



## PRESS RELEASE

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### Crane Elementary School District Safety Measures

**Yuma, AZ** – Over the course of several years, the Crane Elementary School District has steadily been implementing a comprehensive school safety plan, thanks in large part to our community by passing bond measures and approving district additional assistance overrides. As the threat of violence has recently reached the national spotlight due to the widespread circulation of social media threats, the district wants to inform the community of the safety measures established across Crane schools to address safety vulnerabilities.

- As part of the 2014 bond measure, improvements were made to the perimeter fencing at a number of schools, adding appropriate exit hardware so that gates can stay locked during the school day yet remain accessible for quick evacuations.
- Approved by district residents in November 2018, the District Additional Assistance Override, or capital override program, includes the phased installation of a video surveillance system (CCTV), remote door access, one-button lockdown emergency notification system, and the integration of other systems across all district schools. The primary function of this system is to immediately notify law enforcement of a lockdown, automatically lock exterior doors, alert those inside and outside of the building to initiate lockdown procedures, signal flashing strobes, display messages on computers, and notify district officials, in just a few seconds. The system continues to be tested and refined in collaboration with other agency partners of the district.
- Since the approval of that initiative, the District entered into discussions with the City of Yuma and the Yuma Police Department (YPD) to permit YPD personnel to access some, or all, of the installed security platforms to enhance the city's response to an emergency. Permitting access to these same systems equips the responding officers with first-hand knowledge of what to expect when they arrive at a school, and what resources may be necessary to be deployed to address the circumstance. A security grant funded a command center so that the district may more easily support and assist incident commanders as they respond to a potential threat.
- As renovations have been made across the district, ballistic glass has been installed to reduce the opportunities for unauthorized window access to school buildings. In the summer of 2024, all exterior windows across the district had ballistic and riot-grade window film applied.
- In 2019, the district provided the transportation department with tactics and strategies that could be utilized to delay or disable an active threat on a school bus. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) also funded a team comprised of district personnel and representatives from the Yuma Police Department and the Yuma Fire Department to attend the Emergency Management Institute and the Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Schools course to provide the team with knowledge, skills and tools needed to review, enhance and sustain an all threats/hazards school emergency operations plan (EOP).
- The replacement of existing classroom door hardware with hardware that keeps the classroom door locked at all times, and requires a key to be used each time someone wants to enter. The district's expectation is for all classroom doors to remain closed and latched during the instructional day in order to prevent unauthorized access.
- Through an Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Yuma and the Yuma Police Department, a school resource officer (SRO) is assigned to service both Crane and Centennial Middle Schools. An SRO is a sworn law enforcement officer who provides an enforcement presence on campus and takes police action as needed.
- When members of the maintenance and operations staff report to a site to perform maintenance or to correct an identified issue, they perform a site-walk to ensure that the campus is secure from unauthorized access.
- All Crane schools have perimeter fencing, and the district has systematically worked to create single points of entry and visitor vestibules where access beyond the front office is not available to unauthorized personnel.



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On that last point, the minimum school facility guidelines found in Arizona Administrative Code (R7-6-205(E)) state that “[a] school site provides adequate security if there is a fenced or walled, outdoor, play or physical education area for preschool students with disabilities and students in kindergarten through grade six.” However, Crane feels that more can be done in this regard.

“We feel that in today’s current climate, the minimum standards should be increased beyond just a physical barrier, and, through community support, we have introduced and implemented systems and strategies that exceed the minimum school facility guidelines,” said Laurie Doering, Superintendent of Crane Schools. “We remain diligent in our efforts to keep unauthorized individuals from accessing the campus beyond the reception space of each campus.”

Crane continues to move forward with additional measures as it prioritizes the safety and wellbeing of all students and staff. In November 2023, the voters of the district approved a bond measure where a portion of that program was designed to improve the physical security of the lobbies of our schools and facilities. Three campuses have already been equipped with these improvements with the others scheduled to receive these improvements soon.

Superintendent Doering shares, “In addition to the physical elements that we’ve implemented, the district has sponsored community and student forums with nationally-recognized experts in the areas of school safety to help our district community become more prepared in its response to acts of violence, specifically an active threat.”

The district also holds quarterly safety team meetings with participation of local partners such as the Yuma Fire Department, the Yuma Police Department and the Yuma County Office of Emergency Management. With their collaboration, Crane ensures that its first responders are familiar with the district’s sites, safety protocols, initiatives and can act quickly with knowledge.

Tabletop exercises are conducted annually with district personnel to test a portion of the district’s emergency response plan. The district also actively participates in the western Arizona meetings of the Arizona School Safety Consortium that occur three times a year for, primarily, Yuma County schools.

Routine fire and lockdown drills are conducted in the schools, as well as large-scale exercises. Since 2009 – initially through the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) grant and with community help – Crane has collaborated with YPD, YFD, the Yuma County Office of Emergency Management and the Arizona Department of Education, to test its abilities to safely evacuate a campus and reunify students with their appropriate parent or guardian.

Other educational and preventative measures have also included hosting individuals from the Arizona Attorney General’s Office to speak about opioid awareness and prevention, and through a visitor management system, working to ensure that only individuals who are authorized to have contact with students are admitted into the school through a search of the national sex offender registry.

The Crane Elementary School District understands that the current educational climate warrants the implementation of robust district-wide safety plans that allow for the use of technology, partnership with local agencies, and systems that are established in schools and practiced with regularity. Our priority will always be the wellbeing of our students, their families, and our staff, and these listed safety measures are helpful aids in that mission.

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