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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The 2022-23 Yolo County Grand Jury is composed of citizen volunteers from throughout the county. The Final Consolidated Report represents the commitment and hard work of the jurors, who were dedicated to impartially evaluating each issue so that any published report would improve financial transparency, local government accountability, and ultimately, the county community.

We wish to express our sincere gratitude and admiration to all those jurors who applied their various skills and interests in accomplishing this task. The grand jury appreciates and thanks the Yolo County employees and officials, as well as those in Jury Services, Yolo County Superior Court, who provided us with support and guidance throughout the process. Finally, we would like to thank all those who participated in the interview process, making these reports possible. It has been our honor and privilege to serve the citizens of Yolo County.

Special thanks to several community members of Yolo County who were unable to complete their term but contributed invaluable time and effort.

LETTER TO HONORABLE DANIEL M. WOLK

June 27, 2023

Honorable Daniel M. Wolk
Judge, Superior Court of California
In and for the County of Yolo
1000 Main Street
Woodland, CA 95776

Dear Judge Wolk:

The 2022-23 Yolo County Grand Jury is honored to prepare and present our Final Consolidated Report to you and to the residents of Yolo County.

The Grand Jury received and reviewed 20 citizen complaints. Of those complaints, ten were referred to the different Grand Jury Committees, and seven were investigated. Due to the timing of some submitted complaints, two are being forwarded to the incoming Grand Jury so that the complaints may receive adequate review and investigation.

The Grand Jury inspected the Yolo County Monroe Detention Facility as stipulated by the California Penal Code. In its Final Consolidated Report, the Grand Jury presents three reports based on investigations initiated by the Grand Jury and four based on citizen complaints. Four reports from previous grand juries received considerable attention.

The 2022-23 Yolo County Grand Jury is composed of a diverse group of selfless volunteers from throughout the county. The Final Consolidated Report represents the commitment and hard work of the jurors, who were dedicated to finding the truth and improving the Yolo County community. I personally wish to express my sincere gratitude and admiration to all those who applied their various skills and interests in accomplishing this task.

The Grand Jury appreciates and thanks all the Yolo County employees and officials, as well as those in Jury Services for providing us with support and guidance throughout the process. It has been our honor and privilege to serve the residents of Yolo County.

Steven A. Oldham

Steven A. Oldham, Foreperson
2022-23 Yolo County Grand Jury

RESOLUTION

The 2022-23 Yolo County Grand Jury Approves the Final Report

WHEREAS, the 16 members of the 2022-23 Yolo County Grand Jury (“Grand Jury”) conducted investigations and prepared various reports, all of which are included in its consolidated final report for the 2022-23 term; and

WHEREAS, as is customary, the Grand Jury handled each investigation through specialized committees that are each vested with primary responsibility for (among other things) determining the investigation strategy, conducting interviews and gathering evidence, and with producing various review versions of each report; and

WHEREAS, one member of the Grand Jury, Steven A. Oldham has recused himself from all aspects of one investigation and related work by the Grand Jury, including review and approval of the final investigation report; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of this Resolution is to facilitate approval of the consolidated final report by the Grand Jury while also preserving the prior recusal of one member on the single report mentioned above;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED as follows:

1. The Grand Jury finds the foregoing recitals are true and correct.
2. By adoption of this Resolution, the Grand Jury hereby approves the final, consolidated report for the 2022-23 term, with its members voting as shown below. In voting to approve this Resolution, one grand juror that previously recused himself from participating in the Grand Jury’s efforts on the report entitled “You Only Vote Once” specifically maintained his recusal as to that matter but is deemed to have approved all other reports included in the consolidated report.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Grand Jury this 20th day of June 2023, as follows:

AYES: Sharon Browne, Lorna Carriveau, James Conradsen, Susan Griffin-McCormick, Virginia Herold, Gerald James, Sarah Jewel, Donald Jordan, Robert Kays, Allen Lowry, Steven A. Oldham, Christopher Stewart, Stewart Thompson.

ABSTAIN: David DuBois, Christian Laughlin, Erik Halsted

Steven A. Oldham

Steven A. Oldham, Foreperson

THE YOLO COUNTY GRAND JURY ROSTER

Steven A. Oldham, Foreperson, West Sacramento
Allen Lowry, Foreperson pro tem, Davis

Sharon Browne
Davis

Virginia Herold
Davis

Lorna Carriveau
Woodland

Stewart Thompson
Davis

Susan Griffin-McCormick
Woodland

James Conradsen
West Sacramento

Erik Halsted
West Sacramento

Gerald James
Woodland

Sarah Jewel
Winters

Donald Jordan
Woodland

Robert Kays
Winters

Christopher Stewart
West Sacramento

Christian Laughlin
Woodland

The Yolo County Grand Jury expresses its appreciation to the following jurors who contributed significantly during the 2022-23 term:

Clyde Froelich, Christina Chang, Andrew Kearney, Vong Toan, David DuBois, Patricia Foley

ABOUT THE GRAND JURY

The California Constitution requires that each county appoint a grand jury to guard the public interest by monitoring local government. Per California Penal Code section (§) 888, the Yolo County Superior Court appoints 19 grand jurors each year from a pool of volunteers. These Yolo County citizens, with diverse and varied backgrounds, serve their community as grand jurors from July 1st to June 30th. The Yolo County Grand Jury is an official, independent body of the court, not answerable to administrators or to the Board of Supervisors.

