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FINDINGS

1. The boring samples were not taken from the area of the excavation where the sewer line was to be installed.
2. Performance of additional boring along the relocated pipeline and utilization of Dig Alert in the early stages of the project would have identified the concrete highway beneath the asphalt and the additional utility crossovers. Incorporation of this information into the initial bid documents would have eliminated the necessity of returning to the Board of Supervisors for the excessive overrun cost of the allocated budget.
3. Accurate drawings were not available identifying crossover utilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 15-01 For future projects, the Special Districts Department personnel should ensure the boring soil sample locations specified in the contract be performed on the site where the actual excavation is to be conducted.
- 15-02 The County of San Bernardino Board of Supervisors approve a measure that requires the Special Districts to have surveys conducted at reasonable intervals to update their existing utility drawings in order to reduce inaccurate information given to contractors.
- 15-03 Dig Alert should be used by Special Districts in the preliminary scoping of all future underground projects as required by State law.

Responding Agency	Recommendations	Due Date
San Bernardino County Special Districts Department	15-01 through 15-03	10/01/2015

BULLYING

BACKGROUND

Federal law mandates that any school that receives federal funds must address discrimination on a variety of personal characteristics. The California Education Code (EC) §§234, 234.1, 234.2, 234.3, 234.5, 32261-32262, 32265, 32270, 32282, 32283 and 48900 meet that requirement by establishing a series of policies that must be followed by school districts, schools, and staff within California. Individual school districts adopt these policies and may expand on them in order to accommodate any unique characteristics inherent with their district. Likewise, the individual school may further add to the school district's policies for their environments or situation. The above listed codes may never be altered by the school districts or schools to diminish their intended effect.

Recent research has identified a number of elements that impact the level and frequency of bullying. One such study examined a bullying prevention program based on a model which intervenes with the child's environment on a number of levels. This study included classmates, staff, families, the school as a whole and the community. The crucial element in this study was adult behavior. When adults in the school and at home become aware of the bullying, they must take action to change the situation. The research results demonstrated a “modest decrease” in the number of bullying reports in the schools under study as opposed to the control group.¹

Another area of research that impacts bullying is classified as “school climate”. “School Climate is described as the quality and frequency of interaction among and between adults and students at school” (Kupermine, Leadbeater, Emmons, and Blatt, 1997, p.77). The National School Climate Council (NSCC, 2012) referred to school climate as “the quality and character of school life”. Researchers have found that positive relationships among students and teachers, and negative attitudes toward inappropriate behavior are key elements of school climate. A positive school climate can be fostered by school personnel promoting and modeling appropriate attitudes and

¹ Mark D. Weist, Nancy A. Lever, Catherine P. Bradshaw, and Julie Sarno Owens, Editors, Handbook of School Mental Health Research, Training, Practice, and Policy. Second Edition

behaviors. It was found that an “unhealthy” school climate in that there is a negative relationship between teachers and students, allows bullying to occur. Therefore, it is the researchers’ conclusion that it is critical that the school climate be evaluated in order to improve it and prevent the occurrences of bullying.²

Reports of bullying need to be taken seriously and consistent intervention must take place in accordance with the school rules. The study also found that those engaging in bullying often suffer from mental health problems and that referral to mental health professionals for help would be appropriate.³

In regard to the bully, research has suggested the act of bullying is linked to cognitive, psychological, and social distortions and deficit. Through the application of social cognitive theory using a variety of intervention and counseling sessions, the student will learn appropriate interaction behaviors that will support a positive school climate and reduce the instances of bullying.⁴

The Office of Justice and Juvenile Delinquency Prevention views bullying as a form of violence common on school playgrounds, in neighborhoods, and in homes throughout the United States. It often occurs out of the presence of adults, who are unable to intercede. This behavior may indicate the beginning of a generally antisocial and rule breaking pattern that can extend into adulthood. Intervention should occur on three levels: school, classroom, and the individual.

METHODOLOGY

² Cixin Wang, Brandi Berry, and Susan M. Swearer (2013) Theory into Practice, “The Critical Role of School Climate in Effective Bullying Prevention”, The College of Education and Human Ecology, Ohio State University

³ Ji Hoon Ryoo, University of Virginia, Cixin Wang, University of California, Riverside, Susan M. Swearer, University of Nebraska-Lincoln School Psychology Quarterly. “Examination of the Change in Latent Statuses in Bullying Behaviors Across Time”

⁴ Susan M. Swearer, Cixin Wang, Brandi Berry, and Zach Myers, (2014) Theory into Practice, “Reducing Bullying: Application of Social Cognitive Theory” HTIP #947221, Vol. 53, ISS4

Two school districts were randomly chosen within San Bernardino County: Fontana Unified School District (FUSD) and the Victor Valley Union High School District (VVUHSD). A high school and middle or elementary school were randomly selected within each district. Interviews were scheduled with key personnel within each of the four schools as well as each district. Students, selected by the principals, were also interviewed. In one case the parents attended and participated in the interviews. Written material, supporting documentation, and relevant publications were retrieved from each site.

FACTS

Both school districts participated in the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) Annual Update for 2013 - 2014. The Safe School Plan served as a tool for the school districts to identify what was necessary to improve their school climate (identified as Need in the plan) as well as methods to measure their progress (identified as Metric in the plan). The Grand Jury also reviewed the two high school and two middle school School Accountability Report Cards (SARC).

Research has also suggested that bullying takes different forms, depending on the sex of the bully and the victim, and that different interventions are required. It was also found that transition points, such as moving from grade school to high school, had an effect on the frequency of bullying and that a small percentage of the students were responsible for the majority of the bullying behaviors. The researchers concluded that “only when bullying interventions are developmentally based, gender and culturally sensitive, and address all types of bullying,” will schools reduce the problem of bullying.

Researchers have also found that as students age, cyber bullying increases while verbal and physical bullying decreases. Bullying increases during the transition from elementary to middle school.⁵

⁵ Ji Hoon Ryoo, Cixin Wang and Susan M. Swearer, School Psychology Quarterly, “Examination of the Change in Latent Statuses in Bullying Behaviors Across Time”

A number of community and student body characteristics such as high transient rate, high assisted lunch program population, high non-English speaking population, and high special education population, when combined, constitute a high risk school environment which may negatively influence the school climate.

Both school districts received a three year government (Safe and Supportive Schools, S3) grant to address bullying and have made use of a number of anti-bullying programs utilizing the provided funding. An analysis of the information obtained would reveal how bullying is viewed and treated at multiple levels as well as the degree to which the individual schools adhere to the State and school district's policies. Of those interviewed, one school administrator was the most tenured with three years in her current position. Another school administrator had been in his position for three and one-half months. One administrator stated that a positive school attitude is not uniformly shared by the teachers and feels that it is due to the pressure on the teachers to improve the students' academic scores. Reports of bullying need to be taken seriously and parents must be aware of and involved in the effort to address bullying.

FONTANA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Bullying is any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act, and including one or more acts committed by a pupil or group of pupils as defined in the Education Code §§48900.2, 48900.3, or 48900.4, directed toward one or more pupils that can have a negative effect on a student or students.

Both schools visited had anti-bullying policies in place. Posters throughout the campuses addressed bullying. Programs are in place as a resource to students and parents regarding bullying. Both schools have student dress codes that prohibit gang colors and required that pants be worn at waist height. In an effort to improve the school spirit and climate, tee shirts were provided to the students bearing the school colors, and one day a week is dedicated to wearing them.