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Summary of Disaster Preparedness in San Mateo County Public School Districts

Issue

How can the public school districts in San Mateo County be better prepared to care for students should a disaster occur while students are in attendance at school?

Summary

The San Mateo County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) surveyed all 23 elementary and high school districts, and all responded. The nine-question survey was designed to obtain answers to fundamental questions dealing with basic preparations, communication techniques, and general awareness. The Grand Jury found that all school districts have in place emergency plans for the care of students should a disaster or other emergency take place during school hours. There is considerable variation among districts.



Disaster Preparedness in San Mateo County Public School Districts

Issue

How can the public school districts in San Mateo County be better prepared to care for students should a disaster occur while students are attending school?

Background

The 2005-2006 San Mateo County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) embarked on a county-wide inquiry to determine the adequacy of preparations for a disaster in the County. One area of inquiry focused on the preparedness of the public school districts and their provisions for the care of students should a disaster occur while children are attending school. The public schools of the county include 17 K-8 districts, three K-12 districts, and three high school districts and serve 88,015 students. Caring for those students until they can be safely reunited with their parents is a huge responsibility and requires thoughtful and thorough preparation. Such preparation includes plans to ensure the safe evacuation of the site; to provide stocks of first aid, food, and temporary or alternate shelter; and to communicate with emergency personnel and parents.

Investigation

All 23 elementary and high school districts responded to a survey that consisted of nine questions, several of which had two parts. The survey was designed to obtain answers to basic questions. The investigation did not include review of detailed plans or other documentation. (The questionnaire and summary of responses can be found in the appendices to this report.)

Findings

- All districts have a plan for caring for children in the event of an emergency. Several districts are in the process of revising and standardizing the plan for all schools they administer.
- Among the potential disasters for which schools prepare are fire, earthquake, intruder-on-campus, bomb threat, hazardous materials incident, civil defense threat, windstorm, or flood.
- Most districts review their emergency plans annually and conduct periodic drills or simulations with students, ranging from monthly fire drills to annual or semi-annual earthquake or intruder drills. Reviews are conducted at various times of the year.
- The full-time employees of all districts are trained and understand their assigned responsibilities to care for children in the event of an emergency. Training is conducted annually.
- With respect to holding students for an extended period of time, there is wide variation among districts. The time periods range from a few hours to three days (72 hours). Several school districts have committed to holding students "until parents arrive to pick up children."
- Most schools expect to communicate with parents through cellular phones or land-line telephones. A variety of phone trees, automated calling systems, and radio station broadcasts were mentioned as alternate communication methods.
- Several schools can communicate with police or fire departments directly by radio and do not depend on telephones.
- Nearly all districts inform their students of what to expect in case of an emergency or disaster.
- High schools release older students (grades 9 - 12) on their own; elementary schools release students only to parents or other designated individuals.
- Among special preparations are the following:
 - Walkie-talkies to connect to emergency lines
 - Each classroom equipped with an emergency backpack containing basic first aid supplies and emergency contact and release information for each child in the class
 - Students bringing their own disaster kits with boxed drinks, granola bars, and other snacks to be stored at the school
 - Availability of a book of student photographs for emergency personnel to use

Conclusions

The Grand Jury found that all school districts have emergency plans for the care of students should a disaster or other emergency occur during school hours. There is variation among the plans, and several areas that warrant attention are outlined in the following recommendations. The Grand Jury concluded that it was important that parents be aware of emergency plans.

Recommendations

The Grand Jury recommends that all school districts in San Mateo County review the following recommendations and comply as soon as possible.

1. At the beginning of each school year each district or school should review its emergency plans and update training of personnel.
2. Each school site housing children should have emergency communication equipment that will operate independently of the land-line or cellular phone systems to guarantee reliable communication with police and fire departments.
3. Each district should inform parents, in writing, that telephone communications might not be possible in an emergency and should spell out how their school will provide for children in the event of a major disaster.

APPENDIX A

School Emergency Preparedness Survey Questionnaire

The San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury, in response to elevated concerns regarding Disaster Preparedness, is approaching government agencies across the entire county to assess the level of preparedness. The following questionnaire is designed specifically for public school districts, and is designed to be easy to answer and return with little, if any, need for attached documents.

1. Is there an emergency plan in place at each facility housing children in your district should a disaster occur during hours when children are present? _____

With what types of disasters is your school district presently prepared to deal?
Please list.

2. Are all sites/facilities equally prepared? _____ If not, is there a plan to ensure that?
3. When was the plan at each facility last reviewed or updated? _____
How frequently is there a drill or practice? _____
4. Are there assigned responsibilities for full time regular employees to care for children in the event there is a disaster during school hours when children are in attendance?
5. Have the employees been trained and understand their responsibilities? ____
When?
6. How long is each facility prepared to hold students?

7. What are the provisions for communication with parents or guardians and subsequent release of students if an emergency occurs during school hours?
(describe briefly)
8. Do students understand the expectations of the plan, specifically those relating to being released from school?

