Los Angeles Unified School District
Office of the Inspector General

Follow-up Audit –
Physical Security of Schools

OA 25-1456
June 24, 2025

Sue Stengel
Inspector General

Los Angeles Unified School District
Office of the Inspector General

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June 24, 2025

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RE: Follow-Up of the School Physical Security Audit

Dear Ms. Torres:

Attached is the final report for the Follow-Up of the School Physical Security Audit.

Please feel free to contact our office if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

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c: Maryhelen Torres
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Attachment

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) conducted a follow-up audit of the Los Angeles Unified School District's (LAUSD) school physical security, revisiting the 24 schools assessed in the initial 2022 audit. The purpose of this audit was to determine 1) the status of the OIG's previous recommendations related to school security, and 2) whether any new issues have arisen since our previous audit affecting school security.

Since the last audit, improvements have been made in various areas of school security.

Perimeter Security:

- All 24 schools are maintaining closed perimeter gates.

- The fencing at all 24 schools is intact. Damage to perimeter fencing, previously identified at five schools, was repaired.

Push Bar Doors:

- Out of the 24 schools, three schools (12%) had chain-locked push bar doors, and 21 schools (88%) did not have this issue. This marks an improvement from the previous audit which identified seven schools as having push bar door issues.

- Two of the three schools with the issue were also identified as having the same issue from the previous audit. One school was newly identified as having this issue.

Alarm Systems:

- One school (4%) had a non-functional alarm system, while the alarms at the other 23 schools were operational.

- The malfunctioning alarm systems identified at the three schools from the previous audit have since been repaired or replaced.

Phone Systems:

- Classroom phone systems are functional at all 24 schools, with the previously identified non-functional phone systems at six schools either repaired or replaced.

- Currently, 21 out of 24 schools (87%) have phone systems that allow direct 911 dialing. However, three schools still lack this capability.

Public Address Systems:

- The public address (PA) system at one school (4%) was non-functional during the current audit. This was a new issue identified at the school. It is scheduled for a replacement by March 2025.

- The two schools identified in the previous audit as having non-functional PA systems now have functional systems.

Surveillance Cameras:

- 10 of the 24 schools (42%) did not have surveillance cameras.

- Installation projects are currently underway at three of the 10 schools without cameras, and contract planning is in progress for three additional schools.

- Three schools (13%) had non-operational cameras.

- 11 schools had surveillance cameras. Surveillance camera coverage has improved—15 schools did not have surveillance cameras during the previous audit.

- As found in the previous audit, none of the schools had staff actively monitoring the surveillance footage during school hours.

Visitor Management:

- The current audit found that eight of the 24 schools (33%) did not have secure entry systems, while 16 schools (67%) had them installed.

- In the previous audit, 17 schools (71%) lacked secure entry systems. Visitor management has improved with the installation of secure entry systems at nine additional schools since the last audit.

Homeless Encampments:

- Eight of the 24 schools (33%) reported homeless encampments nearby.

- The number of schools reporting homeless encampments nearby has decreased from 12 to 8.

- Six schools that previously reported encampments no longer have them, while two schools that did not have encampments at the time of the last audit now report their presence.

Campus Security Concerns:

- Campus security concerns have notably improved, as all 24 schools reported no security concerns related to increased incidents. In the last audit, 18 schools expressed concerns in this area.

We commend the District on the improvements made; however, vulnerabilities remain. The lack of surveillance monitoring, gaps in alarm and PA system functionality, missing secure entry systems, outdated phone systems, and locked push bar doors pose continuing risks to school security. Further action is needed to establish a more comprehensive and reliable security framework across all campuses.

Recommendations:

The Division of School Operations (DSO) should:

1. Ensure all schools comply with fire safety regulations by removing unauthorized locks on push bar doors and strengthening oversight. Recommended actions include enhancing accountability, implementing safer security measures, and increasing training on fire safety and emergency egress.

2. Collaborate with Information Technology Services (ITS) to prioritize and expedite the repair or replacement of malfunctioning alarm systems, ensuring that all affected schools receive necessary upgrades in a timely manner.

3. Collaborate with ITS and ensure the completion of the phone system upgrades at the remaining schools to ensure all classrooms can directly dial 911.

