

A REPORT BY
THE 2019-2020 CONTRA COSTA COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY

725 Court Street
Martinez, California 94553

Report 2008

**Do Our Public Schools Have
Adequate Emergency
Supplies?**

APPROVED BY THE GRAND JURY

Date June 9, 2020

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ACCEPTED FOR FILING

Date JUN 09 2020

Anita Santos
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JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT

Contra Costa County Grand Jury Report 2008

Do Our Public Schools Have Adequate Emergency Supplies?

**TO: Contra Costa County Superintendent of Schools, Office of
Education**

Contra Costa County Board of Education

Governing Boards of:

**Acalanes Union High School District, Antioch Unified
School District, Brentwood Union School District, Byron
Union School District, Canyon Elementary School District,
John Swett Unified School District, Knightsen Elementary
School District, Lafayette School District, Liberty Union
High School District, Martinez Unified School District,
Moraga School District, Mt. Diablo Unified School District,
Oakley Union Elementary School District, Orinda Union
School District, Pittsburg Unified School District, San
Ramon Valley Unified School District, Walnut Creek School
District, West Contra Costa Unified School District**

SUMMARY

Contra Costa County school districts develop and implement emergency preparedness plans used by school staff during emergencies. Depending on the nature of the emergency, students and staff may become stranded at school for extended periods. Authorities may require students to shelter outdoors if a school building suffers structural damage. During a gun-related event on a school campus, those requiring medical attention may go unattended until first responders (i.e., Police or Fire) arrive. Adequate preparation for these events includes training and the identification of on-site

items schools may need during an emergency. These items include water, food, and medical supplies and equipment.

The Grand Jury investigation focused on the following questions for public school districts:

- Does each school district have a list of emergency supplies?
- What emergency supplies do schools currently have on-site?
- Does each school district have a safety/resource officer?
- What are the funding options for purchasing school emergency supplies?
- Do teachers have Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and First Aid certification training?

The availability of emergency supplies at Contra Costa County schools varies widely from school to school and district to district. The Contra Costa County Office of Education has published a recommended Emergency Supplies list (minimum standard list). Some schools did not demonstrate to the Grand Jury that they have the items on this list, while others met or exceeded the recommendations.

The Grand Jury recommends that Contra Costa County school district boards consider adopting the Office of Education Emergency Supplies list (minimum standard list) for district schools and identifying funding sources to purchase the supplies. The Grand Jury also recommends that the Contra Costa County school district boards should consider developing a plan to identify organizations that provide CPR and First Aid certification refresher training for all district teachers.

METHODOLOGY

The Grand Jury used the following investigative methods:

- Reviewed emergency supply lists and other preparedness information from all 18 school districts in Contra Costa County (see Appendix A for the list of school districts)
- Interviewed representatives from the Contra Costa County Board of Education, the Contra Costa County Office of Education, and Contra Costa County school districts
- Reviewed websites of organizations that support major emergency and disaster recovery efforts

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLAIMER

One or more jurors recused themselves from this investigation due to possible conflict of interest and did not participate in the investigation, preparation, or approval of this report.

BACKGROUND

Emergencies affecting Contra Costa County (County) schools could take many forms. A school in the County could be locked down due to an intruder or gunfire, requiring students to stay inside the building for many hours. A hazardous material spill could occur near a school, requiring students and staff to shelter-in-place with doors and windows closed, and heating/air-conditioning systems turned off. Following an emergency that affects the physical integrity of a building, school staff may need to care for students outside the building structure. If an emergency affects an entire community, first responders may not arrive for hours.

After a disaster, students may not be able to return home until the roads and transportation systems are restored. Teachers and school staff are legally responsible for protecting and caring for students until they are able to safely leave the school.

The California Civil Code and the California Education Code address legal requirements regarding school emergency preparedness:

- Section 3100 of the Civil Code states that all public employees are considered disaster service workers during an emergency. Depending on the circumstances, school district employees may have additional obligations as disaster service workers.
- California Education Code sections 32280-32289 cover public schools and require that:
 - All schools develop a comprehensive school safety plan that addresses disaster procedures, including earthquake response, crime, and violence committed on school premises
 - All school staff be trained on these plans and procedures

School district administrators ensure that employees meet these legal requirements by developing and implementing school emergency preparedness plans. The emergency preparedness plans typically include storing an emergency minimum supply of water, food, and medical supplies and equipment.