PURPOSE

A California Grand Jury has three basic functions: to weigh criminal charges and determine whether indictments should be returned (Penal Code §917); to weigh allegations of misconduct against public officials and determine whether to present formal accusations requesting their removal from office (Penal Code §992); and to act as the public's watchdog by investigating and reporting on the affairs of local government (e.g., Penal Code §§919 - 925, et seq.). The purposes of any grand jury civil investigation are to identify organizational strengths and weaknesses and to make recommendations aimed at improving the services of county and city governments, school districts, and special districts under study. Based on these assessments, the grand jury publishes its findings and may recommend constructive action to improve the quality and effectiveness of local government.

Recommendations from a grand jury are not binding on the organization investigated. However, the governing body of any public agency must respond to the grand jury findings and recommendations within 90 days, and an elected county officer or agency head must respond to the grand jury findings and recommendations within 60 days. The following year's grand jury may then evaluate and report on the required responses.

All reports included in the document have been approved by at least 12 jurors. Any juror who has a personal interest or might be perceived to have a personal interest in an investigation, is recused from discussion and voting regarding the matter. All reports are reviewed by the grand jury's advisors to ensure conformance with prevailing laws.

A grand jury investigates complaints from private citizens, local government officials, or government employees; initiates investigations based on ideas generated from the jury; and follows California Penal Code that requires it to inspect the county's detention facilities.

Copies of the Grand Jury's Final Consolidated Report, consisting of each year's individual reports on departments and agencies and responses to the prior year's report, are available in hard copy at the courthouse, in all public libraries, and on-line via the grand jury's website, <http://www.yolocounty.org/grand-jury>. Grand jurors and all witnesses are sworn to secrecy and, except in rare circumstances, records of meetings may not be subpoenaed. This secrecy ensures that neither the identity of the complainant nor the testimony offered to the grand jury during its investigations will be revealed. The grand jury exercises its own discretion in deciding whether to investigate or report its findings on all complaints.

HOW TO SUBMIT A COMPLAINT TO THE GRAND JURY

Complaints must be submitted in writing and should include any supporting evidence available. A person can pick up a complaint form at the Yolo Superior Court, Monroe Detention Facility, or any local library. Alternatively, a person can request a form be mailed by calling 530-406-5088, by writing to the Grand Jury at P.O. Box 2142, Woodland, CA 95776, or by accessing the grand jury's website at <http://www.yolocounty.org/grand-jury>.

Complaints should be mailed to P.O. Box 2142, Woodland CA 95776 or sent to the grand jury's email address, grandjury@yolocounty.org. It is not necessary to use the printed form as long as the essential information is included in the complaint. Complaints received late in the term, when the grand jury's investigative work is concluding, may be referred to the next year's grand jury for consideration.

REQUIREMENTS AND SELECTION OF GRAND JURORS

To be eligible for the grand jury you must meet the following criteria:

- You must be a citizen of the United States;
- You must be 18 years of age or older;
- You must have been a resident of Yolo County for at least one year immediately before selection;
- You must be in possession of your natural faculties, of ordinary intelligence, of sound judgement and fair character;
- You must possess sufficient knowledge of the English language;
- You are not currently serving as a trial juror in any court of this state during the time of your grand jury term;
- You have not been discharged as a grand juror in any court of this state within one year;
- You have not been convicted of malfeasance in office or any felony; and
- You are not serving as an elected public officer.

In addition to the requirements prescribed by California law, applicants for the grand jury should be aware of the following requirements:

- Service on the grand jury requires a minimum of 30 hours per month at various times during the day, evening and weekend. During peak months, 40 hours a month or more is typical, with more hours for those in leadership positions.
- Jurors must maintain electronic communications to participate in meeting planning, report distribution, and other essential jury functions.

Each spring, the Yolo County Superior Court solicits applicants for the upcoming year's grand jury. Anyone interested in becoming a grand juror can apply to the court in the spring, usually in April. Application forms are available at the courthouse or from the grand jury's website at <http://www.yolocounty.org/grand-jury>. Applications are managed by the Jury Services Supervisor, Yolo County Courthouse, 1000 Main Street, Woodland, CA 95695, telephone 530-406-6828. The court evaluates written applications and, from these, identifies and interviews potential jurors to comprise the panel of nineteen citizens and alternates. Following a screening process by the court, grand jurors are selected by lottery as prescribed by California law.

Investigative Reports

Yolo County Grand Jury Final Consolidated Report

The 2022-23 Yolo County Grand Jury is honored to present the Final Consolidated Report to the Residents of Yolo County. In its Final Consolidated Report, the Grand Jury presents seven reports based on Grand Jury investigation. Investigations may be undertaken based on outside citizen complaints, by Grand Jury members, or by follow-up of a prior grand jury report.



ARE WE THERE YET?

On the Road to School Safety

A report by the 2022-23 Yolo County Grand Jury

June 1, 2023

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“The People find and declare that the right to public safety extends to public and private primary, elementary, junior high, and senior high school, and community college, California State University, University of California, and private college and university campuses, where students and staff have the right to be safe and secure in their persons.”

--California Constitution, Article 1, Section 28(a), item 7.

SUMMARY

Threats to schools – nationally, statewide and in Yolo County – have continued since the 2019-20 Yolo County Grand Jury issued its [report](#) “Every School is Vulnerable: Staff and Students Must Feel Safe for Learning to Occur.” (1) That grand jury made several recommendations, noted in the Background section below, to improve school safety. The 2022-23 Grand Jury (Grand Jury) found that the five school districts headquartered in Yolo County are in compliance with state-mandated Comprehensive School Safety Plan requirements and have continued to improve their safety measures, including physical improvements (hardening¹), safety training and working with law enforcement and other first responders. The Grand Jury also found that opportunities to improve safety measures and training still exist, as noted in the Recommendations section below.

