



Fresno Unified School District Commission on School Safety

Report and Recommendations

June 13, 2007

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FUSD CORE BELIEFS

Student Learning

Every student can and must learn at grade level and beyond

High Quality Instruction

Teachers must demonstrate the ability and desire to educate each child at a high level

Leadership

Leaders must perform courageously and ethically to accomplish stated goals

Safety

A safe learning and working environment is crucial to student learning

Culture

Fresno Unified is a place where:

- Diversity is valued
- Educational excellence and equity are expected
- Individual responsibility and participation by all is required
- Collaborative adult relationships are essential
- Parents, students and the community as a whole are vital partners

June 13, 2007

To: Michael Hanson, Superintendent

From: The Fresno Unified School District Commission on School Safety

Subject: The Commission Study and Recommendations on School Safety

This letter introduces our report and recommendations to Fresno Unified School District on the very important issue of school safety. The members of the commission are not just members of the community, but also experts in the field of safety and security (our bios are included at the end of the report). Because we care about the students of Fresno and the Fresno Community, we accepted the responsibility of working together on behalf of our schools.

The Commission began our work on March 28, 2007, with a deadline to complete our work by the 1st of June. We met with students, teachers, classified staff, parents, and community members at more than 30 meetings. We went to elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, and other schools throughout the district. We collected hundreds of pages of information during these meetings and also reviewed surveys and operational data from the district.

The major reason for the intensity of the schedule, which involved as many as five meetings in a single day, was to get stakeholder feedback, review best practices (inside and outside the district), and review school safety surveys, in time for district budget deliberations for the 2007/2008 school year. These recommendations are presented to you today so you may begin to implement them during the summer of 2007.

More than anything we learned that there are many examples of safe schools and effective programs. However, there is a clear need for consistent application of behavioral guidelines for students and a standardization of safety equipment and policies throughout the district to improve safety.

The Commission members recognize that many of our recommendations are long-term projects deeply rooted within the organizational culture of Fresno Unified, but there are also a number of short term items that are in process or can be implemented quickly that would make an immediate and important impact to improve personal safety and facility security in Fresno schools.

We offer the following report for your immediate consideration.

James E. Aldredge Ph.D.

Chairperson

FUSD Commission on School Safety

This commission was asked to conduct an audit of FUSD schools and to provide recommendations to the Fresno Unified School District to improve school safety. To accomplish this goal, Commissioners listened to constituents, conducted site visits, reviewed survey results and analyzed previous safety audits.

The Commission met with students, teachers, classified staff, parents, and community members at more than 30 meetings including four open-community meetings at Bullard, Edison, Hoover, and Roosevelt High Schools.

Students at middle schools and high schools shared their insights with us about school safety; explained how rules were not consistently enforced by adults on campus; told us that it was easy to break rules; and shared that they generally felt safe at school. Parents and other family members expressed concerns about school safety, identified needs for clear communication, identified programs that have worked well, and made requests for the district to remove the worst behaving students from school. Teachers and classified staff described school practices that have increased school safety and security, identified equipment needs, expressed concern about student misbehavior, and asked for more consistent punishments for misbehaving students.

The Commission also met with maintenance supervisors, principals, parents of Special Education Students and leaders from the classified employee unions (Fresno Teachers Association leaders did not accept our invitation to share suggestions to improve school safety). These groups identified needed improvements in equipment, training, communication, and operational support to improve school safety and facility security.

Along with many conversations with students and adults, Commissioners conducted site visits to review facility security and reviewed safety and security data. During these visits, Commissioners observed a fire drill; spoke to front office staff about safety protocols, examined gates and fences, and gathered other important information.

Commissioners reviewed results from the California Healthy Kids Survey, an FUSD Parent/Family Survey, and an FUSD Staff Survey. This data tells us that nearly all elementary students believe their school is safe, while only half of middle and high school students feel school is safe. Seventy-four percent of high school parents, 84% of middle school parents, and 90% of elementary school parents perceive schools as safe. Finally, 80% of high school staff, 77% of middle school staff, and 86% of elementary school staff perceive schools as safe.

