



RESCUE UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

"Educating for the Future Together"

2390 Bass Lake Road • Rescue, CA 95672

(530) 677-4461 • FAX (530) 677-0719

www.rescueusd.org

August 2024

Dear Rescue Staff and Families,

Welcome to the 2024-2025 school year! Your child's safety is of utmost importance in Rescue USD. I wanted to provide you with an update related to the safety measures and preventative steps we have in place, and have recently implemented, to help ensure that our students, staff, and community are safe and secure while on our campuses. After attending many training sessions and consulting with the Office of Emergency Services (OES), the El Dorado County Sheriff's Office, and a security expert, I have categorized these as follows: **Deter, Detect, Delay and Defend**. Note: Some safety measures and preventative steps fit into more than one category, and I have noted that when applicable.

Deter

License Plate Readers Pilot (LPR's)

In the fall of 2022, Rescue USD partnered with Odin Industries to pilot the use of License Plate Readers (LPR's) on all of our campuses. These LPR cameras automatically capture and read every license plate that enters onto all of our campuses on a 24/7 schedule. When our LPR's capture an image of a license plate, it processes the image and compares it against a national database of vehicles that have been flagged for law enforcement purposes in a matter of seconds. The system alerts local law enforcement officers when a match is found, allowing them to take swift action. We will be evaluating this tool this fall to determine next steps. (Also applies to Detect section)

Phone Lockdown Button

This summer we installed new phones in every office and classroom in the district. These phones will allow office and administrative staff to press a "lockdown button" that allows for immediate notification to the entire campus and district senior leadership in the event of a threat on our campuses. (Also applies to Delay section)

Cameras

We currently have 131 security cameras district-wide at our school sites. (Also applies to Detect section)

Bus Rider Tracking Software

On March 21, 2023, the Rescue USD School Board unanimously voted to purchase and install software on every Rescue USD school bus that allows school staff, and eventually parents, to track their child's entry and exit from our school buses on a daily basis and during field trips. In the 2023-2024 school year we installed the hardware and software on all of our buses and we trained staff in the Spring of 2024. We are refining protocols and our software and we anticipate we will go live with this safety feature in October of 2024. (Also applies to Detect section)

Bus Rider Tracking Software

We have installed onboard interior cameras in all of our vehicles/buses that transport students.

School Safety Plans

Every fall, each site convenes their School Safety Committee and updates their school safety plans with guidance and technical assistance from our law enforcement partners. These plans are intended to ensure our safety and incorporate lessons learned from local and national events. Site staff are aware of the safety plans for their particular site. (Also applies to all other sections)

Shelter-In-Place Drills

Each year, our students and staff practice “Shelter-in-Place Drills” (sometimes referred to as Lockdown Drills). These drills are often conducted at a variety of times during the day (during classes, passing periods and lunches) to ensure we are replicating and practicing for a potential real-world situation. (Also applies to Delay and Defend section)

Internet Safety HUB

We have partnered with Linewize, a leading global provider of online safety products and education, to create an educational hub for parents and teachers. This hub includes articles, videos, courses, and more, to ensure you know how to keep your kids safe while online. You can find this information on our website under the Technology tab or by clicking [here](#). (Also applies to Detect section)

Cybersecurity

The ultimate goal of our cybersecurity efforts is to protect our information from being stolen or compromised. Our secondary goal in cybersecurity is to reduce the risk of any unauthorized access to our system. To achieve this we strive to focus on 4 fundamental tasks:

1. Protecting the Confidentiality of data
2. Preserving the Integrity of data
3. Restricting the Availability of data only to authorized users
4. Training (Our Director of Technology is a leader in the county in this space).

(Also applies to Detect section)

Detect

Staff Handheld Walkie-Talkies

Beginning in the 2024-2025 school year, every classroom and office on every campus will have a new handheld walkie-talkie allowing them to communicate important information with all staff and first responders from any location on the campus. (Also applies to Delay and Defend section)

Threat Assessment Training

On March 23, 2023, Rescue USD sent a team (Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, Directors and school site Principals) to the El Dorado County Threat Assessment Training entitled “Building and Operating a School Threat Assessment Program.” This program was intended to assist our Rescue USD staff to implement a systemic process that is designed to:

- Identify person(s)/situation(s) of concern.
- Gather information/investigate.
- Assess the person/situation.
- Manage the person/situation.

(Also applies to all sections)

WE TIP (If You See Something, Say Something®)

We all have something worth protecting - a "why" that unifies our community. For each of us reading this message, our “why” are all of our Rescue USD children and staff. There is overwhelming evidence that those who commit violence at schools don’t “just snap.” Instead, there is a “pathway to violence.” They develop an idea, plan, prepare, often share their plan on social media, make comments to friends, and eventually act. Informed and alert communities play a critical role in keeping our schools safe. Thank you for staying connected with your students and encouraging them to share anything that concerns them. Our [WeTip.com](https://www.wetip.com) website and phone number is a safe and anonymous method to report bullying, harassment, threats or other concerns. In short, **“If You See Something, Say Something®”**

[WeTip.COM](https://www.wetip.com)

or

1-800-78-CRIME (27463)

As of April 2023, all students see our WeTip App each time they log into their district account. (Also applies to all sections)

Student and Family Supports

Through agreements with nonprofits and government health agencies, our schools can offer services to help students and families navigate trauma and other challenges.