4. Ensure the repair or replacement of malfunctioning alarm PA systems.

5. Assess security needs at schools lacking surveillance cameras and prioritize funding allocations where security concerns are highest. Evaluate cost-effective solutions, such as centralized monitoring or longer footage retention periods, to enhance security without requiring individual schools to assign staff to real-time monitoring.

6. Assess funding opportunities for the installation of secure entry systems at the remaining schools without them and explore interim security measures for schools still awaiting installation to mitigate the risks associated with unauthorized campus access.

7. Continue monitoring and addressing the impact of homeless encampments near school campuses through collaboration with city and county officials.

Summary of District Responses:

The Division of School Operations (DSO) and Information Technology Services (ITS) provided responses to the audit findings and recommendations.

DSO agreed with the audit recommendations and reported that it continues to advise Region Operations teams to reinforce physical security policies during principals' meetings and to provide refresher training on fire safety and emergency egress. DSO also described ongoing efforts to monitor homeless encampments near school campuses, including monthly campus surveys, coordination with municipal programs through the Office of Government Relations (OGR), and weekly meetings with City of Los Angeles Council District offices. In addition, DSO noted that secure entry systems have been installed at all elementary schools, with a new round of installations for secondary schools currently underway.

ITS confirmed that the District has made significant progress in upgrading outdated phone systems, replacing malfunctioning alarm and PA systems, and installing new surveillance cameras. As of June 2025, camera installations have been completed at three of the ten schools identified during the audit as lacking surveillance systems, with construction or planning underway at three additional schools. ITS also reported that the three schools with non-operational cameras during the audit now have fully functional systems. ITS continues to prioritize upgrades at schools with the most critical needs and is working to secure funding for campuses that currently lack surveillance systems.

Both departments expressed their commitment to implementing the audit recommendations and enhancing school security across all campuses.

INTRODUCTION

Maintaining a secure school environment is essential for student and staff safety. In 2022, the OIG conducted an audit of 24 schools and identified vulnerabilities in perimeter security, access control, alarm systems, and emergency communication tools. The audit found that while some security measures were in place, gaps in implementation and compliance with safety protocols required corrective actions. Since the previous audit, DSO has undertaken several initiatives to enhance campus security and address previously identified concerns.

Division of School Operations' Actions Since the Last Audit

Perimeter Gates and Panic Bar Doors:

- DSO presented the audit findings to school administrators and outlined the necessary actions in January 2023 and November 2024, committing to ongoing monitoring of security measures.

- Monthly security meetings are held with the Administrator of Operations, Operations Coordinators, Principals, and Assistant Principals to reinforce policies on campus security, visitor management, and gate-locking protocols.

- Since the start of the 2023 academic year, Campus Aides have received training on security procedures, including the importance of keeping panic bar doors unlocked for emergency exits.

- Principals are required to conduct bi-annual safety inspections under the Injury and Illness Prevention Plan (IIPP), ensuring that perimeter gates are secure and that no hazardous conditions exist on campus.

Homeless Encampments:

- Operations Coordinators conduct monthly assessments to document recreational vehicles and homeless encampments within 500 feet of school campuses, using a dedicated LAUSD tracking platform.

- The DSO actively collaborates with the City of Los Angeles, including Council Districts 1, 8, and 9, in weekly meetings with agencies, including the Los Angeles Police Department, LA Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), School Police, and the Department of Sanitation to coordinate response efforts.

- During the 2024-2025 school year, the Mayor's Office assisted in clearing several encampments through the Care Plus initiative.[1]

- All Operations Coordinators have submitted 311 service calls related to encampments near schools, ensuring concerns are formally documented and addressed.

These efforts reflect proactive steps taken by DSO to improve security measures and mitigate risks identified in the previous audit. This follow-up audit aims to assess the effectiveness of these measures, identify remaining vulnerabilities, and provide further recommendations for enhancing school safety.

SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

The objective of this follow-up audit was to verify whether the safety and security issues identified at 24 schools during a 2022 audit have been addressed and resolved in accordance with the recommendations provided and whether new issues have been identified since that audit.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with *Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS)*. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

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[1] Care Plus is a City of Los Angeles program initiated to clean up homeless encampments in the City of Los Angeles.

METHODOLOGY

To conduct this audit, we revisited the 24 schools assessed in 2022. We inspected security measures, interviewed school administrators and District management, and reviewed maintenance records to verify the resolution of previously identified concerns. The evaluation focused on compliance with security policies, functionality of critical security systems, and any newly emerging risks.