A closer look at the California Healthy Kids Survey shows that students in middle and high schools seem most concerned about demeaning comments made at school; mean rumors or lies spread at school; and seeing guns, knives, or other weapons at school. We were also concerned when many students told us that they would not turn in another student for having a weapon because of fear of retaliation.

Similar to students, staff identified bullying, obscene language, and disrespect as three issues which occur most frequently at their schools. They also identified the need for more resources such as crisis response teams, multi-disciplinary teams, behavioral support specialists, and social skills training to improve student behaviors.

The parent survey data showed that 88% of parents believe that “this school provides a safe and secure environment for students to learn,” and 86% agreed that, “information I receive from this school is easy to understand and helpful.” Additionally, 37% of parents stated that their complaints were not dealt with fairly and openly at their school.

Based on our meetings with teachers and classified staff members, it appears that many of them are frustrated by student misbehavior as well as what they perceive to be a lack of administrator follow-through in enforcing behavior policies. Many staff members requested extra support at school to manage student behavior such as more Campus Assistants or stricter policy enforcement. We fully support the need for security personnel and behavior specialists to support students. We also support the need to standardize student conduct policies and consistently enforce those policies. However, we also believe that teachers and staff who work directly with students must see themselves as having the most important role in establishing the culture of civility, respect, and appropriate student behavior.

Recommendations

Fresno Unified School District needs to centralize and standardize safety and security management, policies, procedures, equipment and training. Teachers and other school staff need to provide support to students to behave appropriately and also enforce rules in a consistent and fair manner. Teachers and other school staff need to be prepared to support students, to consistently enforce student conduct policies, and to be accountable for that enforcement.

Under the umbrella of this primary recommendation, the findings of the Commission cluster into four areas: organizational support; facilities and equipment; student, teacher, and staff support; and community partnerships. Nine recommendations within these four areas are briefly presented on this page, and then explained in detail on the following pages:

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

- Create a clear chain of accountability for safety and security
- Establish centralized budget procedures for all safety and security expenditures

FACILITIES and EQUIPMENT

- Secure all schools to protect students and staff from external threats
- Provide standard and effective safety equipment

STUDENT, TEACHER, and STAFF SUPPORT

- Develop positive school climates and interventions to increase appropriate student behavior
- Develop and apply clearly defined and articulated guidelines for appropriate student behavior

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- Develop and maintain effective partnerships and open communication with students' families
- Revisit and strengthen partnerships with municipal agencies and community based organizations
- Convene this Commission annually to review the status of school safety in FUSD

Detailed Explanation of Recommendations

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

Create a clear chain of accountability for safety and security

- Create a Security Administrator position: The Commission on School Safety recommends that all aspects of safety and security be centrally coordinated by a single person, reporting directly to the Superintendent. This person should have a strong background in the areas of school security, emergency planning, and emergency response. This person could act as a liaison to police, fire and other municipal agencies; lead district trainings; direct regular simulations and emergency drills; coordinate emergency responses; and act as the district's single point of contact for all safety and security issues.

From an organizational standpoint, the Security Administrator should manage the safety/security budget for the entire district; hire safety staff; and manage the Campus Assistant program. FUSD should also explore the possibility of combining other district functions such as the Emergency Planner position and Risk Management within the Security Administrator's functional area.

- Centralize and restructure Campus Assistant programs: Currently, Campus Assistants (CA) report to site administrators which means that each school has different CA service delivery models. It is important to centralize the CA program under the office of the Security Administrator. Part of the centralization of CA services should focus on raising standards and expectations for the work that Campus Assistants perform at FUSD schools including establishing a clear set of responsibilities and priorities. The number of CAs deployed to schools should depend on the number of students at each school.
- Develop consistent protocols to protect students and staff beyond the regular school day: Campus Assistants should begin work as soon as staff and students arrive at school and stay until staff and students leave school each day. Custodians and other maintenance personnel who work at night need other measures to ensure their safety.