Full-Time Counselors at Every Site

There are specific credentials required to work in schools, which for counselors, is the Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) credential. Our counselors provide instruction on bullying prevention, suicide prevention, substance abuse, help students with academic progress, and connect with students socially and emotionally.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and Special Programs

Our coordinator provides guidance and direction to support students academically, emotionally, and behaviorally. Our Coordinator also provides training, strategies, and tools for school staff in order to meet individual student's needs. Each site has a Student Success Team that meets to identify students of need (academically, socially, and emotionally), with the intent of providing needed resources and support to identified students and families.

Yard Supervisors

Yard Supervisors provide supervision during recess, lunches, and at crosswalks. They help provide activities for students and connect students with their peers. They are often the first group of people to notice and report concerns. (Also applies to Deter and Defend section)

Mental Health Support

- **School Psychologists** Since the winter of 2022, we have added significant mental health support in Rescue USD. We now have five Psychologists within our district supporting sites in addition to full-time counselors at each of our school sites. Our Psychologists provide Educationally Related Mental Health Services (ERMHS) to students who are assessed with mental health needs.
- **Behaviorists**
We currently employ two Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA) and one Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) within our district behavioral team. Our team supports sites and parents by providing ongoing behavior related training on: proactive behavior intervention strategies, de-escalation techniques, and basic principles of behavior.

District Staff ID Badges

All staff are issued Rescue USD ID Badges. These are intended to allow all staff to quickly identify staff and unauthorized visitors. (Also applies to Deter section)

Guest Badges/Stickers at Each Site

All visitors to all school sites are required to sign-in at the main office and wear a guest badge/sticker while on campus. These are intended to allow all staff to quickly identify authorized visitors and unauthorized visitors. (Also applies to Deter section)

Delay

Door Lock Enhancements

All of our classroom doors lock from the inside. During the 2021-2022 school year, Rescue USD demoed a unique door locking tool that allows anyone in the room to lock the door within seconds. The device was well-received, and we subsequently purchased and deployed enough of these tools for every compatible door in the district. We will continue to explore new and innovative locking products that come to market. (Also applies to Defend section)

Classroom with Office Phones and Emergency Intercoms

Every classroom and office is equipped with a landline phone that can call 911 in an emergency.

Window Blinds and Door Window Blackouts

We continually assess the window blinds in all of our classrooms and offices to ensure that every window has functioning blinds. Additionally, every entrance door to every room has blackout blinds that can be used to cover the door window within seconds.

Safety Communications System

Rescue USD utilizes the [CatapultEMS](#) system. Staff can also use this app to instantly issue a lockdown for the entire site and notify district office personnel who can connect with law enforcement staff.

Defend

Active Violence Training with Office of Emergency Services (OES)

By the fall of 2024, all seven sites will have had Active Violence Training for all site staff conducted by the Office of Emergency Services and the El Dorado County Sheriff's Office. This training focuses on procedures for keeping staff and students safe during an "act of violence" event, as well as other safety measures needed during a disaster. Staff review and analyze the site safety procedures with the OES officer in light of the latest recommendations. District personnel are also present to discuss upcoming safety measures to enhance abilities to communicate and available classroom materials to respond to such events. At the conclusion of the event OES and EDSO staff walk classes, offices and campus spaces with staff to discuss safety considerations. Most Law Enforcement agencies have migrated to a **"Run-Hide-Fight"** model for schools and Rescue USD is adopting this approach. To see what this looks like for our students, please see the end of this document. (Also applies to all other sections)

Incident Command Systems (ICS) Training with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

FEMA provides world-class training and education for the nation's first responders, emergency managers and others. On July 28, 2023, Rescue hosted all district school site principals, vice principals and district leaders for a one-day training with FEMA. At the conclusion of the training, all attendees were ICS certified by FEMA. (Also applies to all other sections)

Partnering with the El Dorado County Sheriff's Office

Rescue USD has a long history of positive partnerships and relationships with the El Dorado Sheriff's Office (EDSO). Currently EDSO assists Rescue USD with:

- Threat assessments as needed
- Home visits as needed
- Site visits and educational programs
- Guidance and technical assistance on our school safety plans (lockdowns, evacuations, active shooter, wildland fires, earthquakes and more)
- Emergency responses as needed

(Also applies to all other sections)

Partnering with our Local Law Enforcement

Rescue USD has a long history of positive partnerships and relationships with many local agencies. In the past few months, Rescue Leadership has attended El Dorado County (EDC) Student Threat Assessments Trainings in collaboration with:

- EDC District Attorney's Office
- EDC Child Protective Services (CPS)
- EDC Health and Human Services
- EDC Office of Education
- EDC Probation Department
- EDC Sheriff Department
- Placerville Police Department
- South Lake Tahoe Police Department

(Also applies to all other sections)

School Resource Officer (SRO)

The El Dorado Sheriff's Office (EDSO) has seven School Resource Officers in the County. We have one of these School Resource Officers dedicated to Rescue USD, and he is able to support any of our sites in an emergency. This officer is armed and has instantaneous access to communicate with local law enforcement officers when needed.