In addition to emergency care obligations, the State of California requires all teachers to complete Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training to obtain their teaching credentials. The California Education Code, Section 4422, states:

... it is the intent of the Legislature to encourage teachers to engage in an individual program of professional growth that extends their content knowledge and teaching skills and for school districts to establish professional growth programs that give individual teachers a wide range of options to pursue as well as significant roles in determining the course of their professional growth ... An individual program of professional growth may include a basic course in cardiopulmonary resuscitation ... [that] meets or exceeds the standards

established by the American Heart Association or the American Red Cross for courses in that subject or minimum standards for training programs established by the Emergency Medical Services Authority. An individual program of professional growth may also include a course in first aid that meets or exceeds the standards established by the American Red Cross for courses in that subject or minimum standards for training programs established by the Emergency Medical Services Authority.

Pending California Assembly Bill 1214 would make it mandatory for public school districts to offer CPR and First Aid certification refresher training to teachers.

This investigation examined what emergency supplies are stored at public schools in the County, excluding charter schools and other education programs directly served by the Contra Costa County Office of Education. The investigation also examined how schools fund the cost of these supplies, whether each school district has a safety/resource officer, and whether CPR and First Aid certification training is currently offered to teachers.

DISCUSSION

According to the Contra Costa County Office of Education (CCCOE) website, there are 178,000 students in the County, in 292 schools within 18 school districts. The San Ramon Valley Unified School District is the largest in the County with 32,000 students. The smallest school district is Canyon Elementary School District with 68 students.

The CCCOE is responsible for assisting individual school districts in the County. The CCCOE website states:

The CCCOE provides direct support services to the County's most vulnerable students, including adults and young people who are incarcerated, homeless, or in foster care, as well as students who have severe physical or emotional challenges. CCCOE provides support services to schools and school districts in Contra Costa County – services that can be handled most effectively and economically on a regional basis, rather than by each of the county's 18 school districts. These services range from budget approval and fiscal support, to technology infrastructure and communication support.

While the CCCOE may assist individual school districts, the school district boards are responsible for setting their own safety-related requirements. Contra Costa County schools and school districts must be prepared to care for students and staff during emergencies. California Education Code, Section 32822 mandates that comprehensive school safety plans shall include, but not be limited to:

- Disaster procedures, routine and emergency, including adaptations for pupils with disabilities in accordance with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- A school building disaster plan, ready for implementation at any time, for maintaining the safety and care of pupils and staff
- Establishing an earthquake emergency procedure system in every public school building having an occupant capacity of 50 or more pupils or more than one classroom

Although these plans typically include storing an emergency minimum supply of water, food, and medical supplies and equipment, the California Education Code does not specifically mandate that schools maintain minimum emergency supplies.

Since the State of California does not specify what emergency supplies schools should maintain, the CCCOE offers a list of recommended minimum standards to the County school districts. Because this list is a recommendation rather than a requirement, each school district determines which supplies it will maintain. The districts may choose to adopt all or part of the Office of Education's minimum standard list (Appendix E), or they may look to other emergency supplies lists such as:

- The American Red Cross list of school emergency supplies, developed after the California Senate Northridge Earthquake Task Force report (Appendix B)
- The list published by the Emergency Medical Services Authority, California Health & Human Services Agency (Appendix C)
- The Los Angeles Unified School District emergency supplies list (Appendix D)

The three emergency supply lists referenced above contain more items than the minimum list recommended by CCCOE.

The Grand Jury requested that each of the 18 school districts in Contra Costa County provide its list of emergency supplies and the funding source for those supplies.

All County school districts reported that they have emergency supplies in their schools. Most school districts in the County provided the list of supplies they store. However, some school districts did not identify the specific items on their list.

Based on the lists that were provided by the school districts, emergency on-site school supplies vary from district to district – from extensive to minimal – with no consistency. Furthermore, what they store does not necessarily conform to the emergency supplies list recommended by the CCCOE. San Ramon Valley Unified and Orinda Union school districts met or exceeded the supplies recommended by CCCOE.

Funding

School districts make their own decisions about the purchase of emergency supplies. Funding sources for Contra Costa County school districts to purchase emergency supplies vary by district. Some school districts fund these supplies as a line item in their annual budgets. Most school districts, however, fund them through parent or community donations.

School districts can apply for federal, state, corporate, non-profit, and local service organization grants to supplement funding for emergency supplies. Examples of organizations that may award grants include the Sandy Hook Foundation, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the American Red Cross. Currently, no Contra Costa County school district funds supplies through such grants.

CCCOE may choose to apply for block grants on behalf of school districts to minimize duplication of effort. A block grant is a consolidated grant of federal funds allocated for specific programs that a state or local government can use at its discretion for such programs as education or urban development. If funded, a block grant could facilitate the bulk purchase of supplies to be distributed to school districts.