Establish centralized budget procedures for all safety and security expenditures

A centralized budget should be established to pay for safety/security equipment, training, and other needs for all FUSD schools to ensure minimum standards are met. This budget should be sustained regardless of grant funding. The Security Administrator should manage this budget, and should also be responsible for soliciting site needs throughout the district. District purchasing processes should be adhered to, but some flexibility should exist to allow administrators to quickly order equipment that is urgently needed at school.

FACILITIES and EQUIPMENT

Secure all schools to protect students and staff from external threats

- Establish a single student identification and visitor badge system for all schools: Every FUSD middle and high school student needs a student ID that is carried at all times at school or school-related functions. Currently, there is no district-wide identification system used in FUSD schools. Additionally, it is critical that the district deploy a standard visitor check-in and identification system for all sites.
- Establish a single point of entry for schools, and secure all gates during school hours: Safety cannot be separated from facility security. Every school should be kept locked during the school day to ensure that only people who are supposed to be at that school can get onto that school campus. One of the most effective ways to achieve this is to maintain a single entrance to each school, preferably through the school office.
- Consistently enforce the district policy that all gates are locked during school hours: When gates and fences are unlocked by maintenance staff and delivery personnel they need to be locked immediately.
- Provide all classrooms with some method of viewing the area immediately outside their classroom door: Many teachers requested that their classroom doors have windows or peep-holes so they could safely view adults and children on the other side of the door.
- Continue to install classroom door locks that can be secured from the inside

Provide standard and effective equipment

- Provide all schools with effective communication tools: One of the most common recommendations made by school site staff is to have effective communication tools for all staff. Many schools have walkie-talkies, but there does not appear to be any standard device used throughout the district. It is critical for staff, especially those who patrol school parking lots, fields, and buildings to communicate with each other and site administrators. A standard district communication device should be purchased by the district and distributed to every site. Depending on the size of the school and number of staff, we project that schools will require between 10 and 25 radio devices.
- Research the most effective use of safety cameras for schools: Utilize safety cameras with night-vision and pan-and-tilt capabilities. Implement web-based systems to enable district leaders and first responders (police and fire) to view school cameras from any location. Explore the possibility of partnering with local safety equipment companies to provide state-of-the-art technology for schools.

- Establish a Central Emergency Operations Center to support all schools during emergencies. The district office on Tulare Street is the hub of district operations and should be outfitted with appropriate technology for district administrators to effectively monitor sites during emergencies and provide leadership to those sites.
- Explore new technologies such as text messaging, the internet, and email as tools for students and staff to share emerging safety issues
- Explore the possibility of reducing overcrowding on school buses: Student transportation is another important area of concern. The Commission heard from some students and their families that overcrowded buses lead to bullying and unsafe conditions for students. While some people recommend placing cameras on busses, the Commission believes that a more proactive approach would be to reduce overcrowding.
- Standardize safety equipment for all schools including: emergency kits with food, water and other essentials; traffic safety equipment such as traffic cones, speed bumps, and traffic signs; golf carts; and lighting on fields; dedicated phone lines from every classroom to the office for emergencies; and loud speaker systems.

STUDENT, TEACHER, and STAFF SUPPORT

Develop positive school climates and interventions to increase appropriate student behavior

When schools pay attention to campus culture and climate, students not only behave better, but students are also more likely to do well in their classes. Campus culture is created in each classroom, but it also includes character education, diversity training for students and staff, athletics, after school programs, and other activities. It is important to note that the tone for positive behavior is set in the classroom, which means that teachers are the primary cultivators of appropriate student behavior.

