

# **WACO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**Safety & Security Audit**

**Confidential Report**

**[In Accordance with Texas Education Code § 37.108(B)]**

## **DISTRICT SUMMARY EXECUTIVE REPORT**

**Dr. Bonny Cain  
Superintendent**

**Audit Conducted  
Reporting Year  
2016-2017**

# **DISCLAIMER**

This security audit report is developed from the observations of the security audit team at the time of the audit site visits, statements and representations made by school employees, and documents gathered and examined as a part of the security audit process. Consequently, the findings and recommendations of this report are relevant only to those observations, representations, and/or examinations made by the security audit team at that particular time. Therefore, all information provided by school district employees has been accepted as factual, unless contrarily observed during the audit site visit and/or within provided documents. This report is intended only for the use of the school district to assist in compliance with the provisions of TEC § 37.108(b).

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This District Summary Report for the State of Texas required Safety and Security Audit, is prepared in accordance with the requirements established in Texas Education Code, § 37.108(b). This summary report is a companion report to the individual campus/facility reports that have been developed from 1) observations, 2) interviews, and 3) from district provided information. This District Report seeks to summarize the overall security and audit process for Waco ISD, and includes the following.

Section 1. Introduction

Section 2. Audit Elements

Section 3. Summary of Key District-wide Findings (Recommendations and Commendations Section)

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# I. Introduction

The primary goal of a school is to provide a quality education to the children within the district's charge. To achieve this goal, the learning environment must be a safe and secure place, and perceived as such by the students, staff, and parents. Without a safe and secure environment, learning is compromised.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Department of Education have established four basic emergency management phases, which all schools should embrace in their effort to achieve a safe and secure learning environment:

- Prevention / Mitigation
- Preparedness
- Response
- Recovery

All emergency management actions taken by a district should fall into one of the four above critical areas. All recommendations made in this report are aimed at strengthening one or more of these four phases. Ultimately, ignoring any one of these phases will adversely impact school operations, and will impact the school's ability to meet their primary objective when emergency events occur. Unplanned emergencies, and the resulting negative consequences of poor planning, have driven some school districts to address these four phases with far greater diligence. As a part of the Prevention/ Mitigation process, it is Waco ISD's intent to effectively evaluate school safety and security environments through this audit process, prior to the occurrence of significant events, to provide a safer, more secure learning environment.

Toward that end and in an effort to comply with Texas Education Code §37.108(b), a safety & security audit of Waco ISD was conducted during the 2016-2017 school year.

The audit included a complete on-site audit at each campus and at each of the support facilities, to include vacant facilities. The checklists established by the Texas School Safety Center (TSSC) were utilized for all assessments. Optional intruder assessments were also conducted at each campus to determine the state of perimeter security and intruder awareness at the campus level.

It should be noted that the safety audit and assessment process is not a maintenance inspection for maintenance issues needing to be addressed. While a hazard may constitute the need for maintenance, not all maintenance issues qualify as hazards. This District Report summarized the more significant audit findings, including recommendations well as commendations. The summary report is provided to assist district management in seeing the larger picture of what the District is doing well and where there is opportunity for more significant improvement in the area of school and support facility safety and security.

## II. Audit Elements

The audit process is composed of multiple elements designed to assess school and facility safety and security against a standardized set of criteria. These criteria were developed by the Texas School Safety Center for use in this assessment process. Each of the audit elements are described in brief detail below. Waco ISD was evaluated against these elements as a part of the 2016-2017 process.

### 1. School/Facility Characteristics and Surrounding Environment

This information describes the type of school, the surrounding environment, and characteristics of the staff and student population. The demographic information is included in Section 1 of each campus report.

### 2. Document Reviews

The following documents were collected, where available, from each facility and were reviewed alongside content with criteria developed by the Texas School Safety Center. Gaps (if any) in documentation are commented on in each of the campus/facility report.

- Campus Emergency Operations Plan
- Floor plan of facility (with key elements identified)
- Site plan of facility (with key features identified)
- Emergency contact lists
- Student Code of Conduct
- Student/Staff ID policy
- Visitor procedures
- Campus discipline referral data

### 3. Audit Checklists

The level of safety and security at each facility was assessed according to the Texas School Safety Center comprehensive audit checklists. The completed checklists were then used to assess the status of safety and security present at the time of the audit.

- School/Instruction (Part I- Policies and Procedures; Part II- Observations)
- Administration
- Transportation
- Maintenance/Warehouse
- Athletic Facilities

Each audit checklist contains items specific to that facility, beginning with Part I. Policy questions answered by the school and facility administrators were verified by the audit team member prior to the Part II facility observation walkthrough of the facility. The answers to these policy questions are important when observing policy compliance during the physical walkthrough.

The completed individual facility audit checklists are included in each campus/facility report.

As indicated in each facility's checklist, where "YES" responses are indicated on the checklist, the criteria was observed to be present. Sections predominately marked "YES" can be used to develop broader commendations relative to that section being audited. A commendation indicates the school/facility has made safety a priority in this area and previously made plans, improvements, or developed policies and practices to ensure student and

staff safety. Conversely, items marked “NO” need to be considered as possible areas of concern for improvement or for further evaluation by the campus/district.

The audit team members attempted to determine the following:

- Does the data indicate a need for this criterion to be placed at the school facility?
- Is this criterion considered a best practice in school or facility safety and security?
- Is this criterion already in process on the campus or facility?
- Will the addition of the criterion make the school or facility a substantially safer, more secure place?

The audit team has also attempted to prioritize the needs of the facility when making recommendations for improving facility safety and security. A cost/benefit analysis may have been taken into account in deciding what recommendations may be made to improve an area of concern.

