

Minutes of the School Safety & Security meeting

February 22, 2024

Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District

The meeting began at 2pm

Members present: Ashley Chohlis, Anne Marie Espinoza, Cash Keith, Victor Baron, Nichole Henderson, Zeke De la Fuente, David Zamora, Mario Rangel, Josh Guitierrez, Melissa Castaneda, Jennifer Perez, Pedro Huizar, Luis Fernandez, Rob Fowler, Charlie Black, Forrest Anderson, Adam Apolinar, Cody Smith, Van Zabava, Ruben Nolasco, Brandon McCutchen, Eusevio Salinas, Oscar Reyes, Travis Fann, Jacob Albarado, Michelle Ortega, Daniel Rodriguez, Homer Delgado, Daniel Rodriguez, Matthew Porter, Brenda Faulkner, Cody Smith, Kevin King

Staff present: Mikka Sanchez

Guests: Dr. Monica Martinez, A. Castillo, Isaac Juarez, Amanda Fuentes, Mario Santiago, Elsa Cruz, Armando Garcia, Jimmy Alvarado, Fernando Fernandez, Stephen Stephens, Joshua Thomas, Alex Burchhard, M Sullivan, Allen Rose, Rachel Smith, Fred Ratliff, John Simpson, Amy Maldonado, Shayne Gilland, Berlinda Arreola, Alfred Garza III, Laura Garza, Jaclyn Gonzales, Caitlyn Sulley

Media: Leigh Waldman (KSAT), Amber Hughes (Spectrum News), Sofi Zeman (ULN)

1. Welcome/Introduction:

Superintendent Chohlis welcomed everyone. Safety & Security Committee meetings are required by Texas State Law and will be held quarterly. Each committee member introduced themselves. Superintendent Chohlis shared the goal is to be productive and start to build the framework for our safety and security moving forward as administrators.

2. Public Comments

No one spoke in Open Forum

3. TEA Intruder Audit: Corrective Action for Weekly Exterior Door Sweep Documentation

Superintendent Chohlis reported that during the February audits conducted at Dalton and Morales Jr. High, no unauthorized entry was detected, fences were not breached. Door sweep logs are maintained at each campus, however when the principals were asked to provide the door sweep logs they did not have access to the spreadsheets.

To address the issue, the Superintendent held the first Campus Safety & Security meeting last week, which included administrators and safety personnel from each campus. These meetings will be held monthly going forward.

4. UCISD Safety and Security System Planning

At the Campus Safety & Security meeting, a system was set up for campuses on how to manage documentation and roll out of training for safety and security moving forward.

A Google Shared Drive with folders for each campus has been created with access for appropriate individuals involved in safety & security planning and documenting, including our police department.

Folder - Campus Emergency Operations Plan

We currently have a District Emergency Plan. The Superintendent will work with each campus monthly. Their staff will be trained on should there be an emergency on their campus and not need district intervention.

Folder- Campus Safety & Security Agenda

All Safety & Security meeting agendas will be available should they have questions or need to refer back to any notes taken.

Folder - Campus Safety Audits

Administrators know folders are available and will check the door sweep logs weekly to make sure they have been completed. We are now monitoring weekly and monthly. The Superintendent will check monthly.

Folder - Campus Standard Response Protocol (SRP)

The District and campuses use SRP, which is best practice and recommended by the Texas School Safety Center.

Students and staff will be trained with safety drill scenarios with the goal of everyone being prepared in emergencies.

In April and May administrators will prepare staff to start using scenarios for drills and next year will take a scenario to a staff member, that staff member (with support during the drill) will have to decide what to do and who to call. For example, is it a shelter for weather, is it a hold or a medical emergency, etc...

The same scenario will be used across the district. The scenarios will be discussed at the monthly meetings.

These scenarios are required to be conducted on days when faculty meetings are scheduled. The individual who conducted the drill will need to discuss the scenario and its outcome either that afternoon or the next morning. They should explain their decision making process and gather feedback from staff and administration to complete an after action review. This will help everyone build a schema for safety & security.

Folder -Incident Command for Schools

All Senior Leadership has completed IS100 C and have been asked to start sub committees for staying in contact with relevant counterparts and planning to the level necessary.

Campus leaders will take the IS100C and download Incident Command for Schools. The Superintendent will continue to train staff during the monthly meetings and send appropriate individuals to additional training out of District.

Folder - School Safety & Security Documentation

This refers to this group. This is where the agenda and sign in sheets are placed should we get audited by the State of Texas

Folder - Standard Response Protocol Materials (SRP)

Information on how we train and develop students, parents and staff.