- Create a climate of respect and mutual responsibility at all schools: Implement conflict resolution, anger management, crisis prevention training, peer mediation, and restorative justice programs which have the potential to reduce bullying, harassment, fighting, and other negative behaviors. Teach students to behave appropriately through consistent behavioral expectations that are presented in classroom lessons, school assemblies, or one-on-one meetings. Additionally, it is important to reinforce appropriate behavior through positive feedback.
- Train and support teachers and staff to create positive school climates: Teachers need skills which will enable them to build classroom environments in which students behave appropriately. For staff to effectively monitor students before and after school, during recess, passing periods and lunch they need effective communication tools such as radios or walkie-talkies; designated observation “zones”; and possibly golf carts to facilitate movement across large campuses.
- Implement on-campus suspension rooms: Rather than sending students home when suspended, require them to sit in an on-campus suspension room to either do school work or to participate in constructive activities such as restorative justice, and conflict resolution.
- Facilitate safety meetings with all credentialed and classified staff multiple times each year to review and address personal safety and security on campus

Develop and apply clearly defined and articulated guidelines for appropriate student behavior

- Develop, implement and consistently apply a uniform student conduct policy at FUSD schools with clear guidelines for student behavior: While students may not be motivated by the fear of punishment, it is clear that the inconsistent set of policies and inconsistent enforcement of those policies has created confusing settings for our students and allowed unacceptable behavior to be accepted. Teachers and other staff on campus reported that they spend too much of their time dealing with students who misbehave, taking valuable classroom learning time from all students. Many parents were also frustrated by the inconsistent enforcement of student behavior and requested that schools more strictly enforce behavior policies

- Frequently review conduct policies with students and their families: Teachers and classified staff need to be well informed and trained to effectively enforce student behavior policies. Every adult on campus must understand their role in student safety. When the small things are dealt with in a timely and appropriate way, a culture is set that increases appropriate behavior. On the other hand, when school staff avoid dealing with the small things, such as dress code violations, it sets a tone that rules don't need to be followed. A number of FUSD schools already employ this strategy by enforcing policies around gum chewing, running in halls, cell phones, and dress codes from the beginning of the school year. When students know that teachers and adults on campus all have the same expectations and then enforce those expectations consistently, students are much less likely to misbehave or challenge adult authority.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Develop and maintain effective partnerships and open communication with students' families

- Communicate with students' families and involve them in the creation of safe school climates: The Commission heard from many teachers, classified staff, and students' family members about the need to prioritize family involvement as a critical component of school safety. This requires school staff to communicate with families often and to involve families in the creation of positive school culture.
- Establish an effective liaison program between schools and students' families: The Commission also recognizes that not all of our students have families that are engaged in their schooling which necessitates school support systems to provide advocacy on behalf of students.
- Host regularly scheduled community meetings: Listen to students, their families, and members of the community to hear their suggestions and concerns. Some school leaders already host meetings in the mornings or evenings which create welcoming atmospheres for family involvement. The Commission encourages site leaders to continue this practice and to also look for other ways to involve students' families in the development of safe and secure schools.
- Develop an effective communication system to alert staff, students, family members, and the community about emergencies at schools: Some ideas for implementing this include the use of an AM radio station, internet alerts, and telephone calls using the new Teleparent system.
- Provide family education classes to prepare them to support their children and schools
- Continue to implement Family-to-Family programs to build networks of support

Revisit and strengthen partnerships with municipal agencies and community based organizations

- Increase police presence on all middle and high school campuses: School safety can be supported through effective support from the Fresno Police Department. Having assigned police officers at each high school is critical, as well as a consistent schedule to patrol school neighborhoods. Maximize the effectiveness of the Fresno Police Department Sergeant to be assigned to oversee FUSD School Resource Officers. Many staff members suggested that it would also be effective to have police drive by schools during recess and lunch periods to increase their presence.
- Continue service agreements with the Fresno Police Department (especially in relation to School Safety Assessments): One promising program at FUSD middle schools is the STOP (Students Targeted with Opportunities for Prevention)

program, an after-school prevention program that targets middle school students who are at risk of entering the juvenile justice system.