In addition to reviewing each school district’s implementation of the earlier report’s recommendations, the Grand Jury also responded to a complaint expressing concern about how parents were notified by their children’s schools when violence occurred or was threatened. The Grand Jury found that each school district in Yolo County uses a web-based third-party provider to send messages developed by school administration directly to parents and guardians using text messaging, email, phone call, and/or app. If necessary, messages to parents may also be put into a child’s backpack. The school districts also regularly follow up with families to ensure that parents can receive timely emergency notifications and their contact information is up to date.

As students in Yolo County and elsewhere have had to grapple with threats impacting their safety and ability to learn – whether from direct threats or the COVID-19 pandemic – schools continue to focus resources on providing more mental health support. The Grand Jury found that all Yolo County school districts employ trained specialists and partner with nonprofit organizations or local government agencies to help students facing trauma, whatever the source.

¹ Schools use a variety of tools to help them harden their campuses against unwanted intrusion. These can range from surveillance cameras and door-locking systems to armed guards and arming teachers.

While some school districts do not use the “train-the-trainer” model for training staff in safety measures as recommended by the earlier grand jury, all have contracted with web-based third-party providers to provide online safety and other trainings. The school districts have also implemented tracking of training and needed follow-up measures.

The Grand Jury also found student mental health support, budgets and unforeseen events (“the unexpected”) to be challenges. But such challenges also create opportunities for increasing school safety measures and responding to any resulting trauma to children and staff.

In its November 20, 2020, [written response](#) to the 2019-20 Grand Jury report, the Yolo County Office of Education supported that grand jury’s recommendations. (2)

As a result of interviews, reviews of materials provided and internet research, the Grand Jury found that, while Yolo County school districts may implement different safety measures based on such factors as philosophy or financial means, all five Yolo County school districts are taking student and staff safety very seriously and continue to improve their safety measures.

TERMINOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS

Active Shooter Strategies: The FBI, and law enforcement in general, recommends “[Run. Hide. Fight.](#)” tactics to use when confronted with an active shooter emergency. (3) *Run* is recommended when an active shooter is not in your immediate area; *Hide* when you cannot evacuate; and *Fight* as a last resort when your life is in danger. The California Department of Public Health also provides [guidelines](#) for emergency and evacuation planning, including school lockdowns. (4)

Comprehensive School Safety Plans (CSSPs): As described by the California Department of Education, [CSSPs](#) are required under Assembly Bill 1747, School Safety Plans (2018) and contain required elements such as disaster procedures, responses to bomb threats, intruders and weapons or assaults, procedures to notify teachers of dangerous students, and tactical responses to criminal incidents. (5) The Department of Education also provides a [template](#) to assist schools with developing their own CSSPs. (6) See Appendix.

School Districts: Yolo County has five school districts: Davis Joint Unified School District (Davis), Esparto Unified School District (Esparto), Washington Unified School District (Washington, covering West Sacramento), Winters Joint Unified School District

(Winters), and Woodland Joint Unified School District (Woodland). School districts design curricula and make policies and rules that apply to the schools, employees and students within the district. (7) For clarification, a *unified* school district is one that combines and represents all grades and all schools together for the particular area in the county. A *joint unified* school district is the same except it has students from more than one county.

BACKGROUND

School shootings have increased nationwide over the past several years, and 2023 is following this trend. Between January 1 and April 4, 2023, there were 17 [school shootings](#) in the U.S. that resulted in injuries or deaths, with 51 similar incidents in 2022. (8) Yolo County schools also continue to be on edge with a report of a bomb threat at Holmes Junior High School in Davis on [February 2](#), a replica gun being confiscated from a 16-year-old boy in Winters on [February 13](#), and a Woodland High School student being arrested for possession of a gun on [March 16](#). (9, 10 and 11) Fortunately, the responses by school personnel and law enforcement in all incidents were prompt and effective.

The 2022-23 Grand Jury reviewed the earlier 2019-20 Grand Jury report's recommendations to better understand how that grand jury's recommendations had been addressed. The 2019-20 Grand Jury recommended that, prior to the start of the 2021-22 school year, the following be implemented:

1. Esparto Unified School District should develop school-specific Comprehensive School Safety Plans (CSSPs);
2. For all school districts:
 - a. Identify additional approaches in CSSPs for limiting access to areas of schools that remain vulnerable;
 - b. Assure administrative, certificated, and classified employees are engaged in "train-the-trainer" classes to build internal capacity and share resources across districts;
 - c. Provide online safety training modules for all staff;
 - d. Assure safety training is completed by all substitute teachers before reporting for work in any district;
 - e. Identify a method and/or tool to measure the effectiveness of safety training, including an annual survey of all staff; and
 - f. Develop an attendance and tracking mechanism at each school to determine who has or has not participated in safety training offerings.