Information we relay to parents in English and Spanish.

Campus/classroom posters and materials.

Standard Reunification Method should we have to reunify.

Folder - Standard Reunification Method Material
All materials necessary to conduct reunification

Accountability

In the Campus Emergency Plan they will help to create a more detailed schedule and be aware of where students are. Teachers with students with special needs will have to know where they are at all times. An adult will be assigned to that child at all times and has to know where that child is and is to make sure in an emergency that child is taken out of the building and we know exactly who is responsible for the student.

Superintendent Chohlis shared this is how we structured ourselves as a district to handle safety and security as emergency operation planning as administrators. Our police department also steps in as needed, this includes responding to legal issues.

We did have our corrective action training for our weekly exterior door sweep. It can be found in our Safety and Security Shared Drive.

Questions: Chief Daniel Rodriguez asked; During the audit were there any notes made on any of the doors found to be unsecured?

Response: Superintendent Chohlis: No, there were not any unsecured doors. All doors were secured during the January and February audit.

Please note a staff member reported the interior doors in the UHS gym have to be worked on regularly. Zeke De la Fuente stated that the doors will be replaced in two weeks. (Update-All doors with issues in that area have been replaced.)

Question: Rob Fowler: What is reunification?

Response: Superintendent Chohlis: If we had to relocate with students, then have individuals pick up their children from the new place and verify their identity in an organized manner.

5. Feedback on Safety Concerns Around Open Access to Facilities After School

We have several requests for opening our facilities in the evenings. It is a safety issue for us to leave gates open.

From a safety and security committee point of view, what are your opinions, what are the pros and cons?

Concern: Sheriff Eusevio Salinas: Working in Batesville, the Batesville School has the only playground suitable for children but understands there is not enough money or staff to supervise after hours. How do we prevent someone from planting something there for the next day? Who is going to do the security sweep close up to make sure there is nothing there to harm the children the next day?

Response: Superintendent Chohlis: That has been our concern.

Rob Fowler: Opening up the facilities we are going to have an issue with safety but coming together offering opportunities for children to have extra curricular activities. Maybe start a sub committee for this concern.

Chief Daniel Rodriguez: This has been brought up for quite some time. The community would appreciate having facilities available. Parents attending practice can help watch for anything suspicious. Chief Rodriguez offered extra patrol.

Superintendent Chohlis suggested possibly making this an employee benefit. Employees have undergone background checks. We have cameras where gates are visible. This may also attract individuals to seek employment with our district. The employee would be responsible for monitoring their group and making sure gates are locked.

Sheriff Eusevio Salinas: What about the traveling teams? Maybe have those coaches undergo background checks and sign an agreement to be responsible for their group.

David Zamora agrees with Sheriff Salinas. It is hard to find a place to practice.

Superintendent Chohlis: We would still struggle with space. Our teams still need a place to practice.

Forrest Anderson: The tennis courts have always been open for the public to use without issues.

6. Response to School Recommendations from DOJ Report

Superintendent Chohlis stated the best way for our district to communicate when something happens on school property is by setting up the following sub committees:

A. Emergency Operations Planning

Senior Leadership has been asked to start a text thread with their sub committees.

UCISD staff is responsible for establishing contact with the appropriate people. They will meet quarterly prior to our quarterly meetings to get communication going. This will help us know who everyone is in the event someone changes job roles. Superintendent Chohlis is the Chair for the Joint Command Sub Committee, Chief Gutierrez is the Chair for the Operations Sub Committee, Mrs. Espinoza will be the Chair for the Joint Information Sub Committee, Mr. Baron will be the the Reunification Sub Committee Chair, Mr. Keith and Mrs. Henderson will be the Liaison/Notification Sub Committee Chairs, and Mr. De La Fuente the Logistics Sub Committee Chair. The goal is to work through the appropriate UCISD recommendations on sub committee, systematically put best practice measures in place and in one year as a district we would like to be the gold standard of emergency operations planning preparedness.

a. Superintendent Chohlis- Joint Command Sub Committee

Superintendent Chohlis has made contact with Sheriff Nolansco. They discussed procedures for handling a potential mass emergency in one of our schools and how the planning process would involve working with the Sheriff's department. All the heads of the departments would meet at the Joint Command Center, which is equipped with cameras providing access to monitor all locations. Superintendent Chohlis will reach out to the other committee members and plan to meet in early April at the Joint Command Center.

b. Chief Gutierrez - Operations Sub Committee

Operations of any type of incident that may arise and communicating back to the command center. The UCISD Police Department will be working closely with the Uvalde Police