#### **4. Intruder Assessment**

One member of the audit team, whose identity was unknown to the school at the time, was charged with task of attempting to gain access to each campus through an unlocked and/or unlatched exterior door, other than the main entrance. The purpose of this activity is to determine the state of perimeter security and intruder awareness at the campus level. Waco ISD chose to take the intruder assessment one step further for this audit session. If entry could not be gained other than the front door, the audit team member intruder was tasked with attempting to gain access into the school under false pretences. The results of these efforts can be seen at the end of each campus report.

### **III. Summary of District Key Recommendations and Commendations**

This section includes key findings that the District should be aware were discovered in the course of the audit process. In addition to audit findings for this audit session, the past audit session (2013-2014) findings were also reviewed for any hazards not addressed. In the event that hazards were not addressed, those hazards were again recorded on this session’s report. The findings listed below include some key recommendations to consider for correction. Additionally, the audit team has developed a listing of items referred to as key commendations, which across the district, were perceived as strengths and worthy of mention.

#### **1. Key Commendations (District-Wide):**

- The maintenance department succeeded in addressing 98.9% of all hazards recorded in the 2010 audit session.
- The maintenance department succeeded in addressing 94.6% of all hazards recorded in the 2013 audit session.
- The District installed the COPsync 911 system which serves as the District’s central reporting anti-intruder notification system.
- Point of entry security barriers are being installed to better control access.
- The District’s Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) contains most recommended components.
- A reunification plan was developed and implemented into each individual campus emergency operations plan.

- Campus emergency operations plans now contain procedures for persons with limited mobility and special health needs.
- Campus emergency operations plans now contain a post incident reunification plan.
- School-based law enforcement is active throughout the campuses.
- All school zones speed signs were inspected for time accuracy and are synchronized.
- All campuses now have a representative on the Student Health Advisory Council.
- Administrators, teachers and other staff members receive annual training in conflict resolution, problem solving skills, and bullying prevention.
- All campuses now have a defined drop-off/pick-up point for buses, car riders and walkers.
- The district student code of conduct is reviewed and updated annually.

## **2. Key Recommendations (District-Wide):**

- Key staff on some campus have not been trained in the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the Incident Command System (ICS). It is recommended all key staff be trained in each.
- Exterior doors for most campus buildings are not systematically numbered on the outside and inside. It is recommended each exterior door at each building be systematically numbered.
- Most electrical boxes and control panels on campuses were obstructed by storage materials. It is recommended that custodial staff receive safety training on proper storage methods.
- Not all fire extinguishers / fire suppressions systems are inspected and/or up to date on all district campuses and facilities. It is recommended that all fire extinguishers / fire suppression systems are listed and tasked to be inspected annually.
- Although the campus emergency operations plan contains most recommended components, it is recommended to develop a plan for sustaining occupants for 72 hours during an emergency and developing a train derailment plan for those campuses located within 1,000 yards of a railroad.
- Although most schools were successful with perimeter security during intruder assessments, many intruders were able to still access the campus through unlocked/propped open doors and/or by asking students to let them have entry. It is recommended that staff and students receive additional training in additional safeguards.
- Although the amount of campuses receiving surveillance cameras has increased, surveillance cameras are not used at all district schools and facilities. It is recommended that each campus and facility have surveillance cameras.

Additional findings and comments are provided in each campus / facility audit report.

## **IV. Next Steps**

Waco ISD's next steps are to:

- Report the results of the security audit to the Texas School Safety Center (at the time and in the manner prescribed by the TXSSC);
- Discuss the relevant safety audit with the campus principal/facility administrator.
- Conduct an annual review of the security audit report to monitor the ongoing progress of recommendations set forth in the report and to identify and additional needs or safety concerns developed since the audit was conducted.

## **V. Frequently Asked Questions about the Texas Education Code 37.108 (Provided by the Texas School Safety Center (TXSSC), 2009)**

### ***What is the school's responsibility for being in compliance with TEC 37.108?***

- (a) The District is responsible for the implementation of a security audit as required by Subsection (b).
- (b) At least once every three years, a school district shall conduct a security audit of the district's facilities. To the extent possible, a District shall follow security audit procedure developed by the Texas School Safety Center or a comparable public or private entity.
- (c) A school district shall report the results of the security audit conducted under Subsection (b) to the District's Board of Trustees and, in the manner required by the Texas School Safety Center, to the Texas School Safety Center.

### ***What is the responsibility of district facilities during the three- year interim between audits?***

It is recommended the building/facility administrator, in consultation with an audit team representative, conduct an annual review of the audit report. The intent of the annual review is to monitor ongoing progress of recommendations set forth in the report and to identify and additional needs or safety concerns developed since the audit was conducted.

## **VI. Conclusion**

As required by TEC 37.108, a safety and security audit of the Waco Independent School District has been conducted and completed. The safety audit revealed ways that Waco ISD can enhance safety measures and eliminate hazards. Some of the improvements suggested could be implemented immediately such as increased vigilance throughout the school, inspections of safety devices, and the inspection of grounds on a daily basis for any new hazards. Some of the improvements, such as emergency management training and the addition of signage, can be implemented with the expenditure of a modest amount of funding. Other improvements, such as protecting exposed entry points to campuses and installing security cameras at every facility will be more costly. However all should be considered for the safety of the District. As such, prioritizing hazards with costly expenditures is recommended.

As members of the emergency management team for the District, the Waco ISD Police Department will be committed to immediately address all the hazards contained within this report. Some campuses have already addressed one hundred percent of the hazards identified. Others, due to the cost factors involved, will take more time. It is expected, prior to the next audit session, that Waco ISD will work diligently to address the hazards contained within this report in the effort to be a safe and secure school district.

For the Audit Team:

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