The Grand Jury also received a complaint related to parent notification. The complaint arose from the school shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, in May 2022. Even with a safety plan in place, the response by local and state law enforcement to the active shooter situation was tragic. In its [2022 Interim Report](#), the Texas House of Representatives Investigative Committee on the school shooting detailed many aspects of the incident and response. (12) There is no mention, however, of how the school or law enforcement notified parents about the threat. Grand Jury review of [media reports](#) suggests that may be because parents learned of it only from calls from the students or staff within the school during the incident. (13)

Days following the Robb Elementary School shooting in Texas, the Woodland school district itself received social media threats which were not considered credible, but the incident distressed parents and caused Woodland police to [boost security patrols](#). (14) The Yolo County Office of Education (YCOE) also established [Resolution #21-22/57](#) entitled “In Support of Keeping Students and Staff Safe.” (15) In addition to noting the names of those who died as a result of the Robb Elementary School shooting and other school shootings, as well as research related to gun violence and safety, the YCOE condemned violence in all forms in schools and resolved to incorporate staff and student voices in conversations around school safety as well as to partner with other organizations and agencies.

Of concern to the Grand Jury was whether parents might fail to receive emergency notification from a school in Yolo County should such a horror as the Robb Elementary School shooting occur.

APPROACH

The Grand Jury reviewed the earlier the 2019-20 Grand Jury’s report and the written responses from each school district. Grand jurors then interviewed school district officials and representatives most knowledgeable about the districts’ safety programs.

Following the interviews, the Grand Jury reviewed current CSSPs from each school district. Written policies and procedures were reviewed as well as information about third-party providers offering school safety training, tracking and parent notification.

The Grand Jury also visited some schools in each district to observe peripheral school hardening efforts.

DISCUSSION

The 2019-20 Grand Jury report stated in its Discussion section (page 23), “every indication is that school officials are fully aware of the challenges in making schools safe and are committed to taking the necessary steps to keep them that way. Given each school’s unique physical setting, structural features, community climate, and local laws, there is no one-size-fits-all solution to school safety.” The Grand Jury agrees.

Given that diversity in circumstance and approach, the Grand Jury wanted to ensure that each district had made good-faith efforts to address concerns about school hardening, safety training for staff and teachers (regular and substitute) and its effectiveness, and efforts to reach all parents, both housed and unhoused, during emergencies, especially those related to potential violence.

Factors Affecting School Safety

Interviews with school district administrators and safety staff as well as review of CSSPs in each district identified three major factors that affect planning and decisions related to school safety: student mental health, budgets and the unexpected. The Grand Jury found these factors can provide a larger context to the discussions about safety that follow.

Student Mental Health

A student’s mental health can affect their learning ability, grades, decision making, and physical health and may contribute to violent behavior. To provide needed support, California enacted the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), also known as Proposition 63, in 2004. According to the California Department of Education: “The intent of this [Act](#) is to transform the public mental health system in California into a system that provides a broad spectrum of prevention and early intervention, treatment, and infrastructure support.” (16) The MHSA also requires that “mental health services in schools include a broad range of services, settings, and strategies.”

Under the MHSA a one percent tax on income exceeding \$1,000,000 was implemented to support mental health services. In addition, the state’s 2019 budget allocated \$40 million in one-time funding for school-county mental health partnerships through the MHSA. Yolo County was awarded \$4 million in October 2020 through a competitive grant process to implement and grow its [K-12 School Partnership Program](#). The program expands mental health services in all Yolo County schools. (17) [Partners](#) in Yolo County’s K-12 Partnership Program include Yolo County’s Health and Human Services Agency

(HSA), the Yolo County chapter of the National Alliance of Mental Health (NAMI) and the Yolo County Office of Education. (18)

To better understand student needs, school districts may survey their students. The California Department of Education provides schools with its [California Healthy Kids Survey](#) (CHKS). (19) The department describes CHKS as: “an anonymous, confidential survey of school climate and safety, student wellness, and youth resiliency. It is administered to students at grades five, seven, nine, and eleven. It enables schools and communities to collect and analyze data regarding local youth health risks and behaviors, school connectedness, school climate, protective factors, and school violence. The CHKS is part of a comprehensive data-driven decision-making process on improving school climate and student learning environment for overall school improvements.” CalSCHLS posts [results](#) from every school district’s CHKS report dating back to 2007. (20)

In addition to CHKS, which Yolo County school districts conduct annually, Winters uses surveys developed by [Pupil Attitudes to Self and School](#) (PASS) to help teachers identify at-risk students and to develop or implement suitable interventions. (21) Davis also uses [YouthTruth](#), produced by the Center for Effective Philanthropy, to provide guidance on student mental health. (22)

Budgets

School districts depend on a variety of sources for funds to provide a safe and healthy environment for students, teachers and staff. In Yolo County, the largest share of funding overall comes from the State through its [Local Control Funding Formula](#) (LCFF). (23) [School facility funding](#), however, is primarily supported through local government. (24)

For 2023-24, the California state budget is anticipated to [shrink](#) by at least \$22 billion. (25) In addition, California schools are anticipating additional budget [shortfalls](#) due to declining student enrollment that began with the COVID-19 pandemic. (26) It is anticipated that school facility funding, which would include school hardening improvements, could have as much as a \$100 billion [shortfall](#) between 2020 and 2030. (27)

Schools have always had to juggle immediate and long-term needs against limited budgets. For example, in August 2022 the Woodland school district approved a district-

wide [facilities assessment](#) which identified over \$600 million worth of facilities needs and potential upgrades. (28) Only a small share of those needs will be covered by \$44 million from the Measure Y Bond passed by Woodland voters in November 2020. The Grand Jury found that even with budget constraints and other demands on their limited resources, Yolo County school districts continue to strive for student safety.

The Unexpected

In addition to the above factors, there are also unexpected events that can significantly impact school plans. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic caused school closures and impacted school attendance, academic achievement, student mental health, and local economies are still being felt.

