



**SOLANO COUNTY GRAND JURY**

2018-2019

**SCHOOL SAFETY**

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## **I. SUMMARY**

The Solano County Civil Grand Jury is concerned about school safety in the Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District's three high schools. All of the high schools have the State required Comprehensive Safe School Plan (CSSP) to follow in any event dealing with safety issues. It is the required document that addresses school safety procedures in emergency situations. Additional concerns at the sites include the role of security cameras and the impact of student mental health issues on school safety.

## **II. INTRODUCTION**

On August 24, 2018, a shooting occurred within blocks of one of the three high schools in the City of Fairfield, California. This incident resulted in the death of a high school student. The situation became a school safety issue when the suspected shooter ran from the primary scene of the shooting and climbed a perimeter fence onto the high school grounds. Once the suspected shooter got onto school property, he was able to mingle with a crowd of students that were attending a football game. He later joined a different group of students in the gymnasium.

The school administrators acted immediately by placing the campus on a lockdown mode and implemented the CSSP. During the lockdown, all students were gathered into the gymnasium and the authorities began a person-by-person evacuation. During the evacuation process, a police officer identified a student, from a student information sheet supplied by the School Resource Officer, as a possible suspect. The student was taken into custody.

Another police-related event took place on November 8, 2018, at a different high school located in the City of Fairfield. The police

responded to a report of a student with a semi-automatic handgun that turned out to be a BB gun. The student was expelled as a result of his actions.

These events were tragic and harrowing experiences for the schools and the community. The Grand Jury chose to investigate the preparedness and training that high-school staff receive to respond in any emergency situation. The Grand Jury inspected and toured the three high schools in Fairfield during the months of October and November 2018.

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

Toured:

Armijo High School  
824 Washington St., Fairfield, CA 94533

Fairfield High School  
205 E. Atlantic Ave., Fairfield, CA 94533

Rodriguez High School  
5000 Red Top Rd., Fairfield, CA 94534

Reviewed:

Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District  
Student Handbook (2018-2019)

Mental Health in Middle Level and High Schools  
Nassp.org/advocacy (Nov. 8, 2008)  
Revised: Nov. 11, 2014, Feb. 24, 2016, Nov. 2018

Article by the TASA Group - TASA ID 2774 ([www.tasanet.com](http://www.tasanet.com))  
“Five Critical School Safety Issues”

NASSP-National Association of Secondary School Principals  
Position Statement: Mental Health

California School Accountability Report Card

The Comprehensive Safe School Plan (CSSP) for Armijo, Fairfield and  
Rodriguez High Schools

California Education Code §32282, et seq.

Police Report of the August shooting at Armijo High School  
(case #18-09907)

City of Fairfield Major Employer List, [www.fairfield.ca.gov](http://www.fairfield.ca.gov)

Interviewed:

Administrative staff of Armijo High School

Administrative staff of Fairfield High School

Administrative staff of Rodriguez High School

#### **IV. STATEMENT OF FACTS**

The objective of the Grand Jury was to review the effectiveness of the high school safety procedures. Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District has an enrollment of over 21,500 students and is the largest school district in Solano County. It is the third largest employer in Solano County, behind Travis Air Force Base and the County of Solano.

There are thirty-two schools in the Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District, of which there are three high schools in the City of Fairfield.

Armijo High School was established in 1891 and has a population of approximately 2,278 students. Fairfield High School was established in 1967 and currently has a student population of approximately 1,411 students. The third high school is Rodriguez High School, established in 2001, with a population of approximately 1,750 students.

Security cameras play a critical role in safety at high schools. The cameras show student movement and record activity in certain areas of the campus. Some cameras are monitored by staff, a School Resource Officer and security teams, so that problems or incidents can be reported and responded to immediately. School administration and law enforcement have informed the Grand Jury that the cameras have proven to be an effective safety tool.

Schools have historically used their resources to employ staff to increase accountability for academic results. Administrators interviewed emphasized that mental health issues profoundly impact students and affect school safety. Mental health disorders affecting students include attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism, depression, eating disorders and schizophrenia. Due to historical and cultural reasons, mental illness has persistently been stigmatized in our society.

Within society, mental health issues are manifested by bias, distrust, stereotyping, fear, embarrassment, anger and/or avoidance. Psychosocial and mental health concerns within the schools are typically not assigned a high priority, except when a high-profile event occurs, such as a shooting on a campus, student suicide, or intensified bullying. Efforts to address school-based services for mental health continue to be developed in an ad hoc, piecemeal and highly marginalized way.

Interviews indicated the safety of the students is a top priority for the Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District. The CSSP is one of the main documents prepared and mandated to address the safety of students attending these high schools. This document is available to the general public through the school district website ([www.fsusd.org](http://www.fsusd.org)). The CSSP is

required by the California Education Code §32282, et seq., to be reviewed and updated by March 1 annually. The CSSP contains the policy, process and procedures in the event of situations concerning student safety. A Crisis Response Team (CRT) and Crisis Plan Policy (CPP) are also outlined and available within the CSSP document.

## **V. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **FINDING 1 -**

Security cameras play a critical role in safety at the three high schools by recording and monitoring student activity throughout the campus.

### **RECOMMENDATION 1-**

Conduct annual evaluations to determine if more cameras or upgrades are needed to provide surveillance of all critical areas on campus.

### **FINDING 2-**

The mental health issue is a crisis that needs immediate attention. Schools currently have limited capacity to address these issues. Schools utilize their resources to employ more staff to increase academic results. School staff have seen their responsibilities shift away from the overall personal, social and emotional development of each student towards an academic focus, which creates a widening gap in support services like mental health.

### **RECOMMENDATION 2—**

Assess and prioritize mental health issues on a continual basis to address the mental health needs of the students. Allocate resources to focus on

mental health concerns. Provide staff training to promote a greater awareness of student mental health issues and techniques to address the problems that exist.

## COMMENTS

The Grand Jury appreciates the professionalism, cooperation and candidness of the school administrators, staff and law enforcement.

## REQUIRED RESPONSES

ARMIJO HIGH SCHOOL, PRINCIPAL  
824 WASHINGTON ST., FAIRFIELD, CA. 94533

FAIRFIELD HIGH SCHOOL, PRINCIPAL  
205 E. ATLANTIC AVE., FAIRFIELD, CA 94533

RODRIGUEZ HIGH SCHOOL, PRINCIPAL  
5000 RED TOP RD., FAIRFIELD, CA 94534

## COURTESY COPIES

FAIRFIELD-SUISUN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
2490 HILBORN RD., FAIRFIELD, CA 94534