

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT NO. 1005

Sounding The Alarm

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Twenty-six (26) schools did not respond to the survey.

Recommendation: School District Governing Boards shall review the list of non-responding schools, determine the types of their fire alarm systems and take appropriate action as required by law.

Responses:

<i>School District and School(s)</i>	<i>Response</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>
<i>Acalanes Union High School District: Center for Independent Study</i>		<i>Acalanes Union High School District Center for Independent Study has an automatic fire alarm system monitored 24 hours a day by an offsite service provider.</i>
<i>Antioch Unified School District: Antioch Charter Academy, Antioch Charter Academy II, Black Diamond Middle School, Encore Home Schooling</i>		<i>Antioch Charter Academy and Antioch Charter Academy II are not part of AUSD. Black Diamond Middle School has an automated alarm system that can be heard in all buildings on campus. There are pull stations and heat detectors; all monitored by an offsite private alarm company.</i>
<i>Brentwood Union School District: Brentwood Elementary School</i>		<i>Brentwood Elementary School has an automated alarm system that can be heard in all buildings on campus. There are pull stations, smoke detectors, and heat detectors; all monitored by an offsite private alarm company.</i>
<i>Liberty Union High School District: Heritage High School, Independence High School, Liberty High School</i>	<i>Agrees</i>	<i>The Liberty Union High School District's Heritage High School, Independent High School, and Liberty High School have automatic fire alarm systems that are monitored by outside companies.</i>
<i>Mount Diablo Unified School District: Diablo Community Day School, Horizons School, Nueva Vista Summit School, Pine Hollow Middle School, Prospect School</i>		
<i>Oakley Union Elementary School District: Delta Vista Middle School, Gehringer Elementary School, Iron Horse Elementary School, Laurel</i>	<i>Agrees</i>	<i>OUESD schools listed all have sprinkler systems, smoke and heat detectors that trigger audible campus-wide alarms. The system transmits the location of the alarm to the school office. Because none of these schools has had a</i>

<i>Elementary School, Oakley Elementary School, O'Hara Park Middle School, Vintage Parkway Elementary School</i>		<i>construction project in excess of \$200,000 since January 1, 2008 they are not required by law to have offsite monitoring; therefore none of these schools have offsite or after hours monitoring.</i>
<i>Walnut Creek School District: Indian Valley Elementary School</i>	<i>Agrees</i>	<i>All of the district's schools have automatic alarm systems. These systems include fire alarms, sprinklers and smoke detectors. The system connects electronically to an offsite monitoring company and the fire department.</i>
<i>West Contra Costa Unified School District: Delta High School, Manzanita Middle School, Middle College High School, West County Community High School</i>	<i>Partially disagrees</i>	<i>Delta High School no longer exists. Manzanita Middle School (a district charter school) is in a facility that is not owned or managed by WCCUSD. Manzanita Middle School's fire system is currently non-operational and they are in the process of obtaining quotes to install a new fire alarm system. Middle College High School is on the Contra Costa College campus and the rooms used are monitored by the campus fire alarm system. WCCUSD responded that West County Community High School is located in a building not owned by the district; the alarm question was not answered.</i>

- 2. Manual Alarm Systems consist of pull stations and smoke detectors that trigger audible alarms on campus. Some manual systems transmit information about the location of the alarm to the school office, while others require school personnel to use phones or intercoms to relay information. A staff member must call "911" to alert authorities to a fire emergency.**

No Response Required

- 3. Automatic Alarm Systems are fire alarms, sprinklers, and/or smoke detectors that automatically detect a fire and activate a campus-wide alarm. A connection is made electronically to a certified 24-hour supervising station at an offsite private alarm company or to a fire or police department. Some systems provide specific zone details to the offsite station.**

No Response required

- 4. Of the 236 responding schools, 225 reported having automated systems.**

No response required

- 5. Eleven schools reported having manual alarms,**
- **Three plan to upgrade their systems in 2010**
 - **Three plan to upgrade in 2011**

- Five have no plans to upgrade

Recommendation: The eleven schools with manual alarm systems shall review procedures for notifying authorities of a fire emergency. Any school without a notification procedure shall work with its fire inspectors to implement one. All implemented procedures shall include clear provisions for making a “911” call.

6. Of the eleven schools with manual alarms:

- Three have pull stations, smoke and heat detectors
- Three have pull stations and smoke detectors
- One has pull stations and heat detectors
- Four have only pull stations

Recommendation: Schools with manual alarm systems shall confer with their fire inspectors to determine if they comply with existing fire alarm requirements. Schools shall work with the inspectors to comply with fire alarm requirements.

Recommendation: With dwindling financial resources available, schools with manual systems shall investigate and apply for available grants and other monetary assistance to help defray the cost of upgrading to a compliant system.

Responses:

<i>School District</i>	<i>Response</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>
<i>Antioch Unified School District</i>		<i>At Antioch High School, Antioch Middle School, and Belshaw Elementary School the manual fire alarms were replaced in the summer of 2010 with automated alarm systems that can be heard in all buildings on campus. These are all monitored by an offsite private alarm company.</i>
<i>Byron Union School District</i>		<i>Byron Union High School has pull stations, smoke and heat detectors that are monitored by an offsite company.</i>
<i>Canyon Elementary School District</i>	<i>Agrees</i>	<i>Canyon School has a written procedure for notifying authorities of a fire emergency. The District will work with Moraga-Orinda Fire District to determine that the system in place is compliant with the Fire Code.</i>
<i>John Swett Unified School District</i>	<i>Agrees</i>	<i>They are in the process of installing an alarm monitoring system at Willow Continuation School.</i>
<i>Pittsburg Unified School District</i>	<i>Agrees</i>	<i>Heights and Stoneman Elementary Schools currently have manual alarms with pull stations, smoke and heat detectors that actuate an audible alarm system. Riverside High School has been closed. The District expects to complete all recommendations within one year.</i>