Safety/Resource Officers

The Grand Jury found that most County school districts have designated safety/resource officers. These safety officers work with school district superintendents to assist in planning, control, and direction of school security and safety projects and services. They work with school principals and local law enforcement agencies to develop school site safety plans. Some school districts do not have designated safety/resource officers due to budgetary constraints or due to the small size of the school district. In those districts, the superintendent takes the lead on safety measures and activities and works with school principals to develop and review school site safety plans.

Certification Requirements

Teachers in California are required to obtain CPR and First Aid certifications to receive their teaching credential; however, the California Education Code does not mandate that teachers renew their CPR and First Aid certifications even though they are considered disaster workers in emergencies. The California Education Code only encourages school districts to establish a basic CPR course. The Grand Jury found no evidence that CCCOE or school districts currently require CPR and First Aid certification training or renewal beyond the State teaching credential requirement.

Pending California legislation AB 1214 would make it mandatory for school districts to offer CPR and First Aid certification refresher training.

FINDINGS

- F1. The California Education Code does not specify the type of supplies schools should maintain for emergencies.
- F2. Each Contra Costa County school district determines its own emergency preparedness plans (based on California State Education Department guidelines), including the amount and type of emergency supplies to maintain at its schools.
- F3. The Contra Costa County Office of Education posts on its website a recommended list (minimum standard list) of emergency supplies for school districts.
- F4. Some Contra Costa County school districts did not demonstrate that they maintain supplies in conformity with the Contra Costa County Office of Education minimum standard list.
- F5. Some Contra Costa County school districts fund purchasing and replenishment of emergency supplies through their annual budgets, but most school districts in Contra Costa County fund them through parent or community donations.
- F6. Contra Costa County school districts can apply for federal, state, corporate or non-profit organization grants to help pay for the cost of acquiring and maintaining school emergency supplies.
- F7. Each Contra Costa County school district has either a designated safety/resource officer or a school administrator who fills the safety/resource officer role.
- F8. There is no legal requirement that teachers renew CPR and First Aid certification training after teachers initially obtain their teaching credential.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Note: The Grand Jury conducted the majority of its investigation before Contra Costa County and the State of California issued shelter-in-place orders. The Jury recognizes that County departments, agencies, and cities are currently addressing COVID-19 related matters and the Jury has adjusted implementation dates in the recommendations accordingly.

- R1. Each Contra Costa County school district board should consider adopting the Contra Costa County Office of Education Emergency Supplies list (minimum standard list) for its schools and identifying funding sources to purchase the supplies, by December 31, 2020.
- R2. The Contra Costa County Board of Education and the Contra Costa County Office of Education should consider assisting school districts by identifying and applying for federal, state, corporate, and non-profit organization grants that fund the acquisition of school emergency supplies, by June 30, 2021.
- R3. The Contra Costa County school district boards should consider applying for federal, state, corporate, and non-profit organization grants to fund the acquisition of school emergency supplies, by June 30, 2021.
- R4. Each Contra Costa County school district board should consider developing a plan to identify organizations that provide CPR and First Aid certification refresher training for district teachers, by December 31, 2020.
- R5. Each Contra Costa County school district board should consider developing a plan to identify funding, if necessary, to provide CPR and First Aid certification refresher training for district teachers, by December 31, 2020.
- R6. The Contra Costa County Board of Education and the Contra Costa County Office of Education should consider applying for federal, state, corporate, and non-profit organization grants to fund voluntary CPR and First Aid certification refresher training for teachers, by June 30, 2021.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

	Findings	Recommendations
Contra Costa County Superintendent of Schools, Office of Education	F1, F2, F3, F6, F7, F8	R2, R6
Contra Costa County Board of Education	F1, F2, F3, F6, F7, F8	R2, R6
Governing Board of Acalanes Union High School District	F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8	R1, R3, R4, R5
Governing Board of Antioch Unified School District	F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8	R1, R3, R4, R5
Governing Board of Brentwood Union School District	F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8	R1, R3, R4, R5
Governing Board of Byron Union School District	F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8	R1, R3, R4, R5
Governing Board of Canyon Elementary School District	F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8	R1, R3, R4, R5
Governing Board of John Swett Unified School District	F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8	R1, R3, R4, R5
Governing Board of Knightsen Elementary School District	F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8	R1, R3, R4, R5
Governing Board of Lafayette School District	F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8	R1, R3, R4, R5
Governing Board of Liberty Union High School District	F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8	R1, R3, R4, R5
Governing Board of Martinez Unified School District	F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8	R1, R3, R4, R5
Governing Board of Moraga School District	F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8	R1, R3, R4, R5
Governing Board of Mt. Diablo Unified School District	F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8	R1, R3, R4, R5

