County of Los Angeles
Sheriff's Department Headquarters
4700 Ramona Boulevard
Monterey Park, California 91754-2169

LEROY D. BACA, SHERIFF

March 30, 2011

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

PREVENTION OF CAMPUS VIOLENCE REPORT

This correspondence is in response to your Board's January 18, 2011, motion requesting the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) and directing the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH) to submit a "plan for enhanced violence prevention services to public and private educational institutions throughout Los Angeles County (County)." Your Board's motion also requested information to "address strategies for identifying and accessing additional school violence prevention funding for collaborative programs involving mental health, law enforcement, and educational institutions."

Since 1993, LASD and DMH have successfully collaborated through the Mental Evaluation Team (MET) program. The MET program is a joint response model for crisis intervention involving persons with a mental illness or experiencing an acute emotional crisis. Each team consists of a specially trained deputy sheriff and a DMH clinician. In 2000, LASD and DMH expanded the model and established the Metropolitan Transit Authority - Crisis Response Unit (MTA-CRU), which responds to requests for mental evaluation services, including homeless outreach, within MTA's contracted jurisdiction.

LASD and DMH currently provide the resources necessary to field a total of five MET teams. Two of these teams work from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., the times when schools are generally in session, and three teams work from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. The two additional MTA - CRU teams are available to respond from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. within MTA's contracted jurisdiction. MET teams have been used in the evaluation of individuals at the Los Angeles County Community College (College) District campuses.

A course titled "Targeted School Violence" is facilitated by DMH's Deputy Director Tony Beliz, Ph.D., and is designed to prevent violence and raise awareness about violence-related issues. This course is presented to students, teachers, and other staff members at each of the nine College campuses. Finally, since 1997, the Regional Community Policing Institute – California (RCPI-CA), staffed exclusively by LASD personnel, has partnered with experts and regularly presents training focused on school safety, violence prevention, and threat assessment to law enforcement professionals and educators throughout the County.

LASD policy is being revised to enhance the Department's ability to address threatening situations involving educational institutions that have a heightened level of urgency. This policy revision will address the implementation of local "Threat Assessment Teams" that serve public and private educational institutions. Current Department policy requires individualized emergency response school safety plans for every public and private educational institution within LASD's jurisdiction. When fully implemented, the revised policy will not only establish protocols for these teams, but also require closer communication between Department members and our colleagues in education.

A pilot project has been developed to further enhance our current level of service. This project addresses the growing mental health and violence prevention needs of the colleges. The project, when implemented, will establish six new School Threat Assessment Response Teams (START) dedicated to providing service exclusively to the nine College campuses within the jurisdiction of LASD. These new teams will implement the key components of the START model: Training and Program Consultation, Early Screening and Identification, Assessment, Intervention, and Case Management and Monitoring. Four of the newly established teams would each work at two schools, dividing their time by providing services at one school on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays and at the other location on Tuesdays and Thursdays. A fifth team will be assigned to work full-time at the college that has historically required the greatest level of service. The sixth and final team would consist of supervisory personnel from both LASD and DMH.

This proposal, however, is wholly dependent upon additional funding for implementation. DMH is exploring the possibility of partnering with the College District in applying for the "Statewide Student Mental Health, California Community Colleges" grant through the California Mental Health Service Authority's Request for Application (RFA) process. If successful, the LASD/DMH START program could be implemented in time for the 2011-12 school year.

LASD has identified discretionary and competitive grants from the United States Department of Education in the categories of Integration of Schools and Mental Health Systems, Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools, Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Programs, and Safe Schools, Healthy Students. These

recurring grants are awarded on an annual basis. Request for Proposals for these grants should be published later this year.

For further information about LASD's programs, please contact Homeland Security Division Chief Michael Grossman at (323) 526-5756 or mgrossm@lasd.org.

For further information about DMH's programs, please contact Deputy Director Tony Beliz at (213) 738-4924 or tbeliz@dmh.lacounty.gov.

Sincerely,

LEROY D. BACA
SHERIFF

MARVIN J. SOUTHARD, DSW
DIRECTOR OF MENTAL HEALTH