What differences are there for high school, middle school, or elementary schools?

Are there any preparations unique to your district which you would like to have shared with other schools and districts?

APPENDIX B

Summary of Survey Responses

Sheet 1

	Bayshore S.D.	Belmont-Redwood Shores Elem. S.D.	Burlingame S.D.	Cabrillo Unified S.D.	Hillsborough City School District	Jefferson S.D.	Jefferson Union H.S. District	Las Lomas S.D.
1. Emergency Plan for Children	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2. All Sites	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
3a. Last Plan Review	Apr-05	Annually	Sep-05	Oct-05	Sep-05	Spring 2005	Several years ago	Spring 2004/Fall 2005
3b. Drill	Monthly	Annually	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly	Fire-monthly, EQ-4x, Armed Int-2x/yr	Fire/EQ/lockdown annually, larger scale not	Monthly
4. Full Time Emp. Assigned to Care for Children in Emerg.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5a. Employees Trained	Yes	Yes	Some	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes except Long term disasters	Yes
5b. When Training Conducted	Faculty meetings	11/29/05-3/26/06	?	Annually	Annually	Annually	Annually	Annually - First Aid every 2 yrs
6. Duration of Emergency Care	1 Day	72 Hours	Until pickup	24 hours	24 hrs	72 hours	1 day	24 hours
7. Communication Provisions w/Parents	Telephone	Telephone	Cell phones, walkie-talkies, NIT	Phone tree	Cell phones, text messaging, phone trees	Communicate with those on emergency list	Telephone	KGO 810 radio
8a. Are Students Informed	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	6-8 grade yes, K-5 uncertain	Yes	Yes	Yes
8b. Differences	Similar	No	No	HS released w/o parent, others with parent	No	No	No	Only elem. has special name tags and color coded areas
9. Unique Preparations	NA		Aircraft crash/Smog/Wildland fire/Tidal wave/Wind storm	HS is Red Cross Evac. Facility for all schools	No	Walkie-Talkies within & to emergency line & administration	Simultaneous telephone to all w/ emergency #	Follow SEMS & all of ICS

APPENDIX B

Summary of Survey Responses

Sheet 2

	Menlo Park City S.D.	Millbrae S.D.	Pacifica S.D.	Portola Valley S.D.	Ravenswood City S.D.	Redwood City S.D.	San Bruno Park S.D.	San Carlos S.D.
1. Emergency Plan for Children	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2. All Sites	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Somewhat	No	Yes
3a. Last Plan Review	Oct-05	Each Fall	May-05	Dec-05	Currently being reviewed	1/year	Oct-05	Yearly
3b. Drill	Quarterly	Fire monthly, EQ & Intruder-2x/yr	Monthly	Monthly w/2 full scenarios per year	Minimum of each semester	Fire 1/mo, Earthquake 1/yr	Monthly	Monthly
4. Full Time Emp. Assigned to Care for Children in Emerg.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5a. Employees Trained	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Some	Yes with backups	Yes	Yes
5b. When Training Conducted	Annually	Annually	Apr-05	Oct-05	Sep-05	?	New employee	Yearly
6. Duration of Emergency Care	3 Days	1 Day	2-3 days	3 days	1 Day	Until parents arrive	Some a few hours, two sites for 3 days	48 hours
7. Communication Provisions w/Parents	?	?	Telephones	Automated telephone system	Telephone & cell phone	KNBR 680 or KIQI 1010	?	Cell phone
8a. Are Students Informed	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not well	Yes	Yes	Yes
8b. Differences	No	No	No	Elem w/teachers, middle school w/grade level teams	No	No	No?	few, if any
9. Unique Preparations	No	?	No	911 phone call system great	No	No	"Cheat Sheets" for subs, students bring own disaster kits	no

APPENDIX B

Summary of Survey Responses

Sheet 3

	San Mateo-Foster City Elem. S.D.	San Mateo Union H.S. District	S. San Francisco Unified S.D.	Woodside Elem. S.D.	Brisbane S.D.	La Honda-Pescadero Unified S.D.	Sequoia Union H.S. District
1. Emergency Plan for Children	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Updating	Yes
2. All Sites	No	Yes?	No	Yes	Yes	No, revising	No, revising
3a. Last Plan Review	Annually	Annually	Currently being reviewed	Spring 2005	Fall 2005	Dec-05	Jan '06
3b. Drill	Monthly	Monthly	See schedule	Yes	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly
4. Full Time Emp. Assigned to Care for Children in Emerg.	Yes	Yes	Assigning now	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5a. Employees Trained	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
5b. When Training Conducted	at staff meetings	Annually & Monthly	2 schools in Nov 2005 Others ?	Monthly	Nov 2005	Not yet	Annually
6. Duration of Emergency Care	72 Hours	72 Hours	12 to 24 hours	48 hours	24 Hours	As long as necessary	1-2 days
7. Communication Provisions w/Parents	?	Contact ed system, telephone	District intra-net	Local radio, telephone tree	Telephone	Student release procedure	Cell phone
8a. Are Students Informed	Yes	Yes	Will be establishing procedures	Yes	Yes	Will train students this year	Yes
8b. Differences	No	No	?	No	No	No	No
9. Unique Preparations	No	No	In process of new template & handbook by 4/06 & will share	n/a	Photo book of students	No	No