RESULTS OF AUDIT

Below is a summary of our findings regarding the various areas assessed:

Perimeter Security

District Requirements

District Bulletin 6492.2, *Visitors to School Campuses and Locked Campuses During Class Hours at All Schools*, requires school site administrators to ensure that all exterior gates and doors are locked at the start of the school day and remain locked until the end of the day. Only the main entrance should remain open during school hours, and it must be always monitored.

Previous Audit Results

Of the 24 schools visited, 10 schools (42%) did not have locked perimeter gates, and five schools (21%) had damaged fencing with accessible openings, potentially allowing unauthorized access to the campus.

Current Audit Results

During our visit to the 24 schools, we noted the following regarding perimeter security:

Perimeter Gates

- Perimeter gates were closed at all 24 schools.

Fencing

- The fencing at all schools was intact.

Push Bar Doors

District Requirements

LAUSD Safe School Inspection Guidebook requires school staff to ensure that push bar hardware is installed and maintained on main exit doors, or doors must be clearly marked with signage stating, "This Door to Remain Unlocked During Business Hours."

In addition to District guidelines, state and national codes stipulate the following requirements:

- California Code of Regulations, Title 8, Section 3235(e) requires that exit doors be openable from the direction of exit travel without the use of a key or any special knowledge or effort whenever the building is occupied. This provision emphasizes that locking mechanisms, such as chains on push bar doors, are prohibited as they can hinder safe egress during emergencies.

- California Fire Code Section 1010.2.8 outlines specific locking arrangements in educational occupancies, ensuring that doors equipped with panic hardware allow for immediate egress without additional unlocking mechanisms.

Compliance with these regulations is crucial to ensure the safety of students, staff, and visitors by maintaining unobstructed and easily operable exit routes during emergencies.

Previous Audit Results

Seven out of the 24 schools (29%) visited had push bar doors that were chain-locked.

Current Audit Results

During our visit to the 24 schools, we noted the following regarding push bar doors:

- Five of the seven schools (21%) identified in the last audit had resolved the issue.

- Three schools (12%) had push bar doors that were chain-locked, showing improvement from the last audit. Two of these schools had the same issue noted in the previous audit, while this issue was newly identified at one school.
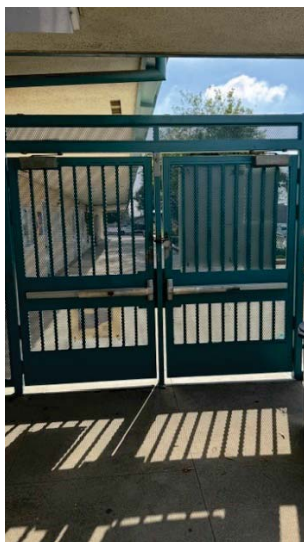
Cause

According to the principals, push bar doors were chain-locked to prevent students from leaving the campus without authorization during school hours.

According to DSO, they have been conducting monthly meetings with school administrators to review campus security policies, during which the importance of keeping panic bar doors unlocked has been clearly communicated to all stakeholders.

However, despite these efforts, some schools have failed to comply with these directives. Two previously identified schools continued to chain-lock push-bar doors, while one additional school was newly identified as engaging in this unsafe practice. This continued non-compliance poses a serious safety risk and violates district policies and state fire safety regulations, necessitating immediate corrective action and increased oversight.

Effect

The continued non-compliance with district directives and fire safety regulations creates significant safety risks by restricting emergency egress. If an emergency, such as a fire or security threat, were to occur, chain-locked push bar doors could delay evacuations, endangering students, staff, and visitors.

Additionally:

- Schools failing to comply with safety codes may be subject to regulatory penalties, citations, or legal liability.

- The lack of adherence despite repeated instructions suggests a gap in accountability and enforcement at the school level, which must be addressed to ensure compliance.

Recommendation No. 1

DSO should promptly address the push bar safety concerns by ensuring all schools comply with fire safety regulations and immediately remove unauthorized locks. The following actions are recommended:

- Enforcing Immediate Compliance – Require all schools to remove unauthorized locks from push bar doors immediately and implement accountability measures.

- Strengthening Oversight – Request written confirmation of compliance from principals and include push bar door inspections in routine audits.

