

COUNTY OF TUOLUMNE
GRAND JURY
12855 Justice Center Drive
Sonora CA, 95370



Tuolumne County School Safety Report

June 30, 2023

Working Together to Improve the Safety of Our Students



Historic Columbia School House

SUMMARY

The Tuolumne County Grand Jury (TCGJ) decided to investigate school safety programs at our local schools. Our motivation was simple – to ensure our children and school employees are as safe as possible. No one needs to be reminded of the potential risks – we see incidents regularly in the news, varying from minor to catastrophic.

During our investigation, we learned that each school has a dedicated, documented safety plan. The plans are designed to deal with a number of possible events – fire, earthquake, injuries, bullying, floods, wild animals, and active shooters. In addition to written safety plans, the schools conduct training for teachers and staff. Periodic training brings in law enforcement to focus on communication and coordination. During the Covid pandemic, law enforcement training was interrupted and has not been reinstated consistently across the board for Tuolumne County schools.

At each school we spoke to superintendents, principals, teachers, office staff, and maintenance personnel. The workload of visiting and investigating the campuses required using multiple teams from the Grand Jury. Each team had slight differences in their investigation focus and their reports will reflect this. Without exception, everyone we met with showed a serious professional attitude toward this most important subject. Rather than a county-wide unified school district, Tuolumne County has many independent school districts. Each school, as mentioned above, has developed their own safety plan. To some extent, this complicates coordination and communication with law enforcement and first responders. A unified approach would not only streamline safety procedures, but also promote shared responsibility, transparency, and communication among all involved entities.

The Grand Jury recommends that an effort be made to standardize the many different safety plans that now exist. This effort would be best led by the Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools. The Grand Jury further recommends more frequent training with local law enforcement. On-campus training with law enforcement present is ideal. This training would be scheduled, mandatory, and well documented.

Finally, the Grand Jury would like to acknowledge that this report takes a close look at the many differences in Tuolumne County school campuses and leadership, and how this contributes to safety. While campuses are different both geographically and structurally, there are benefits and downsides in all cases. Despite efforts taken by schools and law enforcement, the factors that contribute to violence in schools go beyond what was studied in this report. These factors include access to mental health care, violence witnessed at home, access to weapons, psychological conditions, bullying, etc. The grand jury commends every school for facing such serious issues among their student population and working with all resources and creativity available to keep students and staff as safe as possible.

Disclaimer:

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. California Penal Code, §929, requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.

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GLOSSARY

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ALICE	Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate (see Appendix)
CDC	Center for Disease Control
NCES	National Center for Educational Studies
SPD	Sonora Police Department
TCGJ	Tuolumne County Grand Jury
TCSO	Tuolumne County Sheriff's Office
TCSOS	Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools
TK	Transitional Kindergarten

BACKGROUND

The Tuolumne County Grand Jury (TCGJ), in the wake of increasing concerns about school violence and safety, initiated an investigation aimed at understanding the state of safety in our local schools and identifying areas for enhancement. The Grand Jury conducted interviews at twelve local public schools (including elementary and high schools), both law enforcement agencies in the city and county, as well as Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools Office. The task of ensuring student safety falls onto a network of school administrators, teachers, maintenance, and office staff, alongside law enforcement agencies, all of which were interviewed. The Grand Jury hopes that all learning institutions, those interviewed and those not, read this report and consider their safety plans and protocols.

METHODOLOGY

Members of the 2022-2023 TCGJ met with the school administrators, teachers, maintenance, and office staff at every public school. The focus was emergency preparedness and safety of both students and staff. During this investigation, the Grand Jury performed the following:

- Interviewed County School staff, individual school staff, and law enforcement agencies
- Reviewed individual school emergency plans including fires, earthquakes, active shooter and student violence and bullying
- Conducted interviews with staff to ascertain their understanding and commitment to emergency preparedness
- Reviewed school safety training protocols and procedures including exercises, frequency, law enforcement coordination and involvement and documentation
- Interviewed the Tuolumne County Sheriff's office and Sonora Police Department regarding law enforcement roles and responsibilities in school emergencies
- Conducted extensive research for school safety including state and federal guidelines and legal requirements

Confidentiality

Grand Jury members are sworn to secrecy regarding any matter brought before them. This assures all individuals that their testimony will be strictly confidential. Each Grand Juror must keep all evidence confidential. It is a misdemeanor to violate the confidentiality of any individual or evidence brought before the Grand Jury.

Recusal

The Grand Jury recognizes that a conflict of interest may arise during its investigations. In such instances, the juror may ask to be recused from all aspects of an investigation. Those members do not investigate, attend interviews and deliberations, or assist in the making and acceptance of a final report that may result from an investigation.

Therefore, whenever the *perception* of a conflict of interest existed on the part of a member of the 2022-2023 TCGJ, that member abstained from any investigation involving such a conflict and from voting on the acceptance or rejections of any related subject.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of violence in schools, particularly in the form of mass shootings, has become a national crisis that continues to shock and traumatize the United States. In Tuolumne County, the community takes pride in fostering a safe and welcoming environment for raising children. However, given the increasing concerns surrounding mental health among adolescents and teens, and the accessibility of firearms, it is crucial to address the question: how safe are the schools in Tuolumne County?

The 2022/2023 Grand Jury term commenced amidst the devastating Uvalde shooting in Texas at Robb Elementary School, which resulted in 19 fatalities and 17 wounded individuals. This tragedy, along with the failed rescue attempt, remains etched in the hearts and minds of people across the nation. As this report was being prepared, another heartbreaking incident unfolded at a private Christian school in Nashville, Tennessee, where three nine-year-old children and three adults were fatally shot. These incidents emphasize the urgent need to address school safety comprehensively.

According to a National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) report, during the 2017-2018 academic year, 20% of students aged 12-18 reported being bullied at school, while 6% experienced physical attacks or fights (NCES, 2019). Furthermore, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that in 2019, 6.8% of high school students were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property (CDC, 2020). These statistics highlight the extent to which children are exposed to violence in school settings.

Residents of Tuolumne County may recall the 2015 incident in which a potential mass shooting at Summerville High School was averted, thanks to the courageous intervention of students who reported the plot to law enforcement. More recently, Sonora High School and Sonora Elementary School experienced multiple lockdowns due to various threats (Union Democrat, 2023). Although these incidents were resolved without any harm, the persistence of this concern underscores the pressing nature of school safety as an issue that weighs heavily on the minds of Americans.

