

Subject: Grand Jury Response - School Threat Assessment

From: Jeremy Verinsky - To: grandjury@scgrandjury.org - Date: August 4, 2017 at 1:33 PM, Attachments:
SchoolThreatAssessment_Sheriff_ResponsePacket.docx

Lauren- attached please find the Santa Cruz Sheriff's Office response to the report titled Assessing the Threat of Violence in our Public Schools. Do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding our response -
Jeremy

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**The 2016–2017 Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury
Requires that the
Santa Cruz County Sheriff
Respond to the Findings and Recommendations
Specified in the Report Titled
Assessing the Threat of Violence in our Public
Schools
by August 14, 2017**

When the response is complete, please

1. Email the completed Response Packet as a file attachment to grandjury@scgrandjury.org, and
2. Print and send a hard copy of the completed Response Packet to

The Honorable Judge John Gallagher
Santa Cruz Courthouse
701 Ocean St.
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Instructions for Respondents

California law PC § 933.05 (included [below](#)) requires the respondent to a Grand Jury report to comment on each finding and recommendation within a report. Explanations for disagreements and timeframes for further implementation or analysis must be provided. Please follow the format below when preparing the responses.

Response Format

1. For the Findings included in this Response Packet, select one of the following responses and provide the required additional information:
 - a. **AGREE** with the Finding, or
 - b. **PARTIALLY DISAGREE** with the Finding and specify the portion of the Finding that is disputed and include an explanation of the reasons therefore, or
 - c. **DISAGREE** with the Finding and provide an explanation of the reasons therefore.
2. For the Recommendations included in this Response Packet, select one of the following actions and provide the required additional information:
 - a. **HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED**, with a summary regarding the implemented action, or
 - b. **HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE**, with a timeframe or expected date for implementation, or
 - c. **REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS**, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for that analysis or study; this timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report, or
 - d. **WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefore.

If you have questions about this response form, please contact the Grand Jury by calling 831-454-2099 or by sending an email to grandjury@scgrandjury.org.

Findings

F2. Confusion over the disclosure of protected information regarding juveniles has been a barrier to the timely exchange of vital information between school districts and law enforcement, although FERPA permits disclosure of juvenile student information to law enforcement without parental consent.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

F4. Investigating a threat may involve actions that can only be done by law enforcement, necessitating coordination and collaboration in formulating and implementing a threat assessment plan.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

F5. Seven of the ten districts have a specific threat assessment plan; those districts without a plan are less able to respond effectively to threats. All of these reported that local law enforcement was aware of their plan.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

F6. Only one school district had a threat assessment plan that was created with the help of law enforcement, leaving all other districts at a disadvantage in addressing threats.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

F9. Countywide, only two of 11 SROs were included as members of a threat assessment team.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

F10. Not all local law enforcement agencies have personnel trained in assessing threats of school violence, leaving them less able to assist schools.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE – explain the disputed portion

DISAGREE – explain why

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

Recommendations

R2. The County Office of Education (COE) and the County Sheriff's Office (CSO) should advocate that the threat assessment plan for each school district has a written agreement with law enforcement in which restricted information may be exchanged during the investigation of a threat. (F2)

HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED – summarize what has been done

HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE – summarize what will be done and the timeframe

REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS – explain scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)

WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED – explain why

Response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

The Santa Cruz Sheriff's Office and County Office of Education hold student and staff safety as our highest priority on-campus. We have begun meeting with the local Chiefs of Police and Superintendents from all school districts to coordinate the development of a County-wide Threat Assessment Plan. We believe that this regional approach will enable us to leverage the resources of the larger law enforcement agencies and school districts to help support the smaller districts and agencies. Threat Assessment is a complicated arena balancing the needs of school safety and self-expression. Each threat must be investigated appropriately with a view of ensuring a safe learning environment for all the students and staff in Santa Cruz County.

A key component of the plans is the ability to share critical information to further the investigative process of the threat assessment. The COE and Sheriff's Office are committed to the right of each student to privacy, but believe that appropriate information sharing, as allowed by FERPA, contributes to timely and accurate investigations into potential threats of school violence and results in better outcomes.

The plans should be in place by December 2017 at each school district.

