Oak Park
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

EDUCATING TOMORROW'S LEADERS

www.oakparkusd.org

Anthony W. Knight, Ed.D., Superintendent

3rd
6/24/13

June 19, 2013

Hon. Brian J. Bock
Presiding Judge of Supreme Court
800 S. Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

Dear Sir:

Attached please find the response of the Oak Park Unified School District Board of Education to the Grand Jury Report "School Safety". This response was approved by the Board of Education at its Regular Meeting held on June 17, 2013.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Anthony W. Knight, Ed.D.
Superintendent

OAK PARK UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

RESPONSE TO:

Report of the 2012-2013 Grand Jury "School Security"

FACTS

FA-13. ***On 2/25/2013 an elementary school in the Oak Park Unified School District was visited and found to have the following opportunities for improvement; there was no campus security visible, the gates were open with no monitor, visitors were allowed on the school grounds without ID badges. School personnel did inquire as to the nature of our visit. (Att-01)***

FINDINGS

FI-01 – The Grand Jury found that all school districts were trained in school security and threat assessment by the Ventura County Office of Education and conducted by the Ventura County Sheriff's Department.

Agree – The Oak Park USD participated in this training.

FI – 02 – The Grand Jury found that there were no ID badges on some staff campus personnel and visitors. This does not comply with the Threat Assessment Training.

Agree – The Oak Park USD does not require campus personnel and visitors to wear identification badges. The District is exploring the idea of requiring all staff to wear visible photo ID badges and also require visitors to wear temporary badges that degrade so they cannot be lost and used by unauthorized visitors.

FI-03 The Grand Jury found that gates were open and unmonitored. This does not comply with the Threat Assessment Training.

Disagree – Schools in the Oak Park USD are not fenced by design. In consultation with nationally recognized experts such as the National School Safety Council, fencing has not necessarily been determined to make schools more secure from intrusion. For example, it was of no use at Columbine High School and Sandy Hook. Instead, Oak Park USD chooses to use a more active supervision process that involves campus supervisors, and monitoring. All of our elementary schools were built contiguous to the parks by design so that facilities could be shared. Our children enjoy the use of the parks with our campus supervisors during recess periods.

FI-04 – The Grand Jury found no visible campus security. This does not comply with the Threat Assessment Training.

Disagree – Although we do not emply armed security officers on our campus by design, we do employ campus supervisors who watch the students. We have conducted a study at each school to determine if more campus supervisors are needed, however, and the results show that we need to hire additional supervisors. We have determined the cost to be $100,700 annually. The Board will be weighing this expenditure against other demands for the coming year. The District is developing a plan to install security cameras at ALL campuses. Some are now in use at Oak Park High School, Medea Creek Middle School, and Oak View High School. The plan that is being developed is to employ more of them at those sites and at all three elementary schools along with a lighting upgrade to make the cameras useful in the evening hours.

FI-05 The Grand Jury found that some schools have no perimeter fencing. This does not comply with the Threat Assessment Training.

Disagree - See response to FI-03 related to gates and F-04 related to cameras.

R-01. The Grand Jury recommends that each school district conduct a realistic threat assessment review as addressed in the training workshop.

Agree - The District has formed a Threat Assessment committee this year and the committee has developed a first draft of the practices that would be followed at the various sites when there is a potential threat. This first draft will be reviewed again by the committee at the start of the school year. The Threat Assessment committee will be drafting not only practices, but forms and training recommendations to present to the Leadership Team (all administrators) next year. The District will be sending additional staff to Threat Assessment training provided by the county in the fall so that all key participants in the threat assessment process have consistent and appropriate training.

R-02 The Grand Jury recommends that each school district in cooperation with law enforcement should consider instituting a training program based on threat assessment for all classified and non-classified personnel.

Agree – See R-01

R-03 – The Grand Jury recommends that each school building be easily identified from the air and street. Each school district should consider incorporating the use of volunteers who will act as school safety agents and be so identified with unique vests properly identifying persons as a school safety agent. Such vests should be uniform throughout the county.

Agree and Disagree - There are two distinct recommendations presented here. The District has already had the names of the buildings painted in 4-foot high letters on the roofs of all buildings to allow them to be easily identified from the air. This

summer a plan is being made that will ensure that each building is also identified from the ground as this is not currently the case at all schools.

We prefer to hire our own campus supervisors and provide them with training rather than rely on a volunteer program and place student safety in their hands. Uniform vests have already been provided to all campus supervisors, custodians, maintenance personnel, technology staff, etc., which they are required to wear when on any school campus.