This Grand Jury report will critically examine the safety preparations and measures in place within Tuolumne County schools, considering the broader national context of school violence, as well as local incidents such as the recent lockdowns. By evaluating the effectiveness of these measures, identifying areas for improvement, and offering recommendations, the grand jury seeks to contribute to a safer educational environment in the county, providing reassurance and protection for students, staff, faculty, and the community at large.

CHAPTER 1 – Belleview School

Settled on the outskirts of Cedar Ridge, up Phoenix Lake Road and nearby the Big Hill community, this small elementary school serves students from preschool to 8th grade. There is also an onsite preschool, run through the county's supervision. In 2023, the school of Belleview serves a population of 163 students. Breaks and recess have a ratio of one adult to every 18 students indicating a strong adult presence and supervision.

During our investigation, we conducted interviews with the school administration, teachers and maintenance personnel. They provided valuable insights into the school's safety measures

- There is an active and updated safety plan available for staff and public accessibility, which is regarded by staff as important and pertinent to everyday practices.
- The school participates in ALICE training (for a complete definition of 'ALICE training' please refer to the Appendix) through county law enforcement, and there is an updated log in the office that follows the training to ensure they are happening annually.
- There are many cameras around the school, which are utilized, and found to be helpful by school staff and administrators.
- The location of Belleview Elementary School is quite unique, with much unused land surrounding the school and no large neighborhoods that are within walking distance.

Conclusions

Belleview is a small school, but there are many small details that contribute to a safe community and culture. School administration reported the students feel safe in reporting concerns directly to staff. While there are areas that are open from the school, fencing is likely not possible due to steep hillsides. The safety plan is accessible and provided to staff and students. The school should be commended for such a small ratio of students to staff during breaks and recesses.

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND COMMENDATIONS

Findings

- F1.1:** ALICE training is an annual process, with engagement between the local Sheriff's office and the students and staff at Belleview. The school also runs monthly drills for various emergency situations, which are documented in the school office. Notably, at Belleview Elementary School, parents are also

invited to come into the classrooms for education and participation in active shooter drills.

- F1.2:** The school safety plan continues to be updated routinely, staff are provided with it and concurrent education during the training week before the school session starts.
- F1.3:** All doors have a quick-lock system, which is effective and smooth in allowing drills and actual lockdowns to occur as quickly as possible. These locks are universally installed across the school and the staff interviewed felt comfortable and experienced with using them. There are also many cameras in the gymnasium and outsides of the school that are utilizable by staff.
- F1.4:** A great deal of the perimeter of the school is not fenced in and leads to fields or wild lands.

Recommendations

- R1.1:** ALICE training should continue to be yearly, if not twice a year, and the Tuolumne County Sheriff should prioritize and promote engagement with students and education around lockdowns and potential threats to the school. (F1.1)
- R1.2:** The school safety plan must be updated routinely and staff are provided with it and concurrent education during the training week before the school session starts. (F1.2)
- R1.3:** Administration should continue to monitor and evaluate to see if additional fencing is possible to add. (F1.4)

CHAPTER 2 - Big Oak Flat School District

Located in Groveland, this school district is one of the few in Tuolumne County that encompasses more than one school. Tenaya Elementary serves children from preschool to 8th grade and Tioga High School serves children 9th through 12th grade. The school district overall educates 278 students and some of the administrative job roles are shared. They have one staff member per 12 students during recess and breaks.

During our investigation, TCGJ conducted interviews with the school administration, staff and maintenance personnel. They provided valuable insights into the school's safety measures:

- There is an active and updated safety plan available for staff and public accessibility, which is regarded by staff as important and pertinent to everyday practices.
- The school district uses only a few substitute teachers, and they are invited to the same in-person training provided to their staff, which takes place in the days just prior to school starting and encompasses the Safety Plan Training and ALICE training.
- The school participates in ALICE training, and there is an updated log in the office, which follows the training to ensure they are happening regularly.
- There are many cameras around the school and throughout the front campus, which are utilized, and found to be helpful by school staff and administrators.

Conclusions

Big Oak Flat is a small school district; however, their size and location contribute to a safe community and culture. The students feel safe in reporting concerns directly to staff, indicating trust and an openness to communication. The staff have been working with many of the same children, their siblings, and families for many years and generations. Most of the students have grown together from kindergarten to seniors in high school, creating a tight bond and camaraderie among students and staff. The safety plan is accessible, and it is provided to staff and students.

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND COMMENDATIONS

Findings

- F2.1:** ALICE training is an annual process for staff, with engagement between local law enforcement. The school also runs monthly drills for various emergency situations, including but not limited to fire, earthquake and lockdown drills and active shooter drills, which are documented in the school office.
- F2.2:** The school safety plan continues to be updated routinely. Staff and substitutes are provided with updated plans and concurrent education during the training week before the school session starts.
- F2.3:** There are cameras covering about 70% of the access areas on the campuses. About 50% of the campuses are fenced.

Recommendations

- R2.1:** ALICE training should be conducted yearly with staff and students, if not twice a year. (F2.1)
- R2.2:** The district should ensure the safety plan continues to be updated routinely, and that all teachers, staff, students and parents are provided with copies and pertinent training to develop current understanding. (F2.2)
- R2.3:** Administration should evaluate the viability of adding additional fencing. (F2.3)

CHAPTER 3 - Columbia Elementary

Originally established in the 1800s as a one-room schoolhouse in what is now historic Columbia State Park, Columbia Elementary School has a rich and storied history. The old schoolhouse still stands, preserved and maintained by the State Park for tours and educational presentations. In 1936, the one-room schoolhouse was replaced by a new facility at its current location. Over time, the campus underwent significant expansions, with the most recent major additions taking place in 2007, transforming the original 1936 building into an auxiliary classroom and administrative building.

During our investigation, we conducted interviews with the school administration, staff, and maintenance personnel. They provided valuable insights into the school's safety measures:

Conclusions

Columbia Elementary is a marked learning institution in the quaint town of Columbia, which does actively work to improve the safety for the school, including the creation of a robust safety plan. The school has a well-defined plan for the safe evacuation of students in the event of a crisis, as well as protocols for student release and pick-up by parents following an incident. During the time of the grand jury interview, this school was experiencing a transition between administrators and hiring, while making sure that there is continuity in safety planning. Staff training commences prior to the start of the academic year and continues throughout, including regular in-house training sessions that are held on Fridays, from 1:40pm to 3:15pm. With cameras and frequent training for staff, the school overall is prepared for incidents that may compromise the safety of the school.