Media reports of incidents, such as the mass shooting at Robb Elementary School noted above, or the January 2023 [shooting](#) of a school teacher in Virginia by a six year old student, also harm communities in general by raising fears and concerns about how to prepare for the unexpected, and led to arguments about why such incidents occur and what to do about them. (29)

School District Responses

Below are the Grand Jury's findings on how each school district is addressing issues related to physical safety, safety training, coordination with law enforcement, and parent notification. In addition, the Grand Jury looked at how mental health support is provided to students.

Physical Safety and Mental Health Support

Each school district continues to take steps to improve students' physical and mental health depending on philosophy, identified needs and funding availability.

- Most schools in the Esparto, Washington, Winters, and Woodland school districts are enclosed with fencing and a restricted entrance when schools are in session. All schools in the Washington district have such fencing. The Woodland district has some schools completely enclosed with fencing, and all but one school each in the Esparto and Winters districts are completely enclosed with fencing. Most Davis schools are connected to parks or mixed used areas. While that district has chosen not to completely enclose its schools with fencing in order to stay connected with the local community, it has heightened fencing in some cases to discourage intruders.

- Classroom doors in the Davis, Esparto, Washington, and Winters school districts can be locked from within. The Woodland school district plans to complete its change from standard door locks to those that can be locked from within by the end of 2023.
- The CSSPs or supplemental policies for schools in Yolo County all require visitors to check in and wear badges when coming onto campus. Signage at all schools directs visitors to the office to register. However, the location of the school's office is often unclear and signs at some schools are poorly placed or difficult to read.
- The CSSPs for all school districts contain detailed instructions for responding to active threats, such as an active shooter, weapons on school property, bombs, or other possibly dangerous student situations. In addition, all school districts have quick reference, easy-to-read guides on emergency response procedures.
- All schools in Yolo County perform drills as required in California Education Code section [32001](#), and debrief afterwards to improve staff performance. (30)
- All school districts have safety committees, which may include principals, teachers, staff, student representatives, parents, and local law enforcement. The committees work with principals and trained staff to communicate safety-related information through emails, meetings, and development of the CSSPs.

All school districts have trained mental health staff - such as Community and Family Engagement Specialists, Social Workers, Counselors, Home Liaisons, Youth Outreach Specialists, Psychologists - to provide support should a threat or other type of emergency arise. The districts also work with partners to provide emotional support to students as needed, such as [Victor](#) community support services (31), [RISE](#) Inc. (32), and the Yolo County Health and Human Services Agency.

Safety Training

Esparto and Winters school districts do not use the "train-the-trainer" model for safety training, although the Washington school district does so in certain cases. However, every school district offers web-based training in a wide range of topics to its staff and teachers.

- All school districts require that mandatory trainings are completed, including by substitute teachers, either before starting assignments or no longer than six weeks after starting work, depending on substitute teacher availability. Failure to do so by regular teachers and staff can result in coaching or more serious corrective actions. But if a new regular or substitute teacher must start teaching

before receiving the required safety training because of staffing demands, they are given safety documents and are partnered with another teacher who can provide guidance. Many classrooms have flipcharts or posters with emergency lockdown or drill information available for quick reference.

- Each school district tracks compliance with mandated trainings. Administrative or human resources staff typically can learn from the web-based training provider when a training session should be taken and, if not taken within the deadline period, will follow up with the appropriate supervisor or administrator as needed.
- Required trainings at each school district may vary, covering such topics as mandated reporting, blood borne pathogens, COVID-19 measures, anti-harassment, and pest management. Davis does not require active shooter training. Esparto will conduct active shooter training by the start of the 2023-24 school year. Washington, Winters and Woodland school districts have conducted either online or in-person active shooter training for staff in the past. At this time, none of the Yolo County school districts require active shooter training on an ongoing basis.
- Each school district contracts with a third-party online provider for safety training.
 - Davis uses [Target Solutions](#) as its online training provider. (33)
 - Esparto is contracting with [ALICE Training Solutions](#) for the 2023-24 school year to assess its vulnerability to active threats as well as to provide active shooter training. (34) This contract begins July 1, 2023.
 - Washington’s safety training is provided by Keenan [SafeSchools](#). (35) In addition to completing required safety-related trainings, staff and teachers are expected to review their school’s CSSP annually.
 - Winters contracted with [Vector Solutions](#) to provide online safety training starting with the 2022-23 school year. (36)
 - Woodland uses [PublicSchoolWORKS](#). (38) The school district plans to add safety-related courses covering active shooters, bomb threats and suspicious packages to its list of required trainings at the start of the 2023-24 school year.

In its 2020 report, the grand jury recommended that all school districts assess the effectiveness of their safety training. To date, only Esparto and Woodland school districts have surveyed their staff in a quantitative manner about the trainings offered.

Davis, Washington, and Winters school staff will debrief with school administration after safety trainings or safety-related incidents.

Coordination with Law Enforcement/First Responders

Effective January 1, 2019, Assembly Bill 1747, School Safety Plans, requires schools to consult with law enforcement and first responders, such as the local fire department, in the writing and development of their CSSPs. All Yolo County school districts are complying with this law. Superintendents and staff also meet regularly with their local police department or the Yolo County Sheriff's Department to discuss school safety issues, concerns and emergency parent notifications.

Parent Notification

The Grand Jury observed that all Yolo County school districts are working hard to ensure, to the extent possible, that parents or guardians can receive emergency messages when needed.

