Concur. We have yearly emergency drills, but have not practiced one during student break or lunch. I will ask the safety committee to plan a drill during a passing period for the 2002 / 2003 school year.

R-5= Concur. Already implemented.

R-6= Concur. We are in the process of upgrading our current surveillance system. We will have a digital camera system in place for the 2002 / 2003 school year.

R-7= Concur. Already implemented. We have a strong working relationship with the local police department. The police department conducts yearly "Active Shooter" scenarios on campus with their emergency response team.

R-8= Concur. This sounds like a good program. We would require further study to see of possible to implement at our school site.

*Providing Each Student with the Skills Necessary for Productive Employment or College Entrance*

Response 2 - Santa Paula Union High School District

R-9= Concur. The safety committee has already determined that we should have this done as soon as possible. Our plans are to have this done during the 2002 / 2003 school year.

R-10= Concur. Already implemented.

R-11= Concur in part. This requires further study.

Yours truly,



Dr. William J. Brand  
Superintendent of Schools



*W*

# OXNARD HIGH SCHOOL

3400 West Gonzales Road  
Oxnard, California 93030

Information: (805) 278-2806  
Attendance: (805) 278-2813

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May 15, 2002

Mr. Marvin J. Reeber  
Foreman Ventura County Grand Jury  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

Dear Mr. Reeber,

In accordance with the directive from the Grand Jury 2001-2002 regarding their findings and recommendations in the report entitled *Safety and Security in Ventura County High Schools*, Oxnard High School is responding within the 90-day limit. We applaud the diligence of the Grand Jury in their undertaking to make all schools a safer place for the students in Ventura County.

**Procedural Findings:**

Oxnard High School is in full compliance with findings F-1 through F-10. Oxnard High School supports a Peer Mediation program and counseling to resolve student conflicts, supported by a published document of progressive discipline for students who violate school rules. We do not have a Teen Court and so do not comply with F-11.

**Personnel Findings:**

Oxnard High School is in full compliance with findings F-12 through F-17.

**Security Equipment Related Findings:**

Oxnard High School is in full compliance with Findings F-18-19, F-21, F-23, F-25, and F-27.

OHS does not use a Breathalyzer to detect alcohol use by students as stated in F-20.

OHS does have security surveillance cameras, but not of the newer, digital type. We are in the process of reviewing available systems and seeking cost estimates. F-22

OHS does not use bicycles to cover its campus, but does utilize electric carts. F-24

OHS uses digital equipment to produce student picture ID cards in conjunction with the use of an outside photographer. Using an outside photographer allows OHS to more quickly provide ID cards for student identification for entering and exiting school grounds and for identification on school buses and during after school activities. Site digital systems are used for replacement cards and cards for new enrollees. F-26

"Committed To A Standard of Excellence in Academics, Activities, and Athletics"

Response 3 - Oxnard High School

**Specific Findings by School or District**

OHS had no specific findings noted by the Grand Jury. F-28 through F-33

**Recommendations:**

R-1 OHS has fully implemented perimeter fencing enclosing the campus proper. The parking areas, swimming pool, and fields are accessible through swing gates.

R-2 OHS has a full-time SRO present on campus during school hours and by arrangement at special after school activities.

R-3 OHS campus entrance is staffed at all times. OHS employs nine (9) part-time campus security personnel from 7:00 A.M to 4:00 P.M. Additionally, after school security staffing at special events and athletics is supported through Activities funding.

R-4 OHS holds regular, monthly emergency practice drills of all types and submits an evaluation of the effectiveness of the drills to the district Safety Officer.

R-5 OHS and the OUHSD have a policy and procedure for conducting random searches of school property for weapons on a daily basis. OHS submits weekly reports to the District Office.