- Implementing Safer Security Measures – Evaluate alarm-equipped doors, security cameras, or staff monitoring as alternatives to prevent unauthorized exits.

- Increasing Training and Awareness – Reinforce policies in monthly security meetings and provide refresher training on fire safety and emergency egress.

District Response

DSO agreed with the recommendation and stated that it would continue to work with the Region Administrator of Operations and their team to reinforce and train on physical security policies at principals' meetings. Refresher training on fire safety and emergency egress will be included in these efforts. In addition, DSO reported that it will work with Maintenance and Operations to survey campuses monthly and report any violations to Region Operations for follow-up. These actions are intended to support continued awareness and compliance with fire safety regulations and district policies while strengthening accountability at school sites.

School Alarm System

District Requirements

District Bulletin 5460.0 - *Accessing and Securing Sites During School Hours, Non-School Hours, and Holiday Breaks* requires all administrators to ensure that designated staff double-check to ensure that the alarm system is functional and properly set.

Previous Audit Results

Three out of the 24 schools (13%) visited had alarm systems that were not functioning properly and would trigger random false alarms, creating unnecessary alerts. Additionally, those alarm systems only covered the main building, not the entire campus. In these cases, some classrooms were notified of emergencies by staff calling each other.

Current Audit Results

During our visit to the 24 schools, we noted the following regarding alarm systems:

- The alarm systems at all three schools identified in the last audit as non-functional have been repaired.

- One school (4%) had a non-functional alarm system.

Cause

Many of the alarm systems installed years ago have become obsolete and need to be replaced. Information Technology Services (ITS) has been upgrading these systems at District schools, prioritizing those with the oldest equipment. According to ITS, the alarm project for the school with the non-functional alarm system is in the planning stages.

Effect

A malfunctioning alarm system poses a security risk, potentially delaying emergency response times and compromising the safety of students, staff, and school property. Without a reliable alarm system, unauthorized access may go undetected, and in the event of an emergency, certain areas of the campus may not receive timely alerts. Additionally, recurring false alarms can lead to complacency, reducing the effectiveness of emergency protocols and unnecessary disruptions to students' education.

Recommendation No. 2

DSO should work with ITS to prioritize and expedite the repair or replacement of malfunctioning alarm systems, ensuring that all affected schools receive necessary upgrades in a timely manner.

District Response

DSO agreed with the recommendation and stated that they will continue to coordinate with the Facilities Services Division (FSD) and ITS to obtain monthly status updates on alarm system repairs and replacements.

Information Technology Services reported that the one school identified in the audit as having a non-functional alarm system has since been made operational by ITS staff. However, due to the age and condition of the system, it is scheduled for full replacement in January 2026 under the COPs-funded Campus Safety Systems Improvement Phase 1. ITS also stated that it has completed alarm system upgrades at 71 school sites and has approved funding to upgrade an additional 248 sites. An additional 394 school sites are planned for Board of Education consideration in September 2025 for bond funding approval.

<u>Classroom Telephones</u>

District Requirements

District Bulletin 1031.1 - *Policies on Telecommunications* and California Education Code Section 17077.10 require a telephone be placed in classrooms of newly constructed or modernized schools when state funding is used. The system must be programmed to allow direct dialing to 911 from every classroom. Older schools that have not been modernized are not required to have classroom telephones under this policy. The District, however, has been upgrading older systems as part of broader safety initiatives.

Previous Audit Results

During the previous audit, six out of 24 schools (25%) had non-functional classroom phone systems, preventing personnel from making or receiving calls. These issues were associated with the older phone system, whereas schools that had already upgraded did not experience similar problems. Some schools have yet to transition to the updated phone system.

Current Audit Results

During our recent visit to the 24 schools, we noted the following regarding classroom telephones:

- All schools had functional classroom phone systems. The issues of non-functional classroom phone systems at the six schools from the last audit have been resolved by either repair (one school) or a system upgrade (five schools).

- 21 out of the 24 schools (87%) now have upgraded phone systems that allow 911 dialing. Three schools did not have phone systems that allowed 911 dialing. According to ITS, new systems will be installed and operational by April 2025 at those three schools.

Old phone system

Upgraded phone system

Cause

ITS is still in the process of upgrading the phone systems.

Effect

Outdated and non-functioning phone systems pose a security risk by preventing classrooms from placing emergency 911 calls or receiving urgent notifications. This delay in communication could compromise student and staff safety in emergency situations.