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND COMMENDATIONS

Findings

- F3.1:** The school conducts various drills, including active shooter scenarios, in collaboration with local police and fire departments. However, no such drill was held last year.
- F3.2:** Columbia Elementary employs the use of supplies in all classrooms with extended lockdown resources, though it was noted that these may not have been recently updated.
- F3.3:** During recess periods, the student-to-teacher ratio stands at 50 to 1. For special events, security is managed by coaches and administrative staff.

Recommendations

- R3.1:** Ensure the continuation of active shooter and other emergency drills, ideally in collaboration with local law enforcement and emergency services. (F3.1)
- R3.2:** Regularly update and inspect the content of the classroom supplies available to ensure their readiness for prolonged lockdowns. (F3.2)
- R3.3:** Consider reducing the student-to-teacher ratio during recess periods to ensure better supervision and safety. (F3.3)

CHAPTER 4 - Curtis Creek Elementary School

According to the school's comprehensive website and background, "Curtis Creek School District was founded on May 16, 1865, originally in the Sullivan Creek area of Sonora". In May of 1915, the school was moved to the quaint and historical town of Standard. Years ago, there was a secondary campus, in the Sullivan Creek area, near Sonora Meadows and Crystal Falls, but the school was consolidated into one campus at Standard. The layout of campus includes many different levels where certain grade levels are grouped together. The school serves students Transitional Kindergarten through 8th grade, and over 400 students are in attendance there.

The ratio of adults to students during outside recreation time is 1:40, which is like other schools interviewed during the grand jury investigation. During our investigation, we

conducted interviews with the school administration, staff and maintenance personnel. They provided valuable insights into the school's safety measures:

Conclusions

Overall, the campus layout is expansive with the multi-levels of classrooms and play areas. This requires staff to work together for safety and supervision. Curtis Creek utilizes a safety plan, as other schools do, and overall, staff feels that it is important and necessary. The school holds routine drills and keeps track of this, even thinking outside the box to rename the drills "Get Away" to not scare students and make sure they can easily remember what to do. In addition to these drills, Curtis Creek also participates in ALICE training. The school attempts to greet all visitors to the campus and utilizes name badges so that staff know they checked in with the office before entering the students' areas. The geography of the campus provides some difficult to watch areas, with lots of fencing and visibility from the roadways. This is something to think about when discussing staff to student ratios and supervision during outside play times.

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND COMMENDATIONS

Findings

- F4.1:** The school has an accessible safety plan, which is deemed important by the administration. The plan is executed with the aid of radios used by all staff members, and it is reviewed and edited in collaboration with the Tuolumne County Sheriff's office.
- F4.2:** Safety drills are conducted monthly and documented in the school's office. The school has also participated in ALICE training, provided by law enforcement, and holds "Get Away" drills specifically for active shooter scenarios.
- F4.3:** When asked about the plan to have children return to campus after they have practiced the drill, interviewees didn't have a systematic plan.
- F4.4:** All visitors to the campus are challenged and encouraged to wear identification badges.
- F4.5:** The school's campus is only 50% fenced, leaving certain areas exposed to potential unwanted guests, while also providing students with potential escape routes in emergencies.

Recommendations

- R4.1:** To enhance the effectiveness of the safety plan, it would be beneficial to ensure that all staff members, including substitutes, receive a copy of the plan and are properly trained. This will ensure continuity and efficiency in case of an emergency. (F4.1)

- R4.2:** It is commendable that the school is actively engaging in drills and training sessions. To further improve, the school could consider incorporating a wider variety of emergency situations into their drill regimen. Additionally, involving students more directly in these drills can help them understand what to do in a real-life scenario. (F4.2)

- R4.3:** The school should establish a system for ensuring that students know how and when the “Get Away” drill or actual emergency event has ended and how they should return to the campus safely. (F4.3)

- R4.4:** While the practice of challenging visitors and requiring identification is excellent, it could be supplemented with a more formal check-in/check-out system for visitors. This could help track non-staff adults on campus and ensure that everyone on campus has a reason to be there. (F4.4)

- R4.5:** To better secure the school grounds, consider completing the fencing around the entire campus. This would help control access points to the school and potentially deter unwanted guests. If this is not feasible due to the natural environment, other security measures could be explored, such as additional surveillance in unfenced areas or strategic landscaping to deter unauthorized access. (F4.5)

CHAPTER 5 - Gold Rush Charter School

Originally founded in 2001, this school, which serves grades K-8, was started with a “goal to create a non-traditional program that would allow educators to focus on the individual needs of each student.” Today, there is the Country School, which serves the K-8 grades through this charter. The school is set in a quiet, forested area on Peaceful Valley Road, the original Sullivan Creek Elementary School. There are approximately 200 students at the Country School. Despite the charter, this school is still funded through taxes/grants and the school receives ADA money per student in attendance. To become enrolled in The Country School through the charter, parents must request an application and enter through the waitlist. Students at The Country School are required to maintain a 70% grade average and complete 80% of their work.

Interviews held with administration and staff disclosed the following:

- There is an active and updated safety plan available for staff and public accessibility, which is regarded by staff as important and pertinent to everyday practices.
- The school participates in ALICE training through county law enforcement, and there is an updated log in the office that follows the training to ensure they are happening annually.
- The location of The Country School is unique, with little to no fencing and multiple access points to adjoining neighborhoods and land.
- There is no in-person class on Friday, as the schools declares this day an independent study day, and this allows teachers to have meetings and training sessions on campus during this time.
- The ratio of students to adults at peak times (before and after school) is one adult to 40 students, but during the breaks and recess, the school runs on a staggered schedule so there is more supervision.

Conclusions

Unlike all other schools listed in this report, The Country School through Gold Rush Charter School is run by slightly different set of governing laws. While there are no cameras, the administration expressed that there has never been any type of issue for which a look back on a camera would have proven useful. Per staff, the culture of safety at The Country School is valued by students, family, and staff. Because of this, many families support students coming to the staff with concern, and parents play a very active role in advocacy and support to the school.