AYSHORE SCHOOL DISTRICT

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TEL: 415-467-5443 FAX: 415-467-1542

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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PRINCIPAL

NORMAN FOBERT

July 24, 2006

Hon. Stephen M. Hall
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center; 2nd floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: Response to Grand Jury, Disaster Preparedness

Dear Judge Hall:

Below is the district's response to the Grand Jury's recommendations:

1. *At the beginning of each school year the district should review its emergency plans and update training of personnel:*

The district agrees with this finding. Principals have been notified to review their plans with their staffs during the month of September.

2. *Emergency Communication Equipment at each site to communicate directly with the police and fire departments*

The district agrees that this could be helpful, but partially disagrees with the finding in that it believes the cost of such a communication system is prohibitive for the small schools and the small district. Bayshore's resources are already stretched very tight. The district's schools are less than four blocks from the nearest fire station. We believe that in a major disaster such that phone lines and cell phones would be out of service, the district could make direct contact with the police and fire departments by walking to the nearby station. We have a communication system that can reach the fire department with extra units. We would bring one unit to the station to maintain contact during the emergency.

3. *Districts should inform parents where to get emergency information*

The district agrees. Parents are informed annually that it will inform KGO at AM-810 regarding emergency information. The district also uses the SBC messaging system, so that it can leave a message at the district's phone number regardless of whether the district phones are working.

Sincerely,



AYSHORE SCHOOL DISTRICT

ONE MARTIN STREET, DALY CITY, CA 94014
TEL: 415-467-5443 FAX: 415-467-1542

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Superintendent



Brisbane School District
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Christine Evers
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Superintendent
Stephen J. Waterman, Esq.

July 24, 2006

Hon. Stephen M. Hall
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center; 2nd floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: Response to Grand Jury, Disaster Preparedness

Dear Judge Hall:

Below is the district's response to the Grand Jury's recommendations:

1. *At the beginning of each school year the district should review its emergency plans and update training of personnel:*

The district agrees with this finding. Principals have been notified to review their plans with their staffs during the month of September.

2. *Emergency Communication Equipment at each site to communicate directly with the police and fire departments*

The district partially agrees with this finding. It agrees that this system would be optimal. However, because of the district's size, it lacks the resources to provide this service. Moreover, in an emergency during which all phone lines and cell phones are disabled, the Brisbane Police Department plans to send an officer to each school. Should this not be possible, the district can and would send a representative to the police department by foot if necessary. This would take approximately 6 minutes at a walking pace. The district has communication equipment it will use to connect the two Brisbane Schools with the Police Department. We are still working on an adequate communication system for the third school (located in Daly City) in the worst case scenario - when the streets are unusable and the phones do not function. Temporarily, we have designated a place approximately two blocks from that school where the district's local communication system could link to the school.

3. *Districts should inform parents where to get emergency information*

The district agrees. Parents are informed annually that the district will provide information to KGO at AM-810 for emergency information.

Respectfully submitted,



risbane School District

One Solano Street, Brisbane, Ca 94005
Tel: 415-467-0550 Fax: 415-467-2914

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Superintendent

Stephen J. Waterman, Esq.

Stephen J. Waterman
Superintendent

BURLINGAME SCHOOL DISTRICT

September 5, 2006

Honorable Stephen M. Hall
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: DISASTER PREPAREDNESS IN SAN MATEO COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS GRAND JURY REPORT

Dear Judge Stephen Hall,

The Burlingame School District agrees with the findings in your letter dated July 19, 2006.

The recommendations in the report have been implemented as follows:

At the beginning of each school year principals at all schools in the Burlingame School District review their emergency plans and update the training of their personnel.

Each school site in the Burlingame School District has emergency communication equipment including cell phones, walkie-talkies and an emergency notification system provided by the NIT Group, Inc.

Burlingame School District will be informing parents, in writing, that telephone communications might not be possible in an emergency and will spell out how their school will provide for children in the event of a major disaster beginning with the 2006/07 school year.

Sincerely,

Marc Friedman
President
Board of Trustees of Burlingame School District

August 22, 2006

Honorable Stephen M. Hall
Judge of the superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: Response to the 2005-2006 Grand Jury Report filed on July 19, 2006

Dear Judge Hall,

Below you will find our responses to the recommendations of the Grand Jury regarding the Cabrillo Unified School District in San Mateo County.

Recommendations

- 1. At the beginning of the school year each district or school should review its emergency plans and update training of personnel.**

Cabrillo Unified School District agrees fully with the finding of the Grand Jury. Cabrillo Unified has and will continue to implement this recommendation at the beginning of the school year.

