



May 24, 2022

Superintendent's Message: Campus Safety

Dear Parents, Guardians, Staff and Community Members,

Sadly, we have learned of another horrific school shooting, this time in the Uvalde, Texas area. Our hearts and thoughts go out to the families and staff of Robb Elementary School.

We understand that school safety is on the minds of students, parents, staff and community members. It is on our minds, as well.

In this case, law enforcement believes the gunman is a high school student or graduate who entered the campus. In SMMUSD we have worked and continue to work to harden the perimeters and entrances to elementary school campuses. By creating better defenses, we reduce the potential threat.

For middle and high school, there have been incidents where threats come from inside, by a student attending the school. Secondary schools require a different approach that predominantly focuses on reducing the threat through interventions prior to the person entering with a weapon.

As with every other school shooting, Columbine, Sandy Hook and too many more, we will study what happened and strengthen our best practices to reduce threats.

We have safety plans in place at each of our schools that we consistently review, evaluate and practice. You can find our [general safety plan](#) online. Each school plan is customized and updated annually. You may make an appointment with your school office to review your school's plan.

Santa Monica Police Department will be adding additional patrols to the schools both before, during and after school to provide a sense of security to our community. Additionally, we meet regularly with our local law enforcement officials, both the Santa Monica Police Department and the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, serving Malibu. These meetings include other city authorities and will focus on reviewing our current safety plans and discussing additional preventive and proactive measures that may be taken to better protect our students and staff from acts of violence.

We regularly review our threat assessment protocols with our staff and local mental health professional partners. We continue to encourage staff, students, and community members that if they "See something, Say Something." Additionally, reporting concerns to school staff, calling 911, and/or utilizing [WETIP](#) is strongly encouraged.

Student and staff safety are our top priorities. It is our goal to engage students in schools that are safe, well-maintained and family friendly.

Here are three resources that may be helpful to you and your family during times of school tragedies:

- National Association of School Psychologists: [Talking to Children About Violence: Tips for Parents and Teachers](#)
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network: [Parent Guidelines for helping youth after a shooting](#)
- Common Sense Media: [How to Talk to Kids About Violence, Crime and War](#)

Please continue to take care of yourselves and each other.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ben Drati, Superintendent