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND COMMENDATIONS

Findings

- F5.1:** While ALICE training is part of the yearly plan for The Country School, it is not clear if this occurred during the COVID years amidst school closures and times of uncertainty. The most recent drill was in January 2022 and an interviewee stated that the school was actively trying to schedule another drill for this calendar school year but was waiting on Sheriff availability. The ALICE training is listed in the school's safety plan.
- F5.2:** There are no cameras on school premises. While the school does try to greet visitors to the campus and give sticker badges stating that the visitor has been approved by the office, this does not happen always. Of note, during the interview with the grand jury, a repair person from an outside hired agency, entered the interview room while in search of the main office. This

demonstrates that it is possible to walk on campus and not be directly greeted by staff.

- F5.3:** Communication between the main office and individual classrooms is supported through radios provided to all teachers and staff. At this time, the PA system is not working effectively in all areas of the school.

Recommendations

- R5.1:** Administration should continue to support and update the safety plan. The posted evacuation maps are very helpful to substitutes who may be less familiar with the campus, but it would also be extremely helpful to give substitutes a copy of the safety plan for perusal as they are coming to work. (F5.1)
- R5.2:** Cameras on campus are advisable, if at least to monitor the main entrances and exits. Many ways to walk onto campus exist and staff are not always able to greet and have them go through correct badging in process. (F5.2)
- R5.3:** An updated PA system offers clear, fast, and universal communication to all teachers and students, and staff should work to update this PA system as soon as possible. (F5.3)

CHAPTER 6 – Jamestown Elementary School

Located in the small town of Jamestown, CA, the school serves children in Transitional Kindergarten through 8th grade and offers interesting and specialized education programs, including the dual immersion program for Spanish language for over 400 students. For children in grades K through 5th grade, they can learn Spanish in a 50/50 model, where students are being taught in Spanish half of their school day. There is also another school in Chinese Camp, under the same district, that specializes in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) activities where students are actively engaged, individually and collaboratively, in project-based learning. The Chinese Camp campus is available for students in third through sixth grade. In recent years, Jamestown Elementary school has taken steps to become a strong learning institution, with something to reach every student's interest.

During our investigation, we conducted interviews with the school administration, staff, and maintenance personnel. They provided valuable insights into the school's safety measures.

Conclusions

Jamestown Elementary has taken many pains and precautions to ensure safety for its student and staff population. From cameras to limited access points, it is clear that much thought and intention has gone into screening traffic in and out of campus. While staff are trained and updated with policy, there are still some recommendations that can be made to improve and enhance school safety. During breaks and recess, the student to adult ratio during recess/breaks is 40:1, which may be a point of concern in terms of supervision and safety but was stated to be adequate at this time.

The school implements access control to its offices and campus, ensuring security. The school uses radios as a part of their safety plan process, with four different radio channels for administration, aides, and maintenance personnel. While the school has maintenance personnel, there are no designated security staff universally available. The administration serves as the liaison between law enforcement and the school.

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND COMMENDATIONS

Findings

- F6.1:** Jamestown Elementary employs the ALICE training methodology, which is undertaken annually with the involvement of the local law enforcement offices. The school conducts an active shooter drill once a year in cooperation with the sheriff. Besides ALICE, fire and earthquake drills are also conducted.

F6.2: The school safety plan at Jamestown Elementary is readily accessible and is executed by the administration. It is updated routinely, and staff training occurs before the school year starts. The staff training logs are maintained by the school secretary.

F6.3: Jamestown Elementary's campus is mostly fenced in, except for a small portion in the front. The school has security cameras installed. The school follows a safety protocol for releasing students to parents in case of an evacuation, and it has practices in place for firearm/weapon prevention, such as searching backpacks as necessary.

Recommendations

R6.1: Jamestown Elementary should continue to complete ALICE trainings and consider biannual all-school training sessions to ensure that students are reminded of the concepts. This will ensure that all individuals responsible for students are prepared to execute the safety plan in an emergency. (F6.1)

R6.2: The school should establish a regular schedule for revising and updating the safety plan (making this information transparent to both staff and parents). Furthermore, involve more staff members in the maintenance of training logs to ensure accuracy and comprehensive coverage. (F6.2)

R6.3: The school should complete the fencing of the remaining portion of the campus to ensure comprehensive perimeter security. Also, the school should add more cameras around the campus, especially in areas where student activity is high. (F6.3)

CHAPTER 7 – Sonora Elementary School

Sonora Elementary School has the largest enrollment of all elementary schools in Tuolumne County. Founded in 1855, Sonora Elementary School was a school for the children of the gold rush. Located in the heart of town, the home of the Bobcats serves students Transitional Kindergarten through 8th grade, with a Head Start program also located on campus. The school's mission statement elaborates on the idea and importance of safety in the school, as it pertains to fostering a place for learning, growth and engagement. A perusal of the website shows that the school is working to offer opportunities for learning and growth, including the use of technology, as students are given Chromebooks and encouraged to manage their studies online, starting in grade three.

Interviewees stated that there was a ratio of 10 students to every one adult for fieldtrips and during school recess and breaks the ratio of students to staff is 20:1. Sonora Elementary is situated on a large campus with foot traffic on the sidewalk out front and behind some of the athletic fields. Most notably, there was a recent lockdown initiated following a report of a suspicious looking person who might have had a weapon on foot near the school. It is the hope of the grand jury that Sonora Elementary staff has done a debriefing on this incident, and have learned and grown from this experience.

During our investigation, we conducted interviews with the school administration, staff and maintenance personnel. They provided valuable insights into the school's safety measures.

Conclusions

Sonora Elementary utilizes the standard practice of ALICE training involving both students and staff. When asked in interviews, it was stated that the school's safety plan is accessible and perceived as important. It is executed with the use of radios across different roles within the school, including administration, aids, and maintenance staff. Based on the physical location of Sonora Elementary School, situated in an urban environment, it would be greatly beneficial to increase surveillance of parking lots and other areas.

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND COMMENDATIONS

Findings

- F7.1:** The school does not log its regular monthly drills, which might limit the ability to track progress and areas for improvement.
- F7.2:** Sonora Elementary has an active shooter protocol in place, with ALICE training that involves parent participation.
- F7.3:** The school's camera system is not consistently monitored throughout the day, and there are no cameras in the parking lot. This could potentially leave areas of the school vulnerable.