- 2. Each school site housing children should have emergency communication equipment that will operate independently of the land-line or cellular phone systems to guarantee reliable communication with police and fire departments.**

Cabrillo Unified School District agrees fully with the finding of the Grand Jury but finds it difficult to maintain communication devices on the San Mateo Coastside. We were fortunate last year to have the San Mateo County Sheriff's Department provide a communication system, however, it appears to be more one-way than two-ways. We will look into providing a more reliable two-way source of communication in the fall 2006.

- 3. Each district should inform parents, in writing, that telephone communications might not be possible in an emergency and should spell out how their school will provide for children in the event of a major disaster.**

Page 2 2005-06 Grand Jury response

Cabrillo Unified School District also agrees with finding #3. This recommendation has been implemented and will continue to be implemented at the schools. It will be discussed at Back to School Night and is included in annual letters sent home advising parents of students rights.

We appreciate the time the Grand Jury has spent and the reviewing of the summary of emergency disaster plans in San Mateo County public schools.

If we may be of further assistance, please contact my office.

Sincerely,

John Bayless, Ed.D
Superintendent

JB/cmd

August 7, 2006

Dear Hon. Stephen M. Hall
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center; 2nd Floor
Redwood City, Ca. 94063-1655

Thank you for the Grand Jury's report concerning the preparedness of the schools in San Mateo County for a disaster. Obviously we all hope that none of us will be faced with implementing the procedures we have in place but your survey does show that our schools do have plans for contending with a disaster. The President of our Governing Board of our school district has asked me to respond to your report.

The Hillsborough City School District agrees with all of the recommendations from the Grand Jury report. All of the recommendations have been implemented in this school district and below is a summary with regard to all of the recommendations.

The Hillsborough City School District has a Disaster Preparedness Plan. The plan is updated annually and these plans are reviewed with staff annually. Staff receives training in first aide and CPR with annual or bi-annual refresher courses. Disaster preparedness is practiced with our students monthly. We will continue these practices in the future.

Communication is a critical piece of our plans and continually needs to be reviewed. In addition to land lines and cellular lines we do have walkie-talkies in place to communicate with our safety services as well as each other. We do inform our parents annually about our procedure for both housing and releasing students in the case of a disaster. Each school has enough supplies to provide basic food and water for 72 hours. There are basic supplies for shelter located at each school site. These provisions are reviewed annually and there is a regular maintenance schedule for updating all supplies. Disaster manuals are located in each classroom and in all of the school offices. The manuals contain directions for actions and procedures, location of school and emergency services, and useful telephone numbers.

I hope this summary is helpful to the Grand Jury in its attempts to clarify the status of disaster preparedness in this county.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Loushin-Miller
Superintendent of the Hillsborough City School District
300 El Cerrito Avenue
Hillsborough, CA 94010

Jefferson Union High School District

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Michael J. Crilly
Superintendent

September 11, 2006

The Honorable Stephen M. Hall
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, California 94063-1655

Dear Judge Hall:

In response to your July 19th 2005-06 Grand Jury findings and recommendations pertaining *Disaster Preparedness in San Mateo County Public School Districts*.

The Jefferson Union High School District is in concurrence with the three recommendations:

Recommendation #1

At the beginning of each school year each district or school should review its emergency plans and update training of personnel

Response: The Jefferson Union High School District has provided a review and update for district administrations and has met with the North County Fire Authority regarding additional preparedness and training. Our plans are being updated as necessary.

Recommendation #2

Each school site housing children should have emergency communication equipment that will operate independently of the land-line or cellular phone systems to guarantee reliable communication with police and fire departments.

Response: The District has had a variety of wireless communication devices over the years and is currently looking into additional systems which will guarantee communication with police and fire in the event of an emergency.

The District also maintains a telephone communication system which is normally used to notify parents of attendance issues and special events. This communication system is web-based and could be operated from an external site even though district systems may be unable to be accessed.

The Honorable Stephen M. Hall
September 11, 2006
Page 2

Recommendation #3

Each district should inform parents, in writing, that telephone communications might not be possible in an emergency and should spell out how their school will provide for children in the event of a major disaster.

Response: The District is currently formulating a special communication to parents which will be placed in a school newsletter, explaining the procedures that would be utilized in the event of an emergency. We would expect to have this information published by early November in conjunction with the mailing of the respective parent newsletters.

We will endeavor to continue our planning and communication with local police and fire departments and hope to never have to utilize these procedures.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Crilly
Superintendent



Millbrae School District

555 Richmond Drive, Millbrae, CA 94030

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KAREN K. PHILIP
Superintendent

NANCY PALMER
Chief Business Official

SHARON DEBIAGIO
Director of Curriculum

TRACEY WALSH
Director of Special Services

August 28, 2006

Hon. Stephen M. Hall
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Dear Judge Hall:

The Millbrae School District has received the Grand Jury report entitled "Disaster Preparedness in San Mateo County Public School Districts."