- During student registration, all schools require parents or guardians to provide contact information, including their preferred language and technology, for receiving school communications. Since registration is not considered complete without such information, staff follow up with parents if needed to obtain this initial information for the school districts' online platforms. Staff also follow up regularly with parents to check on whether updates of contact information, such as changes in address or phone contacts, are needed. Opportunities for the school districts to get updated contact information include kiosks at schools, events during the school year, written requests and instructions, and follow up by staff who may also be able to speak the parents' primary language. If it is difficult to notify the parents otherwise, students may be given written notices about emergency situations to take home in their backpacks. Families lacking phone or internet service may be provided cell phones from Yolo County's Health and Human Services Agency or additional support from staff who work specifically with the unhoused population.
- School districts have different ways to prepare for emergency notifications. They may create draft notifications which, depending on the situation, can be fine-tuned quickly to meet the specific immediate needs. Administrators, including the district superintendent and school principal, coordinate messages closely with local law enforcement to provide accurate and timely information without harming a subsequent investigation.

- School districts contract with various web-based providers to manage student data and/or facilitate communications between the schools and parents. Davis is reviewing its communication apps for robustness, but currently uses [School Messenger](#). (38) Esparto uses [Aeries](#) for student data management and [ParentSquare](#) for its school-to-home communication needs. (39 and 40) The Winters and Woodland school districts also use ParentSquare. Washington uses [Catapult EMS](#) for emergency notifications. (41)
- Parents in all Yolo County districts must enroll in the web-based platforms during student enrollment and identify their preferred technology: text, email, app, or phone. As of December 2022, 98% of Esparto families were able to be contacted using ParentSquare. Winters has a 99.94% contact rate and Woodland’s contact rate also exceeds 90%. Davis has the ability to reach 100% of parents or guardians. Washington is struggling to exceed a 70% confirmed contact rate throughout the district. After a notification goes out, the school districts typically receive statistics from the provider on how many parents or guardians were reached per technology.

The Grand Jury was concerned about how well emergency notifications can reach high school students when they are off campus during school hours. High schools in all Yolo County school districts except Washington allow some students to leave their campuses during lunch breaks. While school districts may have a parent’s contact email or phone number for high school students, it is challenging to ensure that information is up-to-date so those students can be contacted in a timely manner during an emergency.

COMMENDATIONS

The Grand Jury commends each school district in Yolo County for continuing to improve school safety. This progress includes having Comprehensive School Safety Plans (CSSPs) that adequately address safety issues as they relate to direct threats, including active shooter and bombs, per California Education Code requirements. Each school district is actively coordinating safety measures and emergency communications with local law enforcement and first responders. To ensure that emergency communications are as effective as possible, each school district also has procedures and staff in place to encourage parents and guardians to provide and maintain their contact information so they can be notified as quickly as possible when an emergency occurs. Although the districts have limited resources, they are striving to provide a range of mental health services and other support when needed by students and their families.

FINDINGS

- F-1 Each school district has implemented school hardening measures to some degree in addition to those discussed in the 2019-20 Yolo County Grand Jury report. The measures in place at school sites vary and can be improved. While some schools in each district have their sites enclosed or have security cameras, others do not. Fences may not be high enough to prevent students or intruders from jumping over them. In addition, gates at schools are sometimes not closed, locked or are in disrepair.
- F-2 Each school district conducts California Healthy Kids Surveys, while some use additional methods for assessing student mental health. The response rate of students completing such surveys, however, may not be enough to generate reliable conclusions about student mental health.
- F-3 California Education Code mandates that all school districts require visitors to go to a school's office upon arrival and wear identification while on site. At some Yolo County schools, however, the location of the school's office is not clear. Better signage is needed to direct visitors to the office. This is particularly important for schools, such as in the Davis, Winters and Woodland school districts, where sharing open space or parking lots can make clear signage and prevention of intruders from entering school grounds more challenging.
- F-4 Each school district appropriately uses a web-based third-party provider for safety training modules. Annual training related to violent threats, such as active shooter, is not required at this time by the Davis, Esparto, Washington, and Woodland school districts, although Esparto and Woodland will add such trainings at the start of the 2023-24 school year. Ensuring staff are trained in how to respond appropriately to threats of violence would lessen the chances of another tragedy similar to that in Uvalde, Texas.
- F-5 The Esparto and Woodland school districts have assessed the effectiveness of their school safety training through surveys, as recommended by the 2019-20 Yolo County Grand Jury, while Davis, Washington and Winters districts have not. Assessing effectiveness based on quantifiable data can provide more accurate guidance for decisions about training.
- F-6 Each school district has contracted with a web-based third-party provider to notify parents of emergencies. The providers report on how many parents or guardians were reached per technology (e.g., email, text, app, or voice/phone). All school districts' providers, except Washington, reach 90% or more of their students' parents or guardians. Ensuring that virtually all parents or guardians can be reached when needed is desirable.