Recommendations

- R7.1:** The school should institute a system for logging and reviewing all safety drills. The documentation should include recording the date, time, type of drill, and debrief to identify any issues arising from the drill. Regular reviews of these

logs could help identify trends, areas for improvement, and ensure consistency in safety practices. (F7.1)

R7.2 Continue the existing ALICE training protocol. (F7.2)

R7.3: Evaluate the current camera surveillance system. This evaluation should aim to identify blind spots, including the parking lot, and periods during the day when monitoring is lax or non-existent. (F7.3)

CHAPTER 8 – Sonora High School

Sonora High School has a rich history dating back to its establishment in 1909. Serving as one of the area's oldest high schools, Sonora High School is a staple of the community, priding itself on academic excellence, athletic achievement, and student success. The school is nestled in the heart of downtown Sonora, close to many residential homes. As of the 2022-2023 academic year, Sonora High School serves approximately 1,000 students for grades 9 through 12.

Notably, there was a situation where Sonora High School had to initiate a full lock-down due to a perceived threat of violence on campus. The response by law enforcement was rapid, with many officers responding and being ready to assist. While students were locked down for hours without confirmation of there being an actual shooter on their campus, the opportunity for school staff and county law enforcement to react was educational. It is the hope of the grand jury that Sonora High School has completed a debriefing following this incident and taken measures to improve, aid and promote school safety.

Interviews held with administration and staff disclosed the following:

- There is an active and updated safety plan available for staff and public accessibility, which is regarded by staff as important and pertinent to everyday practices.
- Substitutes are given binders with information for perusal so that they have the opportunity to become familiarized with the safety rules and processes.
- A total of four campus security supervisors, employees of the school, not officers of the law, are employed to provide assistance and attention to general campus safety.
- Communication with students and staff is exemplary with the use of technology in apps to share information and report issues like bullying.

Conclusions

The organization and detail to knowing when drills and trainings have occurred is important and admirable. Staff training logs are maintained, including a checklist of training and a binder for records. Continuing to partner with local law enforcement to complete these trainings and improve students' attention and engagement is notable, as well. As any observer can note, there are many entrances and exits from the Sonora High campus, as it is well integrated into a more urban environment. While access to offices or campus is not controlled, there are designated security personnel available, and the administration acts as a liaison between the school and law enforcement.

Sonora High School's classrooms are supplied with buckets full of food, water, and emergency supplies, which can also be used for emergency toilets during long lockdown situations. Evacuation plans are posted on the walls. It is commendable that the school employs the use of the "Stop It" app, where students are encouraged to report safety concerns, which allows for anonymous reporting and after-hours monitoring. The discipline policy cracks down on the presence of weapons on campus with a five-day suspension for students found carrying a pocketknife. The school also employs a safe schools app and maintains a cumulative file to help identify previously violent students. One great challenge to Sonora High School is keeping track of the location of students, made particularly harder due to off-site education and students being of driving age and independent.

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND COMMENDATIONS

Findings

- F8.1:** Sonora High conducts ALICE training (Appendix 1) as part of their safety plan, with staff training taking place on the days before the school session starts. The school has performed two fire drills, one lockdown drill, and one earthquake drill this academic year.
- F8.2:** The school safety plan is accessible and considered important by the administration. Substitutes receive binders with safety information, ensuring they are informed and prepared in case of emergencies.
- F8.3:** Sonora High has implemented several security measures, including numerous cameras, four non-uniformed campus security supervisors, and a facial recognition app for visitors, which sends instant notifications to staff.
- F8.4** The campus is not fully fenced, with only 50% of the perimeter secured.

- F8.5** Firearm and weapon prevention practices at Sonora High include searching backpacks as deemed necessary, using wands if required, and employing a monthly dog search service.
- F8.6** Despite having a considerable number of students leaving for classes at Columbia College, the school does not have a system in place for regulating those coming on and off campus.

Recommendations

- R8.1:** Regular ALICE Training and Drills - Conduct ALICE training for staff and students more frequently to ensure they are well-prepared for potential active shooter situations. Maintain an updated log of all drills and trainings. Regularly practicing different scenarios can help build confidence and familiarity with emergency response procedures. (F8.1)
- R8.2** Assess and Update Safety Plans - Regularly review and update the school safety plan to ensure it remains relevant and effective. Include input from staff, students, parents, and law enforcement agencies in the review process to ensure all perspectives are considered and the plan reflects best practices in school safety. (F8.2)
- R8.3:** Implement an enhanced access control system to control access to offices and other campus areas. This may include using electronic access cards or keypads that require a code for entry. Regular audits of access permissions can help maintain the security of restricted areas. (F8.3)
- R8.4** Consider increasing the fencing perimeter in order to reduce the risk of unauthorized entry. In addition, consider installing more surveillance cameras and lighting around the school grounds, especially in the back parking lot, to deter potential threats and improve overall safety. (F8.4)
- R8.5** Continue collaborating with local law enforcement agencies to foster a healthy relationship. Regularly involve them in safety drills, training, and planning. Continue use of searches, dogs, and other means to ensure that unsafe items are not being brought on campus. (F8.5)
- R8.6** Monitor Student Movement on and off Campus - Develop a system for tracking and regulating students who leave the campus for classes at Columbia College or for other reasons. This may include a sign-in/sign-out

sheet or app, ID scanning, or other methods to ensure the school is aware of students' whereabouts during school hours. (F8.6)

CHAPTER 9 - Soulsbyville Elementary School

Soulsbyville Elementary was established in 1869 and serves students in Transitional Kindergarten through 8th grade. Located in a quaint area surrounded with hillsides, which was once a gold rush town, Soulsbyville is known as an unincorporated census-designated place in Tuolumne County, and the school is named for Ben Soulsby, who resided in the area during the California Gold Rush. At present, there are 480 children enrolled in Soulsbyville Elementary. Additionally, the school has a Head Start program on-site. Soulsbyville Elementary is known for its academics and close-knit nature of the school families and community.

During our investigation, we conducted interviews with the school administration, staff and maintenance personnel. They provided valuable insights into the school's safety measures.

Conclusions

Soulsbyville Elementary staff and teachers are trained and prepared for maintaining school safety. In general, access to the school is limited for vehicles simply based on the one-way-in and one-way out traffic flow. This also creates traffic backup onto Soulsbyville Road, which is problematic in many ways. There are cameras around campus, but no centralized place to view the camera feeds. The school feels that there are strong bonds and collaboration between parents and staff, all to provide support to students and ensure safety.