Disaster Preparedness and Training is a high priority in the Millbrae School District. Please note that for all Grand Jury recommendations, the Millbrae School District agrees, and currently meets or exceeds implementation for all recommendations.

Sincerely,

Karen K. Philip
Superintendent

ar



Administrative Offices

1011 Altschul Avenue
Menlo Park, CA 94025
(650) 854-2880
www.llesd.k12.ca.us

Las Lomas School

299 Alameda de las Pulgas
Atherton, CA 94027
(650) 854-5900
[Kindergarten – Grade 3]

La Entrada School

2200 Sharon Road
Menlo Park, CA 94025
(650) 854-3962
[Grades 4-8]

July 25, 1006

Honorable Stephen M. Hall
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center: 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Dear Judge Hall:

The following comments are in response to the Grand Jury Findings and Recommendations related to Disaster Preparedness in San Mateo County Schools:

The Grand Jury recommends that all school districts in San Mateo County review the following recommendations and comply as soon as possible:

- 1. At the beginning of each school year, each district or school should review its emergency plans and update training of personnel.***

We agree with the finding. The recommendation has been implemented and has been a regular, annual practice for many years.

- 2. Each school site housing children should have emergency communication equipment that will operate independently of the land-line or cellular phone systems to guarantee reliable communication with police and fire departments.***

We agree with the finding. The recommendation has been partially implemented. We have "independent" emergency communication equipment that provides communication among the school sites and the district office. We are awaiting the allocation of a band width / contact provision from both the police and fire departments.

- 3. Each district should inform parents, in writing, that telephone communications might not be possible in an emergency and should spell out how their school will provide for children in the event of a major disaster.***

We agree with the finding. The recommendation has been implemented and has been a part of our annual back-to-school information for many years.

Sincerely,

Mary Ann Somerville
District Superintendent



Maria M. De La Vega
Superintendent

Ravenswood City School District
STUDENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT
2120 Euclid Avenue, East Palo Alto, California 94303
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Jacqueline Greene, President
Adam Mitchell, Vice President
Todd Gaviglio, Clerk
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Marcelino López, Member

September 29, 2006

Hon. Stephen M. Hall
Judge of Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Dear Hon. Stephen M. Hall,

This letter is in response to the 2005-2006 Grand Jury Report containing findings and recommendations pertaining to Ravenswood City School District's emergency and disaster plans. We, the respondent, agree with the findings and have established a timeline and procedures to implement the recommendations. Please see the enclosed document outlining our actions in attention to this matter.

If you should have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at (650) 329-2800 ex. 163.

Sincerely,

Lisa Pruitt
Director of Student Services

Emergency Preparedness Timeline 2006-2007

October:

- Sites:
1. Review Emergency Plan and update phone tree
 2. Update Emergency Response Teams and begin training staff
 3. Through a school newsletter or student handbook, inform parents how their school will provide for children in the event of a major disaster
 4. Inventory emergency supplies, place order for missing items
 5. Develop a schedule of drills in accordance with Ed Code

- District:
1. Complete Emergency Quick Reference Flip Chart and submit to printer
 2. Begin investigating emergency communication system that will operate independently of the land-line or cellular phones
 3. Develop district Emergency Committee and establish regular meeting times and member responsibilities
 4. Develop a district Emergency Plan and update phone trees
 5. Identify community agencies and establish contacts

November:

- Sites:
1. Complete Emergency Response Teams training
 2. Complete emergency supply kits for classroom and campus
 3. Conduct on-going drills

- District:
1. Distribute Emergency Quick Reference Flip Chart to all staff
 2. Complete district Emergency Plan, including plan for emergency communication system
 3. Define funding sources for emergency communication system
 4. Create Emergency Response Teams and begin training district team
 5. Begin meeting with community agencies
 6. Emergency Committee meeting

Ravenswood City School District

December:

- Sites:
1. Conduct on-going drills
 2. Review procedures in Flip-Chart
 - Directed Evacuation
 - Room Clear
 - Lock Down (during and recovering from)

- District:
1. Implement Emergency Communication System, train personnel
 2. Complete Emergency Response Teams training of district team
 3. Attend community forums on related topics
 4. Emergency Committee meeting

January:

- Sites:
1. Conduct on-going drills
 2. Review procedures in Flip-Chart
 - Dangerous Person on Campus
 - Suicide Threat or Attempt
 - Kidnapping
 - Death, Serious Injury or Medical Condition on Campus

- District:
1. Attend community forums on related topics
 2. Emergency Committee meeting
 3. Begin developing Psychological First Binder

February:

- Sites:
1. Conduct on-going drills
 2. Review procedures in Flip-Chart
 - Fire or Explosion
 - Hazardous Material Spill
 - Bomb or Suspicious Device
 - Bomb Threat

- District:
1. Attend community forums on related topics
 2. Emergency Committee meeting
 3. Continue development of Psychological First Aid Binder

Ravenswood City School District

March:

- Sites:
1. Conduct on-going drills
 2. Review procedures in Flip-Chart
 - a. Earthquake
 - b. Civil Disturbance on Campus