Additionally, EDSO has a SRO that is assigned to support middle schools in the county. This officer regularly visits our two middle schools sites and is available for threat assessments, home visits as needed and emergency responses at any of our sites as needed.

Lastly, we are fortunate that our District is book-ended by two high school sites with full-time EDSO-funded SRO's (Oak Ridge and Ponderosa) who are able to support any of our sites in an emergency. (Also applies to all other sections)

Active Shooter Training

On April 27, 2023, several RUSD site leaders attended Active Shooter Training hosted by Guardian Defense. Guardian Defense is a company located in Boca Raton, Florida, that offers Active Shooter Training for schools, colleges, businesses, places of worship, and law

enforcement agencies across the country. Their programs are intended to transform the way employers and staff respond to an active threat, and are designed to empower staff to act when faced with an active shooter.

Active Shooter Training (now being termed Active Violence Training)

In July of 2022, the El Dorado Sheriff's Office (EDSO) utilized a Rescue USD elementary and a Rescue USD middle school site for their countywide Active Shooter Training. Rescue USD has offered all of our sites to EDSO for future training. Additionally, EDSO has confirmed that they train their officers to take swift, but calculated, individual or coordinated action when arriving on a campus with an active shooter.

Classroom First Aid/Emergency Kits for all Teachers

In August 2023, we deployed new first aid kits for every room on every campus. These are intended to allow staff to address most medical emergencies until medical personnel can arrive on campus. All staff will be trained in the proper use of tourniquets in August of 2024. Every classroom is also equipped with emergency backpacks/bags to support a classroom in the event of an extended lockdown.

Run-Hide-Fight

The federal government and our local Office of Emergency Services and El Dorado County Sheriff have identified **Run-Hide-Fight** as the standard for a school response to acts of violence such as an active shooter. **Run-Hide-Fight training looks and sounds differently depending on the ages of our students.** We encourage all families to have a thoughtful conversation with your student that is aligned with what training they are receiving at their school and in their classroom as listed below.

For Grades TK-3 Run-Hide-Fight is presented as follows:

Our staff do not introduce the topic of active violence in grades TK-3. Instead the focus is on practicing for keeping safe and the examples are typically something like “an unsafe animal or person we need to check for safety” on campus or a “fire”. An emphasis is on being prepared - not scared. All students are taught to follow directions the first time they are given in an emergency situation.

RUN

- Follow your teacher's instructions
- Run to a safe area that the teacher has directed you to run to. This may entail running off campus to a nearby landmark identified by the teacher

HIDE

When directed by your teacher:

- Hide where your teacher tells you to until help arrives
- Remain calm and quiet
- The teacher will lock and barricade the door, turn off lights and close blinds

- Stay in this hidden space until given the all-clear signal

FIGHT

- This topic is not introduced in grades TK-3
- The teacher will fight as a last resort

For Grades 4-8 Run-Hide-Fight is presented as follows:

Our staff do discuss the topic of active violence in grades 4-8, and our practice is through the lens of an active violence event.

RUN

- If it is safe to run away, do so
- If there is an escape route, move quickly to a safe area
- If a staff member is present, follow their instructions
- Escape by exits or windows
- Leave your belongings behind
- Help others escape
- Prevent and warn others along the way about the danger
- Run to any safe area. This may mean running off campus to a nearby home or business
- Call 911 when safe to do so

HIDE

When an attacker is spotted:

- Hide until help arrives
- Lock and/or barricade your door, turn off lights and close blinds
- Silence all electronic devices
- Hide behind large objects
- Remain calm and quiet
- Your hiding place should be out of attackers view, provide protection, not trap or restrict your options
- Stay in the hidden space until given the all-clear signal

FIGHT

- Fight as a last resort
- If approached attempt to incapacitate the attacker
- Improvise to create weapons (if necessary), use any means

In closing, I know that several in our community have asked about installing perimeter fencing on our campuses. Rescue USD has been in communication with the Office of Emergency Services and the El Dorado County Sheriff's Office and both have advised us that perimeter fencing actually creates more of a safety concern than an enhancement. As a result, they have advised all schools in the county to avoid installing perimeter fencing.

Again, please know that student and staff safety is a top priority. We ask for your help in continuing to create safe schools and reporting any concerns. **We will continue to ask our students, staff and families that if they hear something, or know something, to [say something](#) to a school adult or utilize our 24/7 WeTip website or telephone number.**

Take care.



Jim Shoemake
Superintendent



Lisa Donaldson
Assistant Superintendent
Business Services



Dustin Haley
Assistant Superintendent
Curriculum and Instruction

Board of Trustees

Michelle Bebout • Michael Flaherty • Michael Gordon • Jamie Hunter • Kim White