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND COMMENDATIONS

Findings

- F9.1:** Like most of the schools in the county, Soulsbyville has both in-house ALICE training and assistance by local law enforcement. Full time teachers receive safety training, but substitutes must rely on safety plans in the classroom. They do have cameras and 65% fencing which includes athletic fields and play area.
- F9.2:** There is not much foot traffic from the surrounding neighborhoods, but all people entering the campus are challenged by any staff members if they do not check into the office. The only crosswalk is situated in a bad place and has bushes blocking the view of both pedestrian and oncoming traffic. The Head Start program is closest to the cross walk. The lack of a crossing guard presents a problem for both pedestrians & traffic.

F9.3: The ratio of teachers to students at recess is 1:35; on field trips it is 1:10. During hosted school events staff and parents are used as security. After a lock down the students must have their parents come to get them released. Students can contact an adult or use the drop box to report safety concerns.

Recommendations

R9.1: Staff should maintain and follow up in ALICE training for both students and staff, and involvement with local law enforcement is optimal. Staff should also continue to update and review safety plans if possible. (F9.1)

R9.2 Updates to foot path and traffic flow would be optimal, but given geographic location, this provides many challenges. The blind spot where the crosswalk is located should be evaluated. (F9.2)

R9.3: Soulsbyville Elementary school should continue to uphold a high standard in considering their student to adult ratio. Soulsbyville should be commended for having much supervision and small ratios for students at recess. (F9.3)

CHAPTER 10 - Summerville Elementary School

Summerville Elementary School, located in Tuolumne, California, is a school dedicated to fostering a nurturing and secure environment for its students. The school's mission statement underscores its commitment to providing an educational experience that is both academically challenging and personally enriching. The administration, faculty, and staff work collaboratively to cultivate an atmosphere where every child feels valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. The school serves students in grades K-8 and has a total enrollment of approximately 450 students.

The school's ethos is centered around safety, understanding, and respect, with a strong emphasis on cultivating a community of lifelong learners. This commitment extends to all aspects of the school's operations, from classroom instruction to campus security. In line with this, Summerville Elementary's safety protocols and procedures reflect a comprehensive and proactive approach to ensuring the well-being of its students and staff. The administration's strategic approach to safety is underscored by regular drills, staff training, and a robust safety plan, demonstrating the school's unwavering commitment to the safety of its community.

During our investigation, we conducted interviews with the school administration, staff, and maintenance personnel. They provided valuable insights into the school's safety measures.

Conclusions

Summerville Elementary School has a well-structured safety plan in place, with access to radios for all staff and a panic button in the office. Regular drills are conducted monthly and are documented by the school secretary. The grand jury found that Summerville Elementary School's layout seemed incredibly helpful to maintaining safety. The office is located on top of a hill, allowing for a comprehensive view of the parking lot. Furthermore, a fixed monitor with live camera streaming ensures continuous surveillance of the campus. Despite the strong emphasis on security, there are areas of ambiguity and potential improvement. Based on interviews, staff were aware and actively working to find creative solutions. Overall, the grand jury was extremely impressed with the staff's care and attention to safety, as well as the actual school set up and layout.

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND COMMENDATIONS

Findings

- F10.1:** Staff training occurs before the start of the school year and includes two ALICE training courses annually.
- F10.2:** Summerville Elementary School places emphasis on preparedness for a potential lockdown. Classrooms are equipped with flip charts for substitutes, and each room has emergency and water supplies.
- F10.3:** The school has ceased locking its gates and fences based on county advice to facilitate emergency response and to allow children access in the event of a shooter. However, this practice appears to be a point of concern for school administration.
- F10.4** The student to adult ratio during recess at Summerville Elementary School is 12:1, which is a reasonable ratio that allows for adequate supervision during these periods.
- F10.5** The school has mechanisms in place for students to report safety concerns, including options to send an email or talk to a teacher.

Recommendations

- R10.1** Continue to prioritize and invest in regular safety drills and staff training, including ALICE training. Given the comprehensive nature of this training,

consider extending this training to substitute teachers to ensure a uniform response to potential emergencies across all staff. (F10.1)

R10.2 The presence of flip charts for substitutes and emergency supplies in classrooms indicates commendable preparedness. However, it may be beneficial to include a wider range of emergency supplies, including first aid kits, in each classroom. (F10.2)

R10.3: Engage in a dialogue with county officials to gain clarity on the policy regarding the locking of gates and fences. Exploring options for gates that allow emergency access while maintaining a secure perimeter could be a potential solution. (F10.3)

R10.4 Maintain the commendable current student to adult ratio during recess. Regularly evaluate this ratio to ensure it continues to provide adequate supervision. (F10.4)

R10.5 While the existing channels for reporting safety concerns are good, introduce an anonymous reporting system to encourage more students to report any safety issues without fear of being identified. (F10.5)

CHAPTER 11 - Summerville High School

Summerville High School, located in Tuolumne, California, serves just over 600 students from 9th to 12th grade as of the 2022-2023 school year, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. It is part of the Summerville Union High School District and is situated on a sprawling campus that includes academic buildings, athletic facilities, and agricultural grounds.

In 2015, the school made headlines when four students were arrested for plotting a shooting at the campus. While the plot was foiled and no one was harmed, the incident highlighted the importance of school safety measures. The school has since made significant strides in improving safety and security, including implementing ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) training and adding security measures such as cameras and quick-lock systems in classrooms. Despite these advances, there remain areas for improvement in ensuring the safety and security of all students and staff.

During our investigation, we conducted interviews with the school administration, staff and maintenance personnel. They provided valuable insights into the school's safety measures.

Conclusions

Summerville High School participates in the ALICE training, and benefits from collaboration with local law enforcement and community members. Teachers and other staff can call for a lockdown from any classroom, using the PA system, which is up-to-date and functional. In regard to safety planning, staff training occurs before the school year starts, with online training that yields certification, and safety topics are also addressed in monthly staff meetings. The school keeps a record of these certificates. Substitute teachers receive safety training from the county, as stated by an interviewee. The school has evacuation plans in place, with buses available for transportation if needed. There is a system to notify parents in case of an emergency evacuation.

The school manages visitors by putting into place identification measures, such as visitor tags. The school has a significant number of cameras, which are monitored by security/maintenance staff and the principal. The ratio of staff to students is relatively low for a high school setting, which is commendable. During after-hour events, designated administrators, coaches, and teachers provide security, with maintenance staff on site from 4 am to 10:30 pm.