- F-7 Some high school students in the Davis, Esparto, Winters and Woodland school districts are allowed to go off campus during lunch break. Should an emergency arise on campus, it is not possible for the schools to know how safe those students are, and the students may not receive timely emergency notifications if their school is on lockdown or evacuated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R-1 The Grand Jury recommends that, prior to the start of the 2024-25 school year, each school district identify additional hardening approaches and develop a plan to further protect areas of its schools that remain vulnerable.
- R-2 Prior to the start of the 2024-25 school year, each school district should develop a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound) plan to encourage all students to complete the *California Healthy Kids Survey* and similar surveys to produce meaningful data. Each school district should act on survey findings, especially those related to potentially violent actions.
- R-3 Prior to the start of the 2024-25 school year, each school district should evaluate and improve signage for all of its schools, so that visitors can easily find the school's office to register upon their arrival.
- R-4 Prior to the start of the 2024-25 school year, each school district should require and document that training related to threats of violence is completed by its teachers (regular and substitute), staff and administrators every year.
- R-5 Prior to the start of the 2024-25 school year and each subsequent school year, Davis, Washington and Winters school districts should identify and document a statistically reliable method or tool for measuring the effectiveness of school safety training, including an annual survey of teachers, staff and administrators.
- R-6 Prior to the start of the 2024-25 school year and each subsequent school year, each district should achieve and maintain an emergency notification contact rate of at least 95% with parents or guardians, as verified by their third-party emergency notification providers.
- R-7 Prior to the start of the 2024-25 school year, Davis, Esparto, Winters, and Woodland school districts should develop, implement and maintain a plan for contacting at least 95% of students who may be off-site if an emergency occurs during regular school hours.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the Grand Jury requests responses to its Findings and Recommendations as follows:

From the following governing bodies:

- Board of Education/Trustees, Davis Joint Unified School District – F-1, F-2, F-3, F-4, F-5, F-6, F-7, R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5, R-6, R-7
- Board of Education/Trustees, Esparto Unified School District – F-1, F-2, F-3, F-4, F-6, F-7, R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-6, R-7
- Board of Education/Trustees, Washington Unified School District – F-1, F-2, F-3, F-4, F-5, F-6, R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5, R-6
- Board of Education/Trustees, Winters Joint Unified School District – F-1, F-2, F-3, F-4, F-5, F-6, F-7, R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5, R-6, R-7
- Board of Education/Trustees, Woodland Joint Unified School District – F-1, F-2, F-3, F-4, F-6, F-7, R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-6, R-7

Note: The governing bodies indicated above should be aware that the comment or response of the governing body must be conducted subject to the notice, agenda and open meeting requirements of the Brown Act.

INVITED RESPONSES

From the following Individuals:

- Superintendent of Schools, Yolo County Office of Education, – F-1, F-2, F-3, F-4, F-5, F-6, F-7, R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5, R-6, R-7

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APPENDIX

Compliance Tool for a Comprehensive School Safety Plan

California Education Code sections 32280–32289.5

Required and Recommended Components for a Comprehensive School Safety Plan

Note: This tool is designed to assist schools in developing and updating Comprehensive School Safety Plans (CSSPs). Use of this tool is optional. Each school, school district, and county office of education is responsible for compliance and familiarity with all sections of California *Education Code* sections 32280–32289.5.

Section 32280	Mandate Met	Comments, Suggested Details (resources, activities, etc.)
It is the intent of the Legislature that all school staff be trained on the CSSP	Include date and plan	n/a
Section 32281	Mandate Met (date, plan)	Comments, Suggested Details (resources, activities, etc.)
(b)(1) Plan is written and developed by a school site council (SSC) (2) The SSC may delegate this responsibility to a safety planning committee made up of principal/designee, teacher, parent of child who attends the school, classified employee, and others, if desired	Include date and plan	Include planning committee roster
(b)(3) SSC/Planning Committee consulted with a representative from a law enforcement agency, a fire department, and other first responder entities in the writing and development of the CSSP The CSSP and any updates made to the plan must be shared with the law enforcement agency, the fire department, and the other first responder entities Effective January 1, 2019, Assembly Bill 1747 expanded the requirements of this section as noted here	Include date and agencies	n/a

Section 32282	Mandate Met (date, plan)	Comments, Suggested Details (resources, activities, etc.)
(a) CSSP includes, but is not limited to the following:	n/a	n/a

<p>(1) An assessment of the current status of school crime at the school and at school-related functions that may be accomplished by reviewing one or more of the following types of information, is included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office Referrals • Attendance rates/School Attendance Review Board • Suspension/Expulsion data • California Healthy Kids Survey • School Improvement Plan • Local law enforcement juvenile crime data • Property Damage data 	<p>Include date and plan</p>	<p>Describe the data reviewed and key analysis points, and table of findings</p> <p>Document how this information was shared with SSC/planning committee</p>
<p>(2) Appropriate strategies and programs that provide and maintain a high level of school safety and address the school’s procedures for complying with existing laws related to school safety are identified. These include but are not limited to the following:</p>	<p>Include date and plan</p>	<p>Additional items to consider:</p> <p>Threat Assessment Student Support Teams</p>
<p>(A) Child Abuse Reporting procedures</p>	<p>Include date and plan</p>	<p>Include board policy and site-specific steps</p>
<p>(B) Disaster procedures, routine and emergency plans, and crisis response plan are developed and include adaptations for pupils with disabilities and the following:</p>	<p>Include date and plan</p>	<p>Use the Standardized Emergency Management System as detailed in the California Emergency Services Act 8607 and the supporting <i>California Code of Regulations</i></p>
<p>Section 32282</p>	<p>Mandate Met (date, plan)</p>	<p>Comments, Suggested Details (resources, activities, etc.)</p>

