



San José
Unified
School District

Executive Summary

**National School Safety and Security Services
School Security and Emergency Preparedness Assessment
San José Unified School District
*Submitted: November 28, 2025***

San José Unified School District commissioned Kenneth S Trump, Ed. D. and Charles Hibbert from National School Safety and Security Services, Inc. to conduct a comprehensive School Security and Emergency Preparedness Assessment as part of the district's ongoing commitment to student and staff safety, organizational accountability, and continuous improvement. This assessment represents a districtwide review of systems, practices, staffing, training, physical security, communications, and emergency preparedness, informed by extensive document review, stakeholder interviews, and on-site observations across schools and support facilities.

The assessment was conducted between February 2025 and April 2025, and it included more than 275 interviews with administrators, teachers, classified staff, students, parents, first responders, and district leadership. Consultants completed campus walkthroughs, reviewed emergency planning documents, and engaged in multiple district-level debriefs with senior leadership, including the Superintendent and executive cabinet. The findings reflect a snapshot in time and are intended to strengthen, not replace, the district's existing safety systems.

The consultants commended the Superintendent, Board of Education, and district leadership for their transparency, collaboration, and clear commitment to school safety. San José Unified School District has already invested significantly in prevention, intervention, and student support services, and this assessment confirms that the district has a strong foundation upon to build a more coordinated, consistent, and sustainable school safety framework.

Strengths and Existing Foundations

The assessment affirms that San José Unified School District has many foundational strengths upon which to build. District leadership has invested significantly in prevention, intervention, and student support services that address social-emotional, mental health, physical health, and nutritional needs. Schools prioritize positive culture, student connectedness, and relationships, which research consistently identifies as factors for school safety. In addition, nursing services, student nutrition programs, and supportive services were noted as districtwide assets.

From an operational standpoint, the consultants highlighted the responsiveness of Central Station, the effectiveness of two-way radio systems, and the value of campus supervisors, School Resource Officers, and district-level crisis response coordination.



The district's use of ParentSquare, classroom phones, PA systems, radios, visitor management technology, cameras, and alarms reflect a substantial investment in safety infrastructure. Schools regularly conduct drills, maintain emergency go-kits, identify evacuation rally points, and engage staff and, in many cases, parents in safety planning. Administrators consistently describe the relationship with the San José Police Department as strong and collaborative. Collectively, these strengths demonstrate that school safety is already a district priority.

Districtwide Themes and Priority Needs

Across nearly all sites, consultants heard consistent themes regarding supervision, staffing, funding, and clarity. Administrators and staff expressed a need for increased campus supervision, additional two-way radios, and functional, well-placed cameras. Some noted the challenge of choosing between safety resources and instructional necessities due to limited site-level discretionary funding. The consultants recommend establishing dedicated school safety funding separate from instructional budgets to prevent this ongoing trade-off.

The size and design of many secondary campuses, combined with high student movement, expansive grounds, and community factors such as increased transient and unhoused populations, elevate the need for adult presence and active supervision. Human supervision, trained, visible, and mobile, was repeatedly identified as the most critical safety factor. Expanding campus supervisor staffing, refining deployment formulas beyond enrollment alone, and strengthening training and oversight should be considered top priorities.

Emergency Preparedness Planning and Training

The consultants identified concerns regarding the clarity, usability, and consistency of emergency preparedness plans, including Site Emergency Action Plans ("SEAP") and Comprehensive School Safety Plan ("CSSP"). While district staff have made good-faith efforts to improve guidance, administrators consistently reported confusion stemming from changing templates, conflicting expectations, and documents that function more as compliance artifacts than operational tools. Emergency plans must be living documents that guide decision-making during real incidents, not binders or digital files that are rarely referenced.

There is a need for additional district staffing dedicated exclusively to emergency preparedness. The consultants recommend building a small, specialized team under a unified safety structure to provide hands-on, site-specific support, training, and technical assistance. The demand for this support is high, and the current staffing model is not sufficient for a district of this size and complexity.

Drills and training practices also require refinement. The report raises concerns about inconsistent messaging around Run-Hide-Defend, classroom barricading, and options-based response models. The district should standardize language, procedures, and expectations to ensure fidelity of implementation. Also, the district should provide regular tabletop exercises and scenario-based training for



administrators and staff. Special attention must be given to students and staff with disabilities and other access or mobility needs, with planning embedded into IEPs and site procedures.

Evacuation and reunification planning emerged as a particularly underdeveloped area. Current plans rely heavily on open outdoor spaces that are ill-suited for prolonged use or controlled reunification. Schools must identify both nearby and distant evacuation sites, establish formal agreements, physically walk the sites, and plan logistics in detail. This level of planning is time-intensive, but essential.