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND COMMENDATIONS

Findings

- F11.1:** Summerville High School has implemented ALICE training and engages with law enforcement for planning and preparedness.
- F11.2:** The safety plan at Summerville High School is not only accessible but also continually updated.
- F11.3:** The campus is partially fenced, and access control is not absolute, as individuals can walk in unchallenged.
- F11.4** Most classrooms are equipped for lockdowns with emergency supplies, though not all have food and water.
- F11.5** The school employs practices to prevent weapons on campus, such as monitoring break times and behaviors as well as utilizing surprise drug dog visits. They also distribute a classroom discipline policy that outlines the consequences of bringing weapons to school.
- F11.6** The ratio of students to adults during recess and breaks is between 30 and 35 to 1.

F11.7 Students are encouraged to report safety concerns to any adult staff member, reinforcing the message "if you see something, say something".

Recommendations

R11.1 Continue to engage with local law enforcement to practice and review the ALICE training. (F11.1)

R11.2 Ensure that all substitute teachers receive the same level of safety training as full-time staff. Look into providing them with access to the online training and certification that full-time staff members receive. (F11.2)

R11.3: Consider implementing additional access control measures, such as secured entrances or more comprehensive check-in procedures for visitors. Additionally consider increasing the fence perimeter around the campus and extend camera coverage to the tennis courts and softball fields, which currently lack surveillance. (F11.3)

R11.4 Ensure that all classrooms are fully equipped for lockdown situations, including the provision of food and water in the safety buckets. (F11.4)

R11.5 Reinstate surprise drug dog visits and continually enforce the classroom discipline policy. Consider additional preventative measures such as metal detectors or increased supervision in areas where students may potentially conceal weapons. (F11.5)

R11.6 Consider hiring additional staff members to reduce the student-to-adult ratio during recess and breaks. This would also improve supervision during after-hour events. (F11.6)

R11.7 Create a formalized method for students to report safety concerns, such as a confidential online portal or designated staff members. This would ensure that all student concerns are properly documented and addressed. Additionally, consider the administration's suggestion of hiring more security guards and installing additional cameras to increase surveillance coverage. (F11.7)

CHAPTER 12 – Twain Harte School

The first Twain Harte School opened in 1928 in Confidence, California, before being moved to the current location on Manzanita Drive in 1959. Twain Harte School serves students Transitional Kindergarten through 8th grade and the school is located right in

the center of downtown Twain Harte. Twain Harte School and Summerville District also serve four offsite necessary small school campuses in Long Barn, Cold Springs, South Fork and Pinecrest. In 2023, the school in Twain Harte serves a population of over 250 students and has a shared principal and superintendent, with a robust teaching staff. Breaks and recess have a ratio of four adults to approximately 175 students.

During our investigation, we conducted interviews with the school administration staff and maintenance personnel. They provided valuable insights into the school's safety measures:

- There is an active and updated safety plan available for staff and public accessibility, which is regarded by staff as important and pertinent to everyday practices.
- The school participates in ALICE training through county law enforcement, and there is an updated log in the office that follows the training to ensure they are happening annually.

Conclusions

The school is at the disadvantage of not having pre-established, annual or ideally biannual ALICE training jointly with TCSO. This may be due to COVID issues and high demand of the TCSO, but it is a valued moment of connection and education. There are supplies in all classrooms with extended lockdown resources.

The location of Twain Harte School is wonderfully integrated into the town of Twain Harte, making it accessible for parents and staff, but also lending itself to more non-student visitors on campus for recreation. Staff from the front office are tasked with looking out into the yard and blacktop areas to greet any visitors who are not coming into the office to sign in as a visitor.

From a safety perspective, the school buildings are being updated. The addition of new fencing was suggested by teachers demonstrating that engagement with staff around safety is high and input is welcome.

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND COMMENDATIONS

Findings

F12.1: While ALICE training is part of the yearly plan for Twain Harte School, it isn't clear if this occurred during the COVID years amidst school closures and times of uncertainty. The most recent drill was in January 2022 and an interviewee stated that the school was actively trying to schedule another drill for this calendar school year but was waiting on Sheriff availability. The ALICE training is listed in the school's safety plan.

F12.2: The school is directly in town, making it appealing for members of the public to enter the grounds during school hours. In the field nearest the Twain Harte Market shopping center, a locked gate was recently installed, in an attempt to discourage foot traffic through the school grounds. When non-staff or non-students enter the premises there are staff who attempt to greet them and provide education on the availability of campus access.

F12.3: While some of the buildings are older in nature, staff are working to update security measures to ensure that students are safe in the present day. Notably, there was a new locked gate installed along a back pathway into the primary school at the request and suggestion of teachers. Doors have devices to allow teachers to lock from the inside swiftly, and there has been fencing installed, where possible, but much of the school is open.

Recommendations

R12.1: The district should ensure that the safety plan is updated routinely, and that all teachers, staff, students and parents are provided copies and pertinent training to develop current understanding. ALICE training should be yearly, and the Tuolumne County Sheriff's Office should prioritize and promote engagement with students and education around lockdowns and potential threats to the school. (F12.1)

R12.2: Staff must continue to address fencing opportunities and find solutions to highly trafficked areas, during school hours. Dedicated personnel for greeting on-campus visitors, or community members passing through would be ideal. (F12.2)

R12.3: Door locking devices work, but technology around this should be updated, making the locks stronger and more efficient. It is commendable that changes have been made at the request of the teachers, and this participation is critical to staff and students feeling heard, safe, and supported at school. (F12.3)

Tuolumne County Law Enforcement and Superintendent of Schools Office

Tuolumne County Sheriff's Office and Sonora Police Department Interviews

1. **Multiple Law Enforcement Agencies:** Tuolumne County has law enforcement agencies available to respond to school incidents, which can ensure a robust response in case of emergencies.
2. **Involvement in School Safety:** Local law enforcement is actively involved in reviewing and making recommendations regarding the school's safety plans. They also provide ALICE training and host monthly meetings for school administrators to address safety-related topics.
3. **Response Times:** Law enforcement response times to school incidents vary, ranging from as little as two minutes to just under fifteen minutes, depending on the nature of the incident and the location of the responding officers at the time of the report.
4. **School Resource Officers (SROs):** The County has budgeted funds and received grants to pay for SROs, but there is currently a shortage of staff to fill these positions. SROs are considered an important aspect of school safety, providing an immediate response capability and fostering trust between students and law enforcement.
5. **ALICE Training:** ALICE training is provided to school staff and students, but it is not mandated by the state or county. The frequency and type of training are adjusted based on the needs of each school.
6. **Safety Plan Improvements:** Law enforcement officers suggest several improvements to enhance school safety. These include standardized safety plans, the creation of ALICE training videos for parents, the presence of SROs on campuses, the installation of modern automated locking devices in classrooms, and the evaluation and potential implementation of school fencing.
7. **Infrastructure Improvements:** Local law enforcement recommends evaluating school fencing on a case-by-case basis. They believe that a solid perimeter fence could greatly improve school safety, but also recognize that the school's topography can provide escape routes and hiding places for staff and students in certain cases.
8. **Parental Involvement:** There is an ongoing initiative to develop training videos for parents about ALICE practices, highlighting the importance of parental involvement in ensuring school safety.