R-6 OHS has a security camera surveillance system but not of the digital type. We have requested support by the district to install a digital system and the request is under consideration for the new fiscal year. With approval, OHS seeks to have a digital system for SY 2002-2003

R-7 OHS, OUHSD, and Oxnard Police Department work collaboratively through the School/Law Partnership to prepare for the safety of our students. Meetings are held monthly at the Career Center, and membership includes representatives from feeder junior high schools, all OUHSD high schools, Oxnard Police Department, Ventura County Sheriff's Department, Ventura County District Attorney, probation, and special law enforcement guests. OHS has also hosted evening workshops by the Oxnard Police Department SWAT team to provide training to officers as related to hostage situations in school settings, and the Gang Suppression Task Force to decrease gang activity through increased staff and community awareness and surveillance.

R-8 OHS supports a successful Peer Mediation program to resolve student conflicts. OHS is not seeking to implement a Teen Court at this time.

R-9 OHS school buildings are identified on each building's rooftop to facilitate easier recognition by law enforcement air surveillance.

R-10 OHS has a full-time certified nurse, a part-time health assistant, and a volunteer on duty during school hours. The hours of the health assistant are being increased from 4 to 5 hours starting in September 2002.

Should you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the OHS security officer, Mrs. Yvonne Peck, at (805) 278-2919, or myself at (805) 278-2904.

Sincerely,



James Edwards  
Principal

**Hueneme High School**  
 Office of the Principal  
 500 W. Bard Road  
 Oxnard, CA 93033  
 (805) 385 - 2664

**RECEIVED**  
 VENTURA COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

APR 30 2002

OFFICE OF THE  
 PRESIDING JUDGE

BG:  
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April 24, 2002

Honorable Bruce A. Clark  
 Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
 Ventura County Hall of Justice  
 800 S. Victoria Avenue  
 Ventura, CA 93009

Dear Judge Clark,

Please find below the response to recommendations made for Hueneme High School as required for the 2001 – 2002 Ventura County Grand Jury Report:

Safety and Security in Ventura County Schools

R-1 All high schools should have perimeter fencing enclosing the entire school campus

*Implemented*

R-2 All high schools should have a full time law enforcement SRO present on campus during school hours.

*Implemented*

R-3 All high schools should staff campus entrances with campus security personnel.

*Implemented*

R-4 All high schools should have regular emergency practice drills with some drills occurring during a lunch or passing period, and evaluate the efficiency of such drills.

*Regular emergency practice drills – Implemented*  
*Drills during a lunch or passing period – Requires further study*  
*Evaluate efficiency of such drills – Implemented*

R-5 All high schools and districts should have in place procedures for conducting random searches of school property for weapons.

*Implemented*

*Response 4 - Hueneme High School*

R-6 All high schools should have an up to date security camera system.

*Implemented*

R-7 All school districts, high schools, and local law enforcement should adopt attitude of “we are Columbine” and prepare accordingly.

*Implemented*

R-8 All districts with high schools should implement the “Teen Court” or “Peer” program in at least one of the high schools

*Requires further study - Hueneme High School currently makes good use Peer Mediation program as a method to vest students in positive solution: resolutions to problems and conflicts.*

R-9 All school districts should have school buildings in their districts identify building’s rooftop to facilitate easier identification by law enforcement air surveillance.

*Implemented*

R-10 All high schools should have a certified school nurse, nurse’s assistant, or aide on duty during school hours.

*Response 4 - Hueneme High School (continued)*

# CITY OF SAN BUENAVENTURA

**RECEIVED**  
VENTURA COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

**MAY 2 2002**

**OFFICE OF THE  
PRESIDING JUDGE**

**CITY COUNCIL**

Ray Di Gualto, Mayor  
 Brian Brennan, Deputy Mayor  
 Neal Andrews, Councilmember  
 James J. Friedman, Councilmember  
 James L. Morehan, Councilmember  
 Carl E. Morehouse, Councilmember  
 Sandy E. Smith, Councilmember

April 26, 2002

The Honorable Bruce Clark  
 Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
 Ventura County Hall of Justice  
 800 South Victoria Avenue  
 Ventura, California 93009

Your Honor:

I have reviewed the 2001 – 2002 Grand Jury report regarding safety and security in Ventura County high schools, I would like to address the following:

**Recommendation #2** – All high schools should have a full-time law enforcement School Resource Officer (SRO) present on campus during school hours.

