

## LUSD plans its very first Full-Scale Safety Exercise

**Dear Lammersville Unified School District Parents,**

As a parent, knowing that your child is safe at school is extremely important. A couple of important safety related questions parents need answers to are: What are the safety plans at the school sites? What reunification process the school sites follow during emergencies?



Schools in Lammersville Unified School District (LUSD) constantly review and revise plans for emergencies. Safety is a top priority in Lammersville Unified School District! According the US Department of Education, Emergency Response and Crisis Management (ERCM) Technical Assistance Center, simulations of emergency situations, or emergency exercises, are integral to a sound school safety plan. They offer opportunities for districts and schools to examine and strengthen their capacities for responding to various emergencies. By participating in different types of exercises, schools can then identify the appropriate methods for preventing, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from crises. These exercises also may expose the limitations of existing plans, such as procedural gaps or training needs. By encouraging all response partners (e.g., officials in the public health, mental health, fire and law enforcement communities) to participate, schools and districts can assess the roles, responsibilities, relationships, communication strategies, and resources that would be critical should an actual crisis occur.

Per ERCM, school districts need to conduct five main types of exercises for emergency response training and practice- Orientation, Drills, Table Top, Functional, and Full-Scale Exercises. Drills are an important first step in keeping schools safe and secure. They are filled with teachable moments and they are as important to schools as reading, writing and arithmetic. The purpose of drills is to save lives and property. It is important to have full scale exercises occasionally along with the usual drill and table top exercises.

An Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) is only as good as the ability of students, faculty, and staff to execute it. When everyone at the campus regularly practices the plan, school personnel are more confident in making decisions to effectively and efficiently manage an emergency or major event. With good training and practice, everyone involved will be better able to react appropriately to emergency events. The safety and security of students and staff depends upon everyone knowing,



to the extent possible, what to do when an actual incident occurs. Minutes or even seconds often can make a critical difference in saving lives. Conducting drills strengthens schools as learning organizations by empowering and creating a culture of preparedness. Drills allow administrators, staff, and students to better prevent, mitigate, prepare for and recover from a variety of incidents.

In Lammersville Unified School District (LUSD), First four of types of the exercises have been commonly used. So far there has not been a Full-Scale Exercise in LUSD and there is certainly a need to put the district and school safety plans into practice. Full-scale exercises evaluate the operational capability of emergency management systems in a highly stressful environment that simulates actual conditions. Full-scale exercises test and evaluate most functions of the emergency response-operational plan, including the mobilization of emergency personnel, equipment and resources. To design and conduct full-scale exercises, districts collaborate with local public safety agencies. Administrators choose a scenario that is most likely to occur in the community and thereby involve all community stakeholders. Facilitators conduct a post incident critique and develop an after-action report to identify issues for correction.

LUSD safety committee has been working on planning a full scale exercise since the early 2015. LUSD Safety committee is comprised of school and district level administrators, teachers, classified staff, parents, and law enforcement agencies. Committee members meet once a month and help plan and review the safety plans and safety needs at the school sites. One of the responsibilities of the safety committee is to ensure staff training and practice of the safety plans.

LUSD plans to conduct its very first Full Scale Exercise on **Wednesday, March 16, 2016 at Mountain House High School**. Eventually other schools will also conduct such exercises to prepare their staff, students, and parents in case of an emergency. Along with preparing the staff and practicing the safety protocols, the goal of this exercise is also to test the parent communication systems and educate parents of the emergency procedures, specifically Reunification Process. LUSD Safety Committee and MHHS Administration will share specific information with the high school parents regarding the scenario. They will provide information about communications before, during, and after the Full-Scale Exercise, traffic rerouting, and reunification procedures. LUSD Safety Committee looks forward to going through this challenging and a great learning experience to prepare our students, staff, and parents for possible future emergencies! More information and details on its way!!!