- District:
1. Attend community forums on related topics
 2. Emergency Committee meeting
 3. Psychological First Aid Binder to print

April:

- Sites:
1. Conduct on-going drills
 2. Review procedures in Flip-Chart
 - c. Severe Weather Conditions
 - d. Electrical Outages
 - e. Spilled Body Fluids
 - f. Child Abuse Reporting

- District:
1. Attend community forums on related topics
 2. Emergency Committee meeting
 3. Develop timeline for training on Psychological First Aid Binder for the 07/08 school year

May:

- Sites:
1. Conduct on-going drills
 2. Review procedures in Flip-Chart
 - g. Medical Assessment Procedures
 - h. Communicating with the Media
 - i.

- District:
1. Attend community forums on related topics
 2. Emergency Committee meeting
 - begin planning District Disaster Drill for 07/08

San Mateo Union High School District



Samuel Johnson, Jr., Superintendent

Mark A. Avelar, Deputy Superintendent

Ethel C. Konopka, Associate Supt. Human Resources-Admin. Serv.

Elizabeth McManus, Associate Supt. Business Services

650 North Delaware Street - San Mateo, CA 94401-1795

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(650) 762-0249 FAX

October 2, 2006

Honorable Stephen M. Hall
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

RE: San Mateo Union High School District Response to the Grand Jury Disaster Preparedness Report

Grand Jury Findings

1. All districts have a plan for caring for children in the event of an emergency. Several districts are in the process of revising and standardizing the plan for all schools they administer.

District Response

The San Mateo Union High School District agrees with this finding. The District has had a comprehensive Disaster Plan since 1999. This living document is reviewed annually at each of the high schools. The Disaster Plan has been revised at the district level in 2002 and again in 2006 level to comply with "lessons learned" in actual drills and in table-top exercises.

Grand Jury Findings

2. Among the potential disasters for which schools prepare are fire, earthquake, intruder on-campus, bomb threat, hazardous materials incident, civil defense threat, windstorm, or flood.

District Response

The San Mateo Union High School District agrees with this finding. Each site conducts monthly emergency drills that include earthquake drills, fire drills, secure the building drills. Hazardous materials drills, windstorm and flood drills are practiced as part of our participation in county-wide drills and table-top drills. Staff are trained and equipped with the necessary emergency equipment and supplies. Donations of medical supplies, food and water, and search and rescue tools are definitely in need. Each site is prepared to "go it alone" for a 72 hour period.

Grand Jury Findings

3. Most districts review their emergency plans annually and conduct periodic drills or simulations with students, ranging from monthly fire drills to annual or semi-annual earthquake or intruder drills. Reviews are conducted at various times of the year.

District Response

The San Mateo Union High School District agrees with this finding. Through monthly meetings with the Administrative Assistant Principals, the District plans and updates the yearly district-wide Disaster Drill

as well as the monthly site drills. District-suggested protocol is to have fire, earthquake, and intruder drills in the first month of each semester. Every month thereafter should have one of these drills. The District works to coordinate it's yearly district-wide drill with the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services and Homeland Security. The District also participates in County Table-Top drills and workshops that examine and define all stakeholder response to new disasters, i.e. Avian Flu, Chemical Spills, Biological Warfare.

Grand Jury Findings

4. The full-time employees of all districts are trained and understand their assigned responsibilities to care for children in the event of an emergency. Training is conducted annually.

District Response

The San Mateo Union High School District agrees with this finding. The District annually receives an updated Emergency Organization Chart from each school site and the District Office Emergency Operations Center. Annual training and review of responsibilities takes place at the beginning of each school year.

Grand Jury Findings

5. With respect to holding students for an extended period of time, there is wide variation among districts. The time periods range from a few hours to three days (72 hours). Several school districts have committed to holding students "until parents arrive to pick up children."

District Response

The San Mateo Union High School District agrees with this finding. The District is committed to care for students and staff until parents or other agencies arrive. Sites recognize the need and know to network within the surrounding community for food, water, clothing, and medical supplies as needed.

Grand Jury Findings

6. Most schools expect to communicate with parents through cellular phones or land-line telephones. A variety of phone trees, automated calling systems, and radio station broadcasts were mentioned as alternate communication methods.

District Response

The San Mateo Union High School District agrees with this finding. The District will use its automated dialer, Connect-ED, to call numbers listed on a student's emergency card in order to ensure communication with all parents/guardians in the District.

Grand Jury Findings

7. Several schools can communicate with police or fire departments directly by radio and do not depend on telephones.

District Response

The San Mateo Union High School District disagrees partially with this finding. Mills High School can communicate directly to Millbrae Police Department by radio. The District's six other school sites cannot communicate directly by radio to their respective police or fire departments. Each school site, the District Office, the MOT Offices, and the Transportation Offices have a Base Station and a charged backup battery that is capable of operating up to a week without an outside power source for communications to the fire and police departments. In addition the District phone system is capable of operating up to four hours on a battery backup. Each of the 45 district school buses is outfitted to act as a base station as well. The school buses operate on the District's designated emergency channel only, and not on the local school channels.