- Expand the presence and function of probation officers to support school staff: Probation officers can work with at-risk students to decrease inappropriate student behavior.
- Engage the assistance of the Fresno County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS): A geographic placement program of DCFS staff throughout FUSD schools could make a direct impact almost immediately. DCFS could also provide clinical mental health programs for FUSD schools.
- Engage the assistance of the Center for Peacemaking and Conflict Studies at Fresno Pacific University to train staff in conflict management and peaceful resolution practices.
- Utilize the support of faith based organizations and school chaplain services.
- Establish networks of support from multiple city and county agencies as well as community based organizations.
- Establish district wide protocols for working with group-home administrators and alternative-care providers to share important information about FUSD students in their care.

Convene the Commission annually to review the status of school safety in FUSD

This audit would enable the district to make use of the professional expertise of the safety commissioners and also create a system for quickly identifying support needs from the multiple organizations represented by the Commission members. An annual audit could be conducted between January and April each year with a summary presentation provided each May.

Indicators of Success

The Commission recognizes that some of these recommendations will be easier to implement than others, and the timelines for implementation will vary for each. To facilitate the implementation of these recommendations, the Commission offers the following “Indicators of Success”:

1. ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

- a. District safety and security functions are centralized
- b. Student behavior guidelines are posted in multiple locations at every school; provided to all families in their home language; reviewed regularly by students and educators; and applied consistently
- c. Decrease in assaultive behaviors on campus

2. FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

- a. Student and visitor identification systems are implemented
- b. School gates remain locked except for the brief periods when vehicles enter or exit
- c. Standard communications tools are deployed at all sites
- d. All classroom doors can be locked from the inside
- e. Emergency Operations Center is equipped and protocols established
- f. Reduced overcrowding on school buses

3. STUDENT, TEACHER, and STAFF SUPPORT

- a. Students can articulate guidelines for appropriate behavior
- b. Reduced number of suspensions and expulsions
- c. Decreased enrollment at alternative education programs such as Phoenix Academy and Teilman Educational Center
- d. Reduction in number of bullying incidents
- e. Increased participation in extra-curricular activities and the expansion of activities for diverse student populations

4. COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- a. Increased family engagement and increased satisfaction with school safety
- b. Increased involvement by municipal and community based organizations at FUSD schools
- c. Increased police and probation officer presence and participation with at-risk students
- d. Increased communication with students’ families and community members

Conclusion

As members of the Fresno community and professionals in policing, emergency services, and human services, we were pleased to volunteer our time for this important work. The members of the Commission on School Safety were pleased to offer their expertise to the district because we live and work in Fresno and we are committed to creating safe and secure schools. Through our work we found that most students, students' families and teachers believe that FUSD schools are safe, but many people also have real concerns about safety at school.

It is clear that the Superintendent and Board of Education care deeply about the safety of FUSD students and staff. We are confident that that district leadership will continue to focus time, money, and resources in improving school safety. Along with this focus, district leaders need to implement less tangible things such as communication and trainings. It is not good enough to simply make policies or provide trainings. It is critical to follow-through to confirm that policies are enforced, that trainings were understood and that information was used.

The creation of a Security Administrator to oversee all safety and security programs is an important step that should be followed to create and enforce the standardization of policies, equipment and programs. Next, students and staff need to be supported to create positive school cultures. Finally, our schools and the district need to develop effective relationships with students' families, municipal agencies, and community based organizations.

The Commission found many places where safety could be improved but also many places where best practices were employed. One of the best examples of school safety was found at an FUSD middle school where students told Safety Commissioners that the school was safe. They explained that fighting is strictly prohibited, and they knew the school's expectations for appropriate behavior because the principal regularly reviews those expectations with students. These students even expressed concern that misbehavior would cause their principal disappointment. This experience highlighted how consistent communication and enforcement of student conduct has created a culture of respect and safety.

The culture of school safety is set each day by the adults on campus. In other words, students will rise to the high expectations of adults or misbehave when low expectations are established. The challenge is that in the absence of shared high expectations by all adults, low expectations are allowed to spread. All administrators, teachers, and site staff must be empowered to OWN the safety of their campus and must be shown how they are a part of making their schools safe.

FUSD Safety Commissioners

Dr. James E. Aldredge, Ph.D.