R3. The COE and the CSO should collaborate to develop a plan in which all school districts are prepared and capable of assessing a threat of targeted school violence. (F3, F5–F7)

- HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – summarize what has been done
- HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE** – summarize what will be done and the timeframe
- REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – explain scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)
- WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – explain why

Response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

The Santa Cruz Sheriff’s Office and County Office of Education hold student and staff safety as our highest priority on-campus. We have begun meeting with the local Chiefs of Police and Superintendents from all school districts to coordinate the development of a County-wide Threat Assessment Plan. We believe that this regional approach will enable us to leverage the resources of the larger law enforcement agencies and school districts to help support the smaller districts and agencies. Threat Assessment is a complicated arena balancing the needs of school safety and self-expression. Each threat must be investigated appropriately with a view of ensuring a safe learning environment for all the students and staff in Santa Cruz County.

Santa Cruz Police Department, Watsonville Police Department, Scotts Valley Police Department and the Santa Cruz Sheriff’s Office all have dedicated officers assigned to various school districts throughout the county as School Resource Officers. SROs are currently assigned to campuses in the Pajaro Valley Unified School District (WPD and SCSO), Santa Cruz City School District (SCPD and SCSO), San Lorenzo Valley Unified School District (SCSO) and Scotts Valley Unified School District (SVPD). The Sheriff’s Office is committed to providing resources and support to all school districts in its jurisdiction, even if they don’t have a full time SRO assigned to them.

R4. The County Sheriff and the County Superintendent of Schools should act as *boundary spanners* to facilitate collaboration between the school districts and law enforcement in assessing threats. (F4)

- HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – summarize what has been done
- HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE** – summarize what will be done and the timeframe
- REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – explain scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)
- WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – explain why

Response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

The Sheriff and Superintendent of Schools have met and formed a working group with local law enforcement agencies and the school districts to develop a county-wide protocol and share resources with smaller districts.

R5. The CSO and Chiefs of Police should ensure a law enforcement representative, preferably a School Resource Officer, be made available to school districts when drafting or revising an existing threat assessment plan. (F6, F8)

HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED – summarize what has been done

HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE – summarize what will be done and the timeframe

REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS – explain scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)

WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED – explain why

Response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

Most of the law enforcement agencies already have SROs assigned at various school districts throughout the County. The Sheriff is committed to providing SROs or other staff to all the school districts served by the Sheriff's Office for assistance in developing and implementing a threat assessment plan.

R8. The County Sheriff and the Chiefs of Police should ensure their respective law enforcement agencies attend periodic training in assessing threats of targeted school violence. (F10)

- HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – summarize what has been done
- HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE** – summarize what will be done and the timeframe
- REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – explain scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)
- WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – explain why

Response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

The Sheriff's Office personnel attended training hosted by the County Office of Education in March 2017 on threat assessment. We continue to send our deputies to advanced training as part of their assignments on school campuses.

Penal Code §933.05

1. For Purposes of subdivision (b) of §933, as to each Grand Jury finding, the responding person or entity shall indicate one of the following:
 - a. the respondent agrees with the finding,
 - b. the respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation of the reasons therefor.
2. For purpose of subdivision (b) of §933, as to each Grand Jury recommendation, the responding person shall report one of the following actions:
 - a. the recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action,
 - b. the recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation,
 - c. the recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of the publication of the Grand Jury report, or
 - d. the recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefor.
3. However, if a finding or recommendation of the Grand Jury addresses budgetary or personnel matters of a County department headed by an elected officer, both the department head and the Board of Supervisors shall respond if requested by the Grand Jury, but the response of the Board of Supervisors shall address only those budgetary or personnel matters over which it has some decision-making authority. The response of the elected department head shall address all aspects of the findings or recommendations affecting his or her department.
4. A Grand Jury may request a subject person or entity to come before the Grand Jury for the purpose of reading and discussing the findings of the Grand Jury report that relates to that person or entity in order to verify the accuracy of the findings prior to their release.
5. During an investigation, the Grand Jury shall meet with the subject of that investigation regarding that investigation unless the court, either on its own determination or upon request of the foreperson of the Grand Jury, determines that such a meeting would be detrimental.
6. A Grand Jury shall provide to the affected agency a copy of the portion of the Grand Jury report relating to that person or entity two working days prior to its public release and after the approval of the presiding judge. **No officer, agency, department, or governing body of a public agency shall disclose any contents of the report prior to the public release of the final report.**