Grand Jury Findings

8. Nearly all districts inform their students of what to expect in case of an emergency or disaster.

District Response

The San Mateo Union High School District agrees with this finding. The District implements monthly school site drills and an annual district-wide drill to inform and prepare students in case of an emergency or disaster.

Grand Jury Findings

9. High schools release older students (grades 9-12) on their own; elementary schools release students only to parents or other designated individuals.

District Response

The San Mateo Union High School District wholly disagrees with this finding. The District releases students to those persons listed on the Student Emergency Card, preferably in person; however, telephone identification may be accepted in certain circumstances.

Grand Jury Findings

10. Among special preparations are the following:

- Walkie-talkies to connect to emergency lines
- Each classroom equipped with an emergency backpack containing basic first aid supplies and emergency contact and release information for each child in the class
- Students bringing their own disaster kits with boxed drinks, granola bars, and other snacks to be stored at the school
- Availability of a book of student photographs for emergency personnel to use

District Response

The San Mateo Union High School District agrees with this finding. The recommendation has been implemented.

- The District uses a two-channel walkie-talkie to communicate with the school sites
- District classrooms have access to the necessary basic first aid supplies and emergency contact and release information. Each classroom has an Emergency Bag with basic first aid supplies and tools
- The District provides site-stored water and food to students
- The District provides site books of student photographs for emergency personnel to use
- Each site and the EOC has detailed maps of Water, Electrical, and Gas lines

Recommendations

Grand Jury Recommendations

1. At the beginning of each school year each district or school should review its emergency plans and update training of personnel.

District Response

The recommendation has been implemented. Through monthly meetings with the Administrative Assistant Principals, the District plans and updates the yearly district-wide Disaster Drill as well as the monthly site drills. District-suggested protocol is to have fire, earthquake, and intruder drills in the first month of each semester. Every month thereafter should have one of these drills.

Grand Jury Recommendations

2. Each school site housing children should have emergency communication equipment that will operate independently of the land-line or cellular phone systems to guarantee reliable communication with police and fire departments.

District Response

The recommendation has been implemented. Each school site, the District Office, the MOT Offices, and the Transportation Offices have a Base Station and a charged backup battery that is capable of operating up to a week without an outside power source for communications to the fire and police departments. In addition the District phone system is capable of operating up to four hours on a battery backup. Each of the 45 district school buses is outfitted to act as a Base Station as well. The school buses operate on the District's designated emergency channel only and not on the local school channels.

Grand Jury Recommendations

3. Each district should inform parents, in writing, that telephone communications might not be possible in an emergency and should spell out how their school will provide for children in the event of a major disaster.

District Response

The recommendation has been implemented. The District publishes two letters in all seven school's annual Family Handbook. The letters are in English and Spanish. It is requested of all families that they: not call the school, and tune into KCBS 740 am for directions and current conditions. They are told that their children will be cared for under the supervision of district personnel until a parent or authorized adult arrives to pick them up.

Sincerely,

Samuel Johnson, Jr.
Superintendent and
Secretary to the Board

SJ:cam



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August 8, 2006

The Honorable Stephen M. Hall
Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
400 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

RE: Disaster Preparedness in San Mateo County Public School Districts Grand Jury Report

Dear Judge Hall

Below are South San Francisco Unified School District's comments relative to the findings and recommendations in the 2005-2006 Grand Jury report of July 19, 2006, pertaining to our school district:

Recommendations

- 1. At the beginning of each school year each district or school should review its emergency plans and update training of personnel.**

District agrees with finding: Yes

Action: The District has established an Emergency Planning Committee with representatives from each school and from District administration to review the emergency plans and to coordinate training of personnel. Each school is required to conduct the state-mandated drills. In addition, schools are now required to conduct at least one orientation to the site Emergency Plan and an emergency exercise and/or simulation, effective 2006-2007. (See Appendix A, Question 3)

- 2. Each school site housing children should have emergency communication equipment that will operate independently of the land-line or cellular phone systems to guarantee reliable communication with police and fire departments.**

District agrees with finding: Yes

Action: The District maintains an emergency radio system that provides reliable communications between District office, school sites, and with police and fire. The County Office of Emergency Services also gave each school in the county an All Hazards Emergency Radio to enable schools to monitor emergency situations and countywide responses.

- 3. Each district should inform parents in writing that telephone communications might not be possible in an emergency and should spell out how their school will provide for children in the event of a major disaster.**

District agrees with finding: Yes

Action: Schools provide information in writing to parents regarding emergency preparedness and response and require a signed emergency card for each student as part of the back-to-school activities. Information for parents on emergency preparedness is also posted on the District web site.

Appendix A

School Emergency Preparedness Survey Questionnaire

The San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury, in response to elevated concerns regarding Disaster Preparedness, is approaching government agencies across the entire county to assess the level of preparedness. The following questionnaire is designed specifically for public school districts, and is designed to be easy to answer and return with little, if any, need for attached documents.

