



Conejo Valley Unified School District

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June 25, 2013

The Honorable Brian J. Back, Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
Mr. Jay Whitney, Foreperson, Ventura County Grand Jury
Ventura County Grand Jury
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

Re: **Response of Conejo Valley Unified School District to the Final Report of the Ventura County Grand Jury – School Security**

Dear Judge Back and Mr. Whitney:

In response to your letter of request dated May 10, 2013, please find the response of the Conejo Valley Unified School District to the Final Report of the Ventura County Grand Jury, 2012-13 – School Security.

The Board of Education reviewed the Grand Jury report, and approved the District's response at their meeting held on June 25, 2013.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require additional information.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Baarstad, Ph.D.
Superintendent

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VENTURA COUNTY
GRAND JURY

Conejo Valley Unified School District
Response to Ventura County Grand Jury Report
School Security, May 10, 2013

Responses to Findings:

Finding 1 – All school districts were trained in school security and threat assessment by Ventura County Office of Education and Ventura County Sheriff’s Department.

Response: We agree.

Finding 2 – The Grand Jury found that there were no ID badges on some staff, campus personnel and visitors.

Response: We cannot speak to conditions at schools outside CVUSD. With respect to the CVUSD elementary school visited, the report does not identify the school, nor the time of the visitation. As a result, we cannot verify this finding. As a result of recommendations from the Thousand Oaks Police Department (TOPD), in February 2013, CVUSD initiated a program to require all District staff to wear District issued ID badges at all school sites, and to require visitor badges at school sites.

Finding 3 – The Grand Jury found that gates were open and unmonitored.

Response: We cannot speak to conditions at schools outside CVUSD. With respect to the CVUSD elementary school visited, the report does not identify the school, nor the time of the visitation. As a result, we cannot verify finding. All CVUSD elementary schools have multiple points of entry in the form of gates in perimeter fencing. Several of these gates are left open and unlocked before and after school to allow for the orderly flow of students and parents onto and off the campus at arrival and dismissal times. During the school day, all of these gates are closed and locked. Only a single point of entry at the front of school is left unlocked during the school day. In the majority of our elementary schools, that single point of entry is the door to the school office, and visitors are required to enter the office, obtain a visitor pass, and exit onto the campus from the office. At several of our campuses, entry through the office is not possible due to building design. On those campuses, visitors enter through a single gate at the front of the school that can be monitored by office personnel. CVUSD has established a goal of modifying the structure of these schools so that the single point of entry during the school day will be through the school office. This will be accomplished as construction funds become available.

Finding 4 – The Grand Jury found no visible security.

Response: We cannot speak to conditions at schools outside CVUSD. With respect to the CVUSD elementary school visited, the report does not identify the school, nor the time of the visitation. As a result, we cannot verify this finding. CVUSD hires campus supervisors at each of our elementary schools. They are tasked primarily with supervising student conduct before and after school, at recess and at lunch. They also patrol the school when students are in class, but we do not have sufficient campus supervision to ensure that patrols are continuous throughout the school day. We do not employ security personnel.

Finding 5 – The Grand Jury found no perimeter fencing.

Response: We cannot speak to conditions at schools outside CVUSD. All CVUSD elementary schools have perimeter fencing.

Responses to Recommendations:

Recommendation 1 – Each school district should conduct a realistic threat assessment review to determine the facility’s vulnerability. The school should send a representative to the school to meet and discuss the threat assessment.

Response: We agree. Threat assessments were conducted at each CVUSD school during the month of January 2013, the results were discussed with school principals, and a project list was developed to address deficiencies. Projects have been implemented on an on-going basis since that time to address the deficiencies.

Recommendation 2 – Each school district, in cooperation with law enforcement should institute a training program for all personnel. Policies and practices should be implemented to identify warning signs and create effective communication among all personnel.

Response: We agree. CVUSD staff met with TOPD staff in early January 2013 to review and develop training programs, and additional policies to improve school site safety. An Active Shooter Training Program was developed in late January along with supporting materials, and all CVUSD personnel were training in February 2013. Refresher trainings will take place each year in the future.

Recommendation 3 – Each school building should be easily identified from the air and street. School districts should consider incorporating the use of volunteers to act as school safety agents, and these agents should be identified with unique vests. These vests should be uniform throughout Ventura County.

Response: CVUSD school buildings are easily identified from the ground, and we have provided detailed site plans including all room locations and room numbers to Thousand Oaks Police Department at their request. We are not in opposition to painting identification information on the roofs, but have not been asked to do so by TOPD. CVUSD hires campus supervisors at each of our elementary schools, and they are tasked with supervising student conduct. They also patrol the school when students are in class. We do not agree with using volunteers for this purpose for a number of reasons, including the reliability of volunteers, the constant turnover with volunteers, and the additional training burdens associated with that turnover. Our campus supervisors are identified with employee badges, security vests, or both. We do not believe uniform vests at all schools in Ventura County are necessary, but would certainly participate in such a program if it were organized at the County level.