Governing Board of Oakley Union Elementary School District	F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8	R1, R3, R4, R5
Governing Board of Orinda Union School District	F1, F2, F3, F5, F6, F7, F8	R3, R4, R5
Governing Board of Pittsburg Unified School District	F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8	R1, R3, R4, R5
Governing Board of San Ramon Valley Unified School District	F1, F2, F3, F5, F6, F7, F8	R3, R4, R5
Governing Board of Walnut Creek School District	F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8	R1, R3, R4, R5
Governing Board of West Contra Costa Unified School District	F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8	R1, R3, R4, R5

These responses must be provided in the format and by the date set forth in the cover letter that accompanies this report. An electronic copy of these responses in the form of a Word document should be sent by e-mail to ctadmin@contracosta.courts.ca.gov and a hard (paper) copy should be sent to:

Civil Grand Jury – Foreperson
725 Court Street
P.O. Box 431
Martinez, CA 94553-0091

APPENDICES

Appendix A – School Districts in Contra Costa County

- Acalanes Union High School District
- Antioch Unified School District
- Brentwood Union School District
- Byron Union School District
- Canyon Elementary School District
- John Swett Unified School District
- Knightsen Elementary School District
- Lafayette School District
- Liberty Union High School District
- Martinez Unified School District
- Moraga School District
- Mt. Diablo Unified School District
- Oakley Union Elementary School District
- Orinda Union School District
- Pittsburg Unified School District
- San Ramon Valley Unified School District
- Walnut Creek School District
- West Contra Costa Unified School District

Appendix B – American Red Cross Emergency School Supply Lists

https://www.ok.gov/okohs/docs/Recommended_Emergency_Supplies_Schools.pdf

American Red Cross Recommended Emergency Supplies for Schools (drawn from lists created by the California Senate Select Committee on the Northridge Earthquake, Task Force on Education, August 1994)

Appendix C – Emergency Medical Services Authority Emergency School Supply List

https://emsa.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/71/2017/07/EMSA_196-SchoolGuidelines_Final.pdf

Emergency First Aid Guidelines for California Schools

Emergency Medical Services Authority, California Health and Human Services Agency

Appendix D Los Angeles Unified School District Emergency School Supply List

<https://achieve.lausd.net/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/416/36.2%20BUL-5451.1%20School%20Emergency%20Disaster%20Supplies.pdf>

Los Angeles Unified School District Reference Guide
13 April 11, 2013
TITLE: School Site Emergency/Disaster Supplies
NUMBER: REF- 5451.1

Appendix E Contra Costa County Office of Education Emergency Supplies List (minimum standard list)



School Office Evacuation Supplies

- Student roster, emergency contact information, and staff roster in the form of a sign-in/sign-out sheet
- Safety Team reflective vests
- Whistles
- List of emergency telephone numbers (public safety, hospital, school district, etc.)
- COE-provided walkie-talkies/radios
- Pens, pencils, or wax markers
- Copy of school's "Standard Response Protocol"
- First aid kit
- First aid instruction manual
- Medical gloves
- Battery-operated flashlight or light sticks
- Extra batteries
- Speaker or megaphone
- Utility turnoff wrench/procedures

School Storage Container (Evacuate/Shelter)

- Water supply [55-gallon drum/AquaBlox (25% of enrollment)]
- Battery-operated or crank radio
- Folding table/folding chairs
- Space/protective blankets
- Caution Tape
- Duct Tape
- Portable toilets/makeshift toilets
- Garbage bags/plastic disposal bags for toilets
- Sanitary items (toilet paper & towelettes)
- Work gloves
- Plastic sheeting or standard tarps
- Hard hats/safety glasses
- Dust masks
- Lighter

- Sledge hammer/regular hammer
- Pry bar/wonder bar/bolt cutters/screwdriver set
- Broom/dust pan
- Multipurpose tool/wrench or pliers/utility knife
- Privacy screen(s)
- Rope
- Stretcher/full-body rigid backboard

Classroom Supplies (Evacuation Supplies)

- Bucket/portable container for supplies (bucket may also act as makeshift toilet)
- Clipboard with—
 - List of classroom students
 - List of students with special needs and description of needs (i.e. medical issues, prescription medicines, dietary needs), marked confidential.
- Whistle and vest for teacher
- First aid kit (1)
- Medical gloves (2 pair, latex-free)
- Garbage bags (5)
- Battery-powered flashlight
- Batteries
- Space blankets (2)
- Copy of school's "Standard Response Protocol"

Classroom Supplies (Shelter)

- Food (i.e. food bars/self-supplied food bags)
- Water
- Sanitary items (towelettes & toilet paper)
- Work gloves (1 pair)
- Breathing masks (30)
- Duct tape (1 roll)
- Emergency candles/matches (or lightstick)