District: South San Francisco Unified School District

- 1. Is there an emergency plan in place at each facility housing children in your district should a disaster occur during hours when children are present?**

Yes.

**What types of disasters is your school district presently prepared to deal?
Please list.**

Active Shooter on Campus
Bomb Threat
Chemical Accident
Death of Student or Staff
Earthquake
Explosion or Gas Leak
Fallen Aircraft
Fire
Flood
Hazardous Material Release
Hostile Visitor or Staff
Intruder or Nearby Disturbance
Medical Emergencies
Missing Child, Abduction
Sexual Assault/Harassment
Smog Episodes
Suspicious Package
Utilities Failure
Weather (Severe)

2. Are all sites/facilities equally prepared?

No

If not, is there a plan to ensure that?

All schools have emergency plans that are aligned with the District planning template, the state's Comprehensive Safe School Plan requirements, and the District-wide emergency policies and procedures. All schools received a first aid kit and emergency supplies that meet school-wide needs summer of 2006. However, elementary schools also have classroom first aid and emergency kits and most require students to bring an emergency food package at the start of each year. One middle school has acquired and stocked a 40-foot emergency storage unit.

Effective 2006-2007, all schools will be required to address issues of supplies storage and care and shelter for 72 hours in their site emergency plans.

3. When was the plan at each facility last reviewed or updated?

The District updated its District Emergency Handbook 2005-2006, which will be reviewed annually by the newly created Emergency Planning Committee starting 2006-2007.

Each school is required to update their site Emergency Plans annually. These plans are reviewed annually by the Supervisor of Student Attendance and Welfare.

How frequently is there a drill or practice?

As required by state law, schools conduct the following drills:

Fire Drills:

- Elementary Schools One each month
- Middle Schools One each month

- High Schools One each semester.

Drop Drills (Earthquake)

- Elementary Schools One each quarter
- Middle Schools One each quarter
- High Schools One each semester

Lock Down Drills

- All schools Two each year

Starting with the 2006-2007 school year, each school will be required to add two emergency training sessions to the mandated drill schedule:

- At least one orientation to the site's Safe School and Emergency Management Plan per year.
- At least one desktop emergency exercise or simulation with staff.

4. Are there assigned responsibilities for full time regular employees to care for children in the event there is a disaster during school hours when children are in attendance?

Yes. The District has adopted the State Emergency Management System (SEMS) that is now in place at all sites.

5. Have the employees been trained and understand their responsibilities? When?

Yes. Beginning in the fall 2006, each site is required to conduct at least one training session at the beginning of the school year to review staff responsibilities and the site emergency plan. In addition, 40 site personnel were certified in First Aid and CPR by the South San Francisco Fire Department.

All schools sent teams to a district-wide emergency training in February 2005. In 2006-2007, five of the fifteen schools conducted staff trainings as the District Emergency Handbook and the site Emergency Plans were being developed. Each school has identified an Emergency Facilitator who received training in April 2006 and who will be responsible for site training on an annual basis.

6. How long is each facility prepared to hold students?

An average of 12 – 24 hours. Not all schools have resolved the challenges of providing food and water for a longer period of time.

7. What are the provisions for communication with parents or guardians and subsequent release of students if an emergency occurs during school hours? (Describe briefly.)

Communications: The District communicates with parents through the District newsletter, mailings, standard phone calls, an automated calling system, and an emergency web page. Schools communicate internally through the emergency radio system. Each school also has a County All-Hazards Radio to keep informed of countywide emergency warnings and response activities.

Release of students: The District established policies and procedures for the release of students following an emergency effective 2006. These procedures are posted on the District emergency website and will be distributed to parents during the back-to-school events in the fall 2007.

8. Do students understand the expectations of the plan, specifically those relating to being released from school?

Yes.

What differences are there for high school, middle school, or elementary school?

None. It is basic District policy that schools should remain in operation and students cared for until regular dismissal time during an emergency or crisis, to the extent possible. The Superintendent or designee must approve any early release. In the case of an emergency where students might be in danger if they

The Honorable Stephen M. Hall
August 8, 2006
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leave school grounds, school staff remain responsible for student welfare until the Superintendent or designee or the emergency responders indicate it is safe to release students. Schools will then release students only to parents, guardians or other adults who are authorized on the students' emergency cards.

Are there any preparations unique to your district, which you would like to have shared with other schools and districts?

The District has just completed a comprehensive emergency management planning and implementation initiative funded through an 18-month Emergency Response and Crisis Management grant from the Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, U.S. Department of Education. The District is willing to share the products developed under this grant: the District Emergency Handbook, the Site Emergency Planning Template, and the three training modules that include an introduction to SEMS, an earthquake desktop exercise, and a staff emergency simulation.

Sincerely



Barbara Olds
Superintendent

cc: Board of Trustees
Thomas F. Casey III
John C. Fitton