

August 14, 2002

The Honorable Lynn O'Malley Taylor
Marin County Superior Court
P.O. Box 4988
San Rafael, CA 94913-4988

Your Honor:

In response to the request of the 2001-2002 Marin County Grand Jury, I am submitting the following responses to the report entitled: "Emergency Preparedness and Security on Public School Campuses in Marin County."

We generally agree with **Findings** 1-9 except as noted in the responses to the recommendations.

Recommendation #1

All public school districts should review their emergency, safety, and/or disaster manuals and protocols in each of their schools and in the district office (including MCOE) to ensure that they are in compliance with the law. These plans should be updated to include the latest information and requirements pertaining to hazardous materials, intruders and terrorism. They should coordinate with each other, with the MCOE taking the lead. The "Intruder on Campus" procedure should be merged into The Model School Emergency Disaster and Incident Preparedness Plan. A single manual should incorporate all the emergency safety and security procedures at each school.

Response:

Ross School reviews its disaster plan each year to ensure that it is in compliance with the law. We are currently in the process of adding sections dealing with hazardous materials, intruders, and terrorism; these sections should be completed by October 2002. Ross School continues to work closely with the Ross Town Chief of Public Safety, Mike Ridgway; his evaluation of our disaster procedures and drills has been invaluable.

Recommendation #2

As required by California Penal Code Title 15, Chapter 1.1 Section 627, all schools and district offices (including MCOE) should post signs at all points of entry to their campuses or buildings from streets and parking lots. These signs should direct outsiders to the reception point. The signs should indicate that failure to register subject visitors to prosecution for trespass.

Response to the Grand Jury Report Ross School District (Page 2)

Response:

Ross School has posted signs at all points of entry directing visitors to enter the building through the front entrance. Visitors to Ross School are required to register at the front office, where they are issued an identification badge. Ross School staff members always wear identification badges. During the 2002-2003 school year we will be reviewing the language of our signs, using as an example the template to be provided by the Marin County Office of Education. This template will provide appropriate language and legal citations for visitors regarding the requirements for entering a public school site.

Recommendation #3

All school district personnel should be directed to question strangers and visitors on campus to ensure that procedures are followed.

Response:

School district personnel are reminded annually to enforce existing school policies regarding visitors on campus.

Recommendation #4

All school districts should provide knowledgeable evaluators at every drill conducted by their schools. These could be district staff, firefighters, law enforcement officers, County safety personnel and experienced school administrators from other schools. Inexperienced persons in responsible positions should be sent to observe programs and drills at schools where programs and drills are considered good.

Response:

Ross School will continue to work with the Town of Ross Public Safety Department; officers are present at every drill.

Recommendation #5

Appropriate emergency materials, equipment and food for 72 hours should be acquired, inventoried and stored in a suitable location. Supplies not required in the classroom emergency kits, should be stored away from buildings.

**Response to the Grand Jury Report
Ross School District
(Page 3)****Response:**

Ross School does not currently have a 72-hour supply of food and water available for students and staff. We will work towards implementing this recommendation as soon as school starts. We will seek the support of a business to help establish the needed food supply; an alternative solution would be to request the supplies from parents. The school would provide extra supplies for those parents who do not respond.

Recommendation #6

Each school administration should determine the closest designated shelters and provide this information in its plans, along with directions to the shelters and contact information for the people responsible for the shelters. Parents should be informed. Every responsible person on campus should have this knowledge or immediate access to it. The Red Cross should be contacted annually to update procedures.

Response:

The two closest shelters for the Ross School District are Redwood High School and College of Marin. These shelters are listed in our Disaster Plan. Phone numbers, contact information, street addresses, and directions will be added to the Disaster Plan this year.

Recommendation #7

School district administrators should review the emergency preparedness knowledge and experience of

responsible school staff. Site and classroom training should be scheduled as soon as practicable where needed and conducted annually thereafter. Available self-study materials and videos should be provided.

Response:

The Ross School District Disaster Plan includes a list of specific assignments for each staff member, including tasks such as shutting off the gas if needed, working at the first aid station, etc. This plan and these assignments are reviewed each year. Ongoing training occurs in conjunction with the Town of Ross Public Safety Department.

**Response to the Grand Jury Report
Ross School District
(Page 4)**

Recommendation #8

School districts should evaluate the communication requirements and procedures of each school to ensure that procedures are in place for the possibility that all power and phone systems are out.

Response:

Ross School has both cell phones and short wave radios for use by designated school personnel in the event of an emergency where power is no longer available. Ross School participates in monthly drills that include the use of the 800mh Marin School Emergency Radio System. There is a need for training more staff in the use of the emergency radio system. Ross School is working to implement an emergency cell phone tree for contacting parents. Communication procedures are evaluated by school and public safety officials during monthly drills.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine A. Townsley
Superintendent/Principal
Ross School District

Enclosures