Communications and Emergency Response Systems

Effective communication during emergencies emerged as an area for improvement. While systems exist, confusion persists regarding how to call 911. This includes who has the authority and who is responsible for initiating parent communications during an emergency (site administration vs central office). The consultants recommend clear protocols that empower sites to send initial notifications immediately, with follow-up messaging from the central office as appropriate.

The need for additional two-way radios, spare batteries, improved PA systems (particularly outdoors), and visual alert systems in noisy or open areas was consistently identified. The district should conduct systemwide audits of PA coverage, radio capacity, lighting, signage, and camera functionality to ensure reliability during emergencies, including extended power outages. Planning for generator capacity, alternative communication tools, and extended operational disruptions should also be strengthened.

The implementation of the Raptor visitor management system requires immediate attention. While visitor management systems are an essential safety tool, inconsistent functionality and technical issues are creating burdens for office staff and undermining effectiveness. These challenges extend beyond training and require vendor-level resolution and system stabilization.

Organizational Structure and Staffing

A central recommendation of the assessment is the creation of a unified district structure for school safety, security, and emergency preparedness under a single, full-time leader. Currently, responsibilities are fragmented across departments, resulting in inconsistent guidance and a largely reactive posture. A dedicated director with authority, staffing, and direct access to the Superintendent would allow the district to move toward a proactive, coordinated, and strategic safety framework.

Within this structure, emergency preparedness planning, campus supervisor programs, SRO oversight, training, and incident support should be aligned under one vision and accountability system. The consultants emphasize the importance of fully staffing and professionalizing the SRO program in accordance with nationally recognized best practices.

The consultants recommend retaining and strengthening the SRO program, emphasizing consistent coverage, clear role definitions, proper training, and reliable staffing. A partially implemented program



creates risk. SROs should be present during critical arrival and dismissal windows, trained to national standards, and supported by clear MOUs and supervision. When SROs are unavailable, contingency plans must be in place to ensure adequate adult supervision.

Similarly, expanding campus supervisor staffing and training is identified as a top districtwide priority. These staff serve as the front line of prevention and response and are highly valued by administrators. Annual training, consistent expectations, and adequate staffing levels are essential to maintaining safe and orderly campuses.

Conclusion

This assessment affirms that San José Unified School District has a strong foundation for school safety built on committed leadership, dedicated staff, and a culture that prioritizes student well-being. The district has an opportunity to align its many positive efforts into a cohesive, districtwide safety framework that supports schools, protects students and staff, and reinforces community trust. The consultants' findings and recommendations are offered in that spirit and provide practical options to strengthen school safety and emergency preparedness in the San José Unified School District.

Actions Implemented Following the Initial Assessment

Following the completion of the assessment and before issuing the final report, San José Unified School District took immediate, proactive steps to strengthen safety practices and address early findings. These actions reflect the district's commitment to continuous improvement and to acting decisively while longer-term structural recommendations are being considered.

The district implemented a standardized employee identification badge protocol requiring all employees to visibly wear district-issued badges while on any SJUSD property, strengthening campus access control and situational awareness. A districtwide cell phone policy was also reinforced, requiring students to keep cell phones put away from bell to bell, reducing distractions, improving supervision, and supporting safer learning environments during instructional time.

Operational protocols were clarified and strengthened, including the development of a power outage protocol for both school hours and non-school hours to ensure continuity of operations and clear decision-making during extended outages. Lockdown (Run-Hide-Defend) drills were expanded to include non-structured times, such as lunch and passing periods, to reflect real-world conditions better and improve staff and student readiness beyond classroom settings.

The Technology Department enhanced communications by installing landline phones at sites to ensure communication capability if cell phones, radios, and internet systems are unavailable. Risk Management purchased two-way radios and distributed them to school sites, with the option for sites to procure additional units as needed, improving on-campus communication and response capacity.



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The district also prioritized training and leadership development. Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines training was provided to strengthen prevention, early identification, and intervention practices. Substitute teacher training and a new substitute handbook were implemented to ensure that substitutes receive consistent guidance on safety procedures, expectations, and emergency response protocols. The appointment of a new SJUSD Chief of Police established locally-based leadership for school policing and aligned with best practice recommendations for accountability and coordination.

To reinforce a culture of safety, five-minute safety updates were instituted at all management meetings to ensure ongoing awareness, alignment, and communication across departments. In addition, annual safety training for management was embedded in the district's Strategic Planning Day, ensuring that safety, emergency preparedness, and leadership responsibilities remain a standing priority at the executive and site leadership levels.

Together, these actions demonstrate that the district has already begun to operationalize key themes from the assessment, strengthen consistency, and address immediate gaps while continuing to plan for long-term, systemic improvements.