Department and the Uvalde County Sheriff's Department as we respond to incidents. There have been recent training including cross training but we would like to make it a routine training so that if a Uvalde PD officer or a Sheriff's Deputy comes into one of our campuses he/she knows exactly where everything is.

c. Mrs. Espinoza - Joint Information Sub Committee

- The initial purpose of the Joint Information Center (JIC) is to coordinate and disseminate accurate information with surrounding agencies' public information officers.
- The goal will be to establish a team of public information officers to communicate immediately in case of an emergency and bring us all together in one common location and begin messaging.
- One of the main items is to establish Memorandums of Understanding so we all have an understanding when an emergency occurs who is going to take the lead on the official release of information. During the quarterly meetings
- The JIC Sub-Committee will meet quarterly to continue refining communication protocols and enhancing coordination efforts during emergencies. The shared goal is to streamline information sharing, maintain consistency, and ensure a cohesive response strategy across various emergency scenarios. We will create message templates for the initial release of information and updates in English and Spanish. Everyone will have their assigned roles depending on who we have to support.
- Also making sure that the situation is clear and that we make the closing statement and are able to bring the entire emergency of the situation and communicate clearly as far as how it was solved or what are the next steps.
- With a team put together like this information will be able to be released quicker.
- A template will be created for what needs to be included so that our parents, community, and media are aware. Within our messages we will also designate what platform of communication will be the official channel. For example Facebook, Facebook live, our website.
- The goal will be for us to have our first quarterly meeting at the end of March or early April. We will be reaching out to all Public Information Officers and to the State.

There will be a site for the Joint Information Center close to the Joint Command Center.

Sheriff Ruben Nolasco shared that he is working to bring PIO training through the FBI.

d. Mr. Baron - Reunification Sub Committee

- Planning to have the first sub committee meeting will be in mid March
- Back in July 2022 a group of 29 members, many of which participated in the reunification on May 24th were trained in the Standard Reunification Method. We also had an after action review. This committed us to using the Standard Reunification Method for the basis of our plan. This team has grown to 48 members. They are all UCISD employees with specific skills and flexibility necessary for reunification. There are 12 different roles. Each member is assigned to a role. Example student runner, student reunifier, etc...
- We have prepared two response bags in significant size with a quantity of items through the recommendation of the Texas Safety Council. The individuals making contact with parents are LSSP's, they are school counselors who are trained in trauma care able to have those conversations with parents.
- Current need is to include committee members on this 48 person team. We would like to get some outside agencies involved, law enforcement assistance in the need to evacuate.

We have to think of not just on site protection but also think about getting the buses quickly and securely from wherever the incident of any type occurs.

- We currently have two MOU's in place with three possible sites for evacuation.

e. Mr. Keith & Mrs. Henderson - Liaison/Notification Sub Committee

- Role is a go between Incident Command and the communications PIO as well as establishing multiple relationships and introductions communications with other agencies so that we communicate effectively with the hospital or police department or which ever entity it may be
- Bring that critical information to the Incident Command Center and be able to relay the correct information
- We have made contact with key community stakeholders such as the Uvalde Memorial Hospital and victims services advocates for DPS, Texas Rangers. We have also established a contact list of multiple victim service providers of federal, state, and local agencies. Those who are designated to deploy to Uvalde in the event of a mass casualty incident. How we can utilize their communication procedures to communicate with our families effectively. We have discussed ways to streamline communication, sharing of information.
- Please let us know if you have a designated victims services advocate in your organization so we can establish a connection with them. We would like to start a text thread.
- Our next goal is to meet with specific personnel from the FBI, DPS, and Uvalde Memorial Hospital and talk about how we can engage in shared educational opportunities so we are all on the same page and operating from one model.

f. Mr. De la Fuente - Logistics Sub Committee

Points of entry. The best way to get support to location

Our next meeting will have a closed session to discuss logistics in more detail. There is some information that has to be protected from those who wish our students harm.

We can discuss roles and responsibilities for sub committees.

Update: we have been looking into an answer for things getting on campuses that do not belong. We have a committee on the Morales Junior High campus to try to figure out what we could possibly do to keep contraband from getting on the campus. We have looked at a few options including metal detectors and screeners. Mrs. Merlos has been working with a group of parents and stakeholders on her campus to figure out if maybe uniforms or clear backpacks would be a good idea so students feel safe to come to school. We take every situation seriously. We are going to prosecute every situation seriously both student and parent when we are able to.

Any questions?

No questions

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3 pm.