<p>(i) Earthquake emergency procedure system that includes:</p> <p>(I) A school building disaster plan</p> <p>Note: Building disaster plan emergency procedures and drills for the following situations that may be associated with an earthquake or other emergency event should be developed and adapted to each school’s needs and circumstances in collaboration with first responders and community partners. These situations may include but are not limited to:</p> <p>Fire; Relocation/Evacuation; Bomb Threat; Bioterrorism/Hazardous Materials; Earthquake; Flood; Power Failure/Blackout; Intruders/Solicitors; Weapons/Assault/Hostage; Explosion; Gas/Fumes</p> <p>(II) a drop procedure (students and staff take cover) drop procedure practice must be held once each quarter in elementary; once each semester in secondary schools</p> <p>(III) protective measures to be taken before, during, and after an earthquake</p> <p>(IV) a program to ensure that pupils, and certificated and classified staff are aware of and are trained in the procedures</p>	<p>Include date and plan</p>	<p>Detail response procedures may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lock Down • Secure School • Active intruder or other threat(s) <p>Describe information on training and exercise drills</p>
<p>(ii) Procedures are established to allow a public agency, including the American Red Cross, to use school buildings, grounds, and equipment for mass care and welfare shelters during an emergency</p>	<p>Include date and plan</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>(C) Suspension/Expulsion policies and procedures</p>	<p>Include date and plan</p>	<p>Refer to board policy, include site-specific steps, if needed</p>
<p>(D) Procedures to notify teachers of dangerous pupils</p>	<p>Include date and plan</p>	<p>Refer to board policy, include site-specific steps, if needed</p>

<p>Section 32282</p>	<p>Mandate Met (date, plan)</p>	<p>Comments, Suggested Details (resources, activities, etc.)</p>
<p>(E) Discrimination and Harassment Policy that includes hate crime reporting procedures and policies</p>	<p>Include date and plan</p>	<p>Include complaint and investigation procedure</p>

<p>(F) If a Schoolwide Dress Code exists, include prohibition of gang-related apparel</p>	<p>Include date and plan</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>(G) Procedures for safe ingress and egress of pupils, parents, and school employees to and from school site</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>Reference campus visitor policies. Other items may include but are not limited to: crossing guard program, safe routes to school, pedestrian, vehicle and bicycle policies, traffic safety</p>
<p>(H) Maintain a safe and orderly environment conducive to learning at the school</p>	<p>Include date and plan</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>(I) Rules and procedures on school discipline are established</p>	<p>Include date and plan</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>(J) Procedures for conducting tactical responses to criminal incidents, including procedures related to individuals with guns on school campuses and at school-related functions must be developed. The procedures to prepare for active shooters or other armed assailants are based on the specific needs and context of each school and community</p> <p>Note: Effective January 1, 2019, AB 1747 requires the inclusion of these procedures</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>Consult with local law enforcement partners on developing these procedures</p>
<p>(c) Where practical, consult, cooperate and coordinate with other school site councils or school safety planning committees</p>	<p>Include date and plan</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>(d) Evaluate and amend the plan as needed and at least once each year, to ensure the plan is properly implemented</p> <p>An updated file of all non-sensitive safety-related plans and materials is readily available for inspection by the public</p>	<p>School must review, update, and adopt by March 1</p>	<p>n/a</p>

Section 32282	Recommendation Met (date, plan)	Comments, Suggested Details (resources, activities, etc.)
<p>(e) The Legislature encourages that policies and procedures aimed at the prevention of bullying be included in the CSSP</p>	<p>Include date and plan</p>	<p>Comments The Legislature encourages, and the California Department of Education (CDE) concurs, that these procedures and other related policies be included in the CSSP</p> <p>Online Bullying Prevention Training Programs can be accessed on the CDE Bullying Publication and Resources web page at https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/s/se/bullyres.asp</p>
Section 32282.1	Recommendation Met (date, plan)	Comments, Suggested Details (resources, activities, etc.)
<p>(a) Schools are encouraged to include clear guidelines for the roles and responsibilities of the positions listed below (if used by the district):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health professionals, school counselors • Community intervention professionals • School resource officers, police officers on campus <p>(b) The guidelines are encouraged to include strategies to create and maintain positive school climate and mental health protocols for the care of students who have witnessed a violent act at any time</p>	<p>Include date and plan</p>	<p>Include school counselors, nurses, coaches, athletic directors, and other positions, if used</p>
Section 32284	Mandate Met (date, plan)	Comments, Suggested Details (resources, activities, etc.)
<p>Plan may include procedures for responding to the release of a pesticide or other toxic substance from properties located within one-quarter mile of a school</p>	<p>Include date and plan</p>	<p>Comments</p>

Section 32286	Mandate Met (date, plan)	Comments, Suggested Details (resources, activities, etc.)
(a) Each school review, update, and adopt its plan by March 1, every year	Include date and plan	See Section 32288 for guidance on school district or COE approval timeline
Section 32288	Mandate Met (date, plan)	Comments, Suggested Details (resources, activities, etc.)
(a) Submit the plan to school district office or COE for approval	Include date and plan	California Department of Education recommends that the plans be approved within a month of school adoption or as soon as possible
(b)(1) Before adopting its CSSP, SSC/Planning Committee presented the school safety plan at a public meeting at the school site that allowed for public opinions	Include date, agenda, and supporting communications	See notification requirements in Section 32288(b)(2) and recommendations in Section 32288(b)(3)
(c) Each school district or COE must annually notify the CDE by October 15 of any schools that have not complied with Section 32281	Written notification to State Superintendent	Mail to: CDE--SHSO 1430 N Street Sacramento, CA 95814 Email: SHSO@cde.ca.gov

Note: This tool is designed to assist schools in developing and updating CSSPs. Use of this tool is optional. Each school, school district, and COE is responsible for compliance and familiarity with all sections and requirements of California *Education Code* sections 32280–32289.5.

California Department of Education	September 2022
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