Recommendations

The Grand Jury strongly recommends the establishment of a collaborative framework among local law enforcement, the Superintendent of Schools office, and all school districts in Tuolumne County to ensure the regular provision of ALICE (Alert, Lockdown,

Inform, Counter, Evacuate) training. This training is vital in equipping students, staff, and the wider school community with the knowledge and skills necessary to respond effectively to emergency situations.

Given the critical nature of this training, it is suggested that this responsibility should ultimately fall to the Superintendent of Schools office. As the central agency overseeing all school districts, the Superintendent's office is in the optimal position to take the lead to coordinate and ensure the consistent implementation of ALICE training across all schools in the county. In addition to ALICE training, it is suggested that the Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools Office develop a compilation of each school's safety plan available to all substitutes. This centralization of responsibility would ensure a unified approach to safety measures, facilitating the standardization of safety procedures, and limiting errors or confusion.

To ensure the effectiveness and relevance of the training, it is recommended that the ALICE training be provided on an annual or bi-annual basis to staff and students. Regular training would help to keep the school community's knowledge and skills up-to-date and ensure that new staff and students are also adequately trained.

In developing and implementing the ALICE training, the Superintendent's office should work closely with local law enforcement. Their expertise and understanding of the local context would greatly enhance the relevance and effectiveness of the training. Law enforcement can also provide practical insights and guidance, making the training more realistic and hence more useful.

Finally, transparency and communication between these entities are paramount. The Superintendent of Schools office, law enforcement, and individual school districts should maintain open lines of communication to address any concerns, share best practices, and continuously improve the safety measures in place.

Implementing this recommendation would demonstrate a strong, united commitment to school safety, ensuring that all students and staff in Tuolumne County are empowered with the knowledge and skills necessary to keep themselves and others safe during emergencies.

REQUESTED RESPONSES

Required Responses

Pursuant to Penal Code Section 933(c), responses are required from the following governing body within 90 days:

- Belleview, Big Oak Flat, Columbia, Curtis Creek, Gold Rush Charter, Jamestown Sonora Elementary, Sonora High School, Soulsbyville, Summerville Elementary, Summerville High School and Twain Harte School Boards: Findings and Recommendations as identified in related school chapter

Pursuant to Penal Code section 933(c) responses are required from the following elected official within 60 days:

- Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools Office: all findings and recommendations

Invited Responses

Although not required under Penal Code section 933(c), the following responses are invited within 90 days:

- Principals in Belleview, Big Oak Flat, Columbia, Curtis Creek, Gold Rush Charter, Jamestown Sonora Elementary, Sonora High School, Soulsbyville, Summerville Elementary, Summerville High School and Twain Harte School Boards: Findings and Recommendations as identified in respective school chapters
- Sonora Police Department
- Tuolumne County Sherriff's Office

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APPENDIX

ALICE training is a proactive approach to school safety that provides staff, students, and administrators with strategies for responding to an active shooter or violent intruder situation. ALICE stands for Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate. The training emphasizes the importance of making informed decisions based on the specific circumstances of the threat, rather than relying on a one-size-fits-all response.

A - Alert

Alert is your first notification of danger.

ALERT is when you first become aware of a threat. The sooner you understand that you're in danger, the sooner you can save yourself. A speedy response is critical. Seconds count.

Alert is overcoming denial, recognizing the signs of danger and receiving notifications about the danger from others. Alerts should be accepted, taken seriously, and should help you make survival decisions based on your circumstances.

L - Lockdown

Barricade the room. Prepare to EVACUATE or COUNTER if needed.

If **EVACUATION** is not a safe option, barricade entry points into your room in an effort to create a semi-secure starting point.

Our training explains scenarios where Lockdown may be the preferable option and dispels myths about passive, traditional 'lockdown only' procedures that create readily identifiable targets and makes a shooter's mission easier. ALICE trainers instruct on practical techniques for how to better barricade a room, what to do with mobile and electronic devices, how and when to communicate with police, and how to use your time in lockdown to prepare to use other strategies (i.e., Counter or Evacuate) that might come into play should the active shooter gain entry.

I - Inform

Communicate the violent intruder's location and direction in real time.

The purpose of **Inform** is to continue to communicate information in as real time as possible, if it is safe to do so. Armed intruder situations are unpredictable and evolve quickly, which means that ongoing, real-time information is key to making effective survival decisions. Information should always be clear, direct and in plain language, not using codes. If the shooter is known to be in an isolated section of a building, occupants in other wards can safely evacuate while those in direct danger can perform enhanced lockdown and prepare to counter.

Video surveillance, 911 calls and PA announcements are just a few of the channels that may be used by employees, safety officers, and other personnel to inform others. An emergency response plan should have clear methods outlined for informing school employees, hospital workers, or any other employees of the location of a violent intruder.

C - Counter

Create Noise, Movement, Distance and Distraction with the intent of reducing the shooter's ability to shoot accurately. Counter is NOT fighting.

ALICE Training does not believe that actively confronting a violent intruder is the best method for ensuring the safety of those involved. **Counter** is a strategy of last resort. Counter focuses on actions that create noise, movement, distance and distraction with the intent of reducing the shooter's ability to shoot accurately. Creating a dynamic environment decreases the shooter's chance of hitting a target and can provide the precious seconds needed in order to evacuate.

E - Evacuate

When safe to do so, remove yourself from the danger zone.

ALICE provides techniques for safer and more strategic evacuations. **Evacuating** to a safe area takes people out of harm's way and hopefully prevents civilians from having to come into any contact with the shooter.

Did you know that you should break a window from the top corner as opposed to the center? Many useful techniques that civilians do not know exist and can save your life. ALICE trainers teach strategies for evacuating through windows, from higher floors and under extreme duress.

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