In 1999, the Ventura Unified School District and the Ventura Police Department combined resources to develop an aggressive, pro-active program to address school security and student safety. This joint effort is the Ventura Safe Schools Program. Currently, three full-time officers are assigned to this program; one each is assigned to Buena High School and Ventura High School, and one is assigned to Pacific and Foothill Tech.

**Recommendation #7** – All school districts, high schools, and local law enforcement should adopt the attitude of "We Are Columbine" and prepare accordingly.

The goal of the Ventura Safe Schools Program is simple: Safe schools promote the educational process.

This program has several components, including:

- **School Resource Officer (SRO)** - The police department has committed five full-time uniformed police officers to the Safe Schools Program. As described above, three are assigned to the high schools and two work at the middle and elementary schools in the district.

These officers will have a wide variety of responsibilities including; campus security, enforcement of a "zero tolerance" for dangerous weapons, training school employees in campus security and drug recognition, intervention in alcohol, tobacco and illegal drug use,

**POLICE DEPARTMENT**

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referrals to the school district's Student Assistance Program and a variety of community-based programs, and as a resource to both students and teachers.

- **Drug Suppression Program** – The police department has a grant that funds our Drug Suppression in Schools Program. This program established the Suppression of Drug Abuse in Schools Advisory Committee; implemented a Drug Traffic Intervention and Suppression Program; provided classroom prevention curriculum to students and training for teachers; implemented family oriented programs; provided training for school personnel and law enforcement staff in the recognition of drug related problems; and developed a coordinated drug prevention system.
- **School Response Plan** – Our SWAT Team conducted a safety and security survey of each public school in the district. The survey results are used to update the police department's safety response plans for each campus and includes contingency plans for a wide variety of potential incidents. These plans enable emergency personnel to respond quickly and effectively to any potential threat. We also have GIS information and detailed aerial maps of each school campus. SWAT members also insured that school buildings and classrooms were properly marked for easy identification.
- **Beat Officer Accountability** - As part of the police department's Community Problem Oriented Policing (CPOP) philosophy, each beat officer is assigned specific schools within his or her beat and has immediate access to critical school information. These officers are responsible for knowing the problems that are occurring on or around the school during and after school hours. They also developed plans to deal with or prevent these problems and are responsible for the following:
  - A. **School Administration** – Each officer maintains contact with school administration, i.e., principal, vice-principal, etc. In conjunction with the SRO assigned to the school, each beat officer provides contact numbers and shift assignment, in order that the school principal and/or school official can contact that officer directly for information, problems or concerns.
  - B. **Extra Patrol** – Each officer makes every effort to conduct extra patrol assignments and foot patrol of his or her assigned campus.
  - C. **Safety Plans** – Each beat officer is responsible for his or her school's response plan that has been developed by a SWAT team member. Each officer will have knowledge of the school layout, ingress and egress sites, contact numbers, location of telephones, safety equipment and patrol response in case of emergency. Each officer will, in essence, be the police department liaison for the school.
- **Classroom Instruction** – School Resource Officers, in coordination with the school district's Healthy Student Program, spend time on each elementary campus teaching classes in drug abuse resistance, gang resistance, and violence prevention following a curriculum developed in cooperation with the Ventura Unified School District.

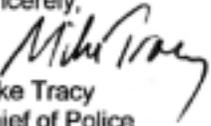
- **Training** – Every sworn member of the police department also receives 8-hours of active shooter training. Most importantly, we have conducted 2 major training exercises on school campuses, while school was-in session, where we simulated an emergency situation and coordinated response with the Ventura City Fire Department and Oxnard Police Department.

Additionally, we have conducted school-law partnership meetings every month for five years, where school principals and administrators meet with members of my department, the District Attorney's office and Ventura County Probation. We have found this is the most effective communication tool we currently use.

I believe we have proactively addressed the school safety issue in our community and we have developed an exemplary relationship with the Ventura Unified School District.

Should you or any member of the Grand Jury have additional questions, please contact Assistant Chief Pat Miller at 339-4468 or Lieutenant Ken Corney at 339-4398.

Sincerely,



Mike Tracy  
Chief of Police