



LODI POLICE DEPARTMENT

215 West Elm Street
Lodi, California 95240
(209) 333-6725

Sierra Brucia
Chief of Police

June 15, 2023

Honorable Michael D. Coughlan, Presiding Judge
San Joaquin County Superior Court
180 E Weber Ave, Suite 1306J
Stockton, California 95202

Re: Lodi Police Department Response to Grand Jury Case #0322 Report

Judge Coughlan,

On June 13, 2023, the City of Lodi Police Department ("LPD") received a copy of the San Joaquin County Grand Jury Case #0322 Report titled "School Safety: A Shared Responsibility" ("Report"). Generally, the Report reviewed state mandated school safety measures focusing on law enforcement and local school district partnerships in San Joaquin County and emphasized the importance of communication, relationship building and practical training exercises.

City Response to the Report

Firstly, LPD would like to state its agreement with the Report that the safety of our children is paramount and we are committed to continued timely and meaningful collaboration with the Lodi Unified School District ("LUSD") to mitigate safety risks and reduce the severity of tragic outcomes in emergency events.

Particularly relevant to LPD, the Report included the following:

-Findings - F2.4 Many district CSSPs [Comprehensive School Safety Plans] show a lack of meaningful collaboration between districts and local law enforcement agencies, causing confusion and chaos during an emergency.

-Recommendations - R2.4 By December 15, 2023, each law enforcement agency in San Joaquin County meaningfully collaborate and approve the updated CSSP: for school sites within that agency's jurisdiction.

LPD and LUSD MOU History – Strong Relationship and Continued Communication

In response to F2.4 and R2.4 above, LPD agrees that meaningful collaboration with LUSD on training and plans prior to and during an emergency can prevent confusion and chaos. To this point, LPD has had a longstanding positive relationship with LUSD through a Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") which has been in effect for over two decades. Under the MOU, LUSD provides funding for two LPD School

Resource Officers (“SROs”) and LPD matches this funding to provide two additional SROs. The MOU provides opportunities for both agencies to collaborate on the role of the SROs, their safety plans and training priorities. The SROs are then dedicated as follows: one SRO to Lodi High, one to SRO to TokayHigh, and the two remaining SROs divide their time between Lodi Middle, Millswood Middle, and rotationally through the LUSD elementary schools.

In addition to the MOU, LPD and LUSD:

- coordinated to revise LUSD’s emergency response plans to criminal incidents in 2019.
- LUSD currently contracts with a retired LPD chief to advise on campus safety and security. This close relationship facilitates very regular discussions between LUSD and LPD on safety matters.
- LUSD and LPD public information officers frequently connect over school safety issues to quickly broadcast pertinent safety information to students, parents, and staff via social media to mitigate chaos and confusion during emergencies.

LPD and LUSD Collaborative Safety Training

LPD has partnered through the years with LUSD for several large scale active shooter exercises. These exercises also included Lodi Fire, American Medical Response, and Lodi Memorial Hospital. They utilized role players and allowed for the practice of concepts such as the Incident Command System, triaging, student/parent collection points, searches, and quickly seeking out and neutralizing any threats.

In addition to these exercises, LPD conducts regular trainings that include active killer situations, hostage rescue, and room searches; all of which play a role in an active shooter response. Every SRO is required to complete basic SRO school which includes training on active shooters/killers. They are also required to attend additional classes to learn to deal with active shooters and other campus emergencies.

San Joaquin County Communicator’s Group

In late 2022, LPD assisted LUSD in creating the San Joaquin County Communicator’s Group, which meets quarterly. The purpose of this group is to network and familiarize with public communications stakeholders throughout the region. LPD hosted the very first meeting which involved a full day of ICS training and scenarios. During the quarterly meetings they conduct live media training scenarios, tabletop exercises, provide legal updates and participate in roundtable discussions on current public information officer trends and practices.

Through these meetings, invaluable working relationships have been developed with all local law enforcement entities, school districts, private utility companies, California Office of Emergency Services, San Joaquin County Office of Education, Department of Public Health, the District Attorney’s office and more. Within 6 months, 93 members have joined from throughout the county.

As a result, LPD and LUSD have been asked to provide training at the California Public Relations Association in Sacramento on June 21, 2023. This is recognition at the highest levels of a strong and meaningful working relationship, and will show how those relationships are moving both of our organizations forward in the realm of effective communication strategies.

Summary

LPD is committed to the highest level of safety of children and will continue to engage in a meaningful collaboration with LUSD to creating a positive school environment, including a strong safety culture for residents in the City of Lodi. These efforts will include updating existing comprehensive school safety plans, regular communication between agencies, training SROs and large scale trainings for LUSD staff and students, support during actual criminal and emergency incidents, and coordinating public messaging to reduce confusion and increase transparency.

Should you need any additional information on LPD's response to the Report, please contact me by email at eversteeg@lodi.gov or by phone at (209) 333-5517.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Eric VerSteeg". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

Capt. Eric VerSteeg

Cc via email only: Mr. Irving Jimenez, grandjury@sicourts.org