Commission Chair

Dr. Aldredge is a professor of Political Science and Social Work Education at CSUF and former Fresno City Manager. He currently serves as a member of the Board of Trustees at Fresno Pacific University; member of the Central Valley Health Policy Institute Advisory Council at CSUF; Board of Directors for Kings View Mental Health Systems; Board of Directors Cen-Cal Business Finance Group; and Board of Directors of the KIPP Academy Charter School. He has provided service and leadership to the Fresno region for half a century since graduating from Edison High School as a student athlete.

Tim L. Casagrande

Director, Fresno County Health Services and Manager, Office of Emergency Services

Tim has a degree in Health Science from California State University, Fresno and is licensed by the State of California as a Registered Environmental Health Specialist. He has 30 years of experience in environmental health and hazardous materials response and for the past 15 years he has served as the Director of Environmental Health and Manager of the Office of Emergency Services (Disaster/Homeland Security Preparedness, Response and Recovery) for Fresno County.

Ron Claassen

Director, Center for Peacemaking and Conflict Studies at Fresno Pacific University

Ron Claassen teaches 60% in the MA Peacemaking and Conflict Studies Program and provides community training, consultation, and intervention the other 40%. He is the founder and former director (1982-1999) of the Fresno County Victim Offender Reconciliation Program, the first VORP in California. He is the founder of Discipline that Restores. He has extensive experience in mediation and has trained thousands in restorative justice, conflict resolution and mediation training events. He is the author of numerous articles and training manuals including "Making Things Right" a curriculum for schools co-authored with his wife, Roxanne.

Randall L. Cooper

Director, Fresno City Parks, Recreation & Community Services

In 1975, Randall began his 29 year career with the San Jose Police Department. During his law enforcement career, Randall worked in patrol, parks detail, robbery, auto theft, street narcotics enforcement and undercover narcotics. He also worked extensively with the Community Services Division. In January of 2005, Randall retired from the City of San Jose at the rank of Deputy Police Chief. He then joined the City of Fresno as Director of Parks, Recreation & Community Services

Valerie F. Davis

Clerk, FUSD Board of Education

Valerie Davis has been a Fresno Unified School District Trustee since December, 2004. She is a Fresno native, graduate of Bullard High School, and has been an advocate for

FUSD schools for many years. Prior to serving on the Board of Education, she worked for FUSD for many years as a teacher's aide, music teacher, inter-session kinder/first grade teacher, substitute, and summer school English teacher. She has also served as School Site Council President at Ayer Elementary School, Tehipite Middle School, and Roosevelt High School as well as PTA/Booster President at Ayer, Kings Middle School Canyon, Tehipite and Roosevelt.

Gordon R. Donoho

Senior Director, One by One Leadership

Dr. Gordon Donoho, a Senior Director at One by One leadership, has been actively involved on a local and global setting connecting people and resources to see personal and community transformation through asset-based collaboration since 1978. He has several grandchildren who attend Fresno schools.

Jordan Duzi

Senior, Sunnyside High School

Jordan is the Sunnyside USB (United Student Body) President. She has also served as a member of the FUSD Student Advisory Board during the 2006-2007 school year. This year she graduates from Sunnyside and will be attending the University of California, Berkeley to study Mass Communications and History with a minor in Philosophy. Her perspective as a student leader was invaluable to the Commission on School Safety.

Jerry P. Dyer

Chief of Police, Fresno Police Department

Chief Jerry Dyer has served the Fresno Police Department for twenty-seven years and has been Chief of Police for 6 years. Chief Dyer has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminology from California State University Fresno; a Master's Degree in Management from California Polytechnic University at Pomona; and he is a graduate of the California Command College. In 2005, Chief Dyer was awarded the prestigious "Excellence in Public Service Award" by the Fresno Business Council. Chief Dyer serves as the 2nd Vice President of the California Police Chief's Association and will assume the role of President in 2008.

Catherine Huerta

Interim Director, Fresno County Department of Children and Family Service

Catherine Huerta currently serves Fresno County as the Interim Director of the Department of Children and Family Services. She is committed to ensuring that all children have the opportunity to grow up in a safe, secure, stable and healthy environment. Cathi has been a Fresno County employee for 32 years with 24 years in a senior management capacity. In 1998, Cathi became Assistant Director over the Department of Children and Family Services. She has a Masters of Social Work from California State University, Fresno.

David Huerta

Chief, California State University Police Department

David Huerta is a 32-year veteran of law enforcement and has been Chief of Police at the CSUF Police Department since 2004. Chief Huerta oversees an agency of 17 sworn

officers and over 50 civilian staff. He has a master's degree in criminology from Fresno State (1992) and a bachelor's degree in organizational behavior from the University of San Francisco (1989). He began his career in 1973 as Fresno County Sheriff deputy and has worked as a SWAT commander, area commander, assistant bureau commander and lieutenant.

Sharon Martinez

Emergency Services Director, American Red Cross-Fresno/Madera Counties Chapter

Sharon began working for the American Red Cross Fresno-Madera Chapter in 1989 as an after-hours consultant sending emergency messages from family members to the Soldiers in the Armed Forces. She was also asked to work part time as a case worker at the Chapter for the Disaster Services Department. After two years she began working full time in the office for The Armed Forces, International Services and Disaster Services. Four years later she became the Coordinator of Disaster Services, and then in 1997 she became the Emergency Services Director.

Robert Nevarez

Deputy Chief, Fresno Police Department

Robert is a 21 year veteran with Fresno Police Department. For the past three years he has managed the patrol division, composed of over 500 sworn and non-sworn officers. He holds a Bachelors in Criminology from Fresno State University and a Masters in Public Administration from National University. Chief Nevarez is also a graduate from Command College. He created the Fresno Police Department's Employee Intervention Program that identifies potential employee problems and assists members in addressing them at their root cause. Currently, he teaches classes on stress management for Avante Healthcare.

Linda Penner

Chief Probation Officer, Fresno County

Linda Penner was appointed Chief Probation Officer of Fresno County on April 2005 where she manages the Juvenile Hall and Elkhorn Juvenile Boot Camp, provides probation services to the Superior Court, and offers assistance to victims and witnesses of crimes. She began her career with the Probation Department in 1977 as a Victim/Witness Advocate and became a Deputy Probation Officer in 1981. Linda has been an active participant in numerous civic organizations and was recognized for her outstanding service to the community, both professionally and personally, as one of Fresno County's 10 Business Women of the Year in 2004. Additionally, she is on the faculty of the National Drug Court Institute.

Ron Richardson

Chaplain, Chaplain Services International

Ron Richardson is a chaplain for the Fresno County Sheriff's Office. He supports law enforcement agencies, schools and businesses with crisis intervention counseling. He also serves as a member of the Fresno Citizen Corps, a Homeland Security program for disaster preparation and response. He has extensive training and experience in critical incident stress management with a special focus on mass disasters and terrorism. He is a board certified expert in traumatic stress; a Fellow with the American Academy of

Experts in Traumatic Stress; an approved trainer for International Critical Incident Stress Foundation for crisis intervention training; and is a Thought Field Therapy practitioner.

Ellen Schneider

Chief Executive Officer, American Red Cross-Fresno/Madera Counties Chapter

Ellen Schneider is a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley and has lived in Fresno for the last 25 years. Since July 2004 she has led the American Red Cross Fresno Madera Counties Chapter as the Chief Executive Officer. Previously, she was a Vice President of Merchandise Control for Gottschalks and involved in strategic business planning for Community Medical Center.

Rainer F. Streib

Coordinator, Office of Emergency Services Coordinator, City of Fresno

Rainer Streib is the first full time Emergency Coordinator, hired in April 2001. He is responsible for maintaining the City's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), training city staff on emergency response protocols, conducting exercises to improve response capabilities for city departments to a large emergency/disaster, developing community relationships to enhance emergency/disaster response, and maintaining the City of Fresno Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Rainer is a retired US Naval officer, Helicopter Rescue Swimmer and member of the Navy Search and Rescue team.