Recommendation No. 3

DSO should collaborate with ITS and ensure the completion of the phone system upgrades at the remaining schools to ensure all classrooms can directly dial 911.

District Response

DSO agreed with the recommendation and stated that they will continue to collaborate with ITS by requesting updates during their monthly ITS/DSO meetings to ensure the completion of phone system upgrades.

ITS reported that the three schools identified in the audit as lacking direct 911 dialing capability have since received system upgrades. Two upgrades were completed in February 2025 and one in April 2025. As a result, all 24 schools included in the audit now have phone systems that allow direct 911 dialing. ITS also stated that it has completed phone system upgrades at 547 school sites through various bond programs and will complete an additional 166 sites under Phase 2 of the School Network Systems Upgrade project.

Public Address (PA) System

District Requirements: District Reference Guide 5803.6—*Emergency Procedures, Drills, and Districtwide Emergency Exercises Requirements* requires administrators to ensure that all equipment for fire alarms, public address (PA) systems, and bell systems are tested monthly to ensure full functionality.

Previous Audit Results

Two out of 24 (8%) schools visited had non-functioning PA systems, and although PA systems were installed, they were not operational campus-wide, requiring teachers to be contacted by phone during drills.

Current Audit Results

During our recent visit to 24 schools, we noted the following related to PA systems:

- The District replaced the PA systems at the two schools with non-functional PA systems during the last audit.

- One of the 24 schools (4%) had a non-functioning PA system. According to the site administrator and ITS, the outdated PA system will be replaced in March 2025.

Cause

Many schools' PA systems were installed years ago and have become outdated, leading to malfunctions and the need for replacement.

Effect

Schools with non-functional PA systems cannot effectively broadcast emergency alerts or instructions

campus-wide, resulting in operational inefficiencies and delayed emergency response.

Recommendation No. 4

The Division of School Operations should ensure the repair or replacement of malfunctioning PA systems.

District Response

DSO agreed with the recommendation and stated that they would continue to coordinate with FSD to obtain monthly updates on the status of PA system repairs and replacements at school sites.

ITS reported that the school identified in the audit as having a non-functional PA system has since had its system replaced and it has been fully operational since March 2025. ITS also stated that it has completed PA system upgrades at 578 school sites using various bond-funded programs and has funding approval to upgrade an additional 135 school sites under Phase 2 of the School Network Systems Upgrade project.

Surveillance Camera System

District Requirements

LAUSD Bulletin BUL-1197.1 provides guidelines for the installation, use, and maintenance of surveillance cameras. However, the policy does not mandate that all schools must have them.

Previous Audit Results

- 15 of the 24 schools visited (63%) did not have surveillance cameras.

- Nine schools had surveillance camera systems, but seven reported issues with installation, image clarity, or coverage, including failure to capture key areas and blind spots.

- None of the schools had staff actively monitoring camera activity during school hours. Camera footage is retained for only two weeks before being automatically erased.

Current Audit Results

During our recent visit to 24 schools, we noted the following regarding surveillance camera systems:

- 11 schools (46%) had functioning surveillance camera systems.

- 10 schools (42%) lacked surveillance cameras.

- Three schools (12%) had surveillance cameras, but they were not functioning.

- None of the cameras were monitored by staff.

ITS personnel informed the OIG that of the 10 schools without surveillance cameras, construction is currently in progress at three schools, contract awards are being planned at three additional schools, and funding has not been secured for camera projects at the remaining four schools.

Regarding the three schools with cameras that were not working, ITS personnel reported that the cameras at one school were being configured and should become operational once the configuration is complete; however, funding has not been secured for camera projects at the other two schools.

Cause

There is no district-wide mandate for surveillance cameras, and during interviews, principals of those schools that lacked cameras reported that their schools had to pay for their own surveillance systems, which has limited their ability to install them.

Effect

In schools without surveillance cameras, there is an increased risk of security breaches, such as unauthorized intrusions, vandalism, and safety concerns for students and staff, as there is no system in place to deter or monitor suspicious activities. Additionally, even in schools with surveillance cameras, the lack of staff assigned to actively monitor footage in real-time reduces the effectiveness of the system. Unmonitored cameras may fail to provide timely intervention during security incidents, and with footage only retained for a limited time, critical evidence may be lost before issues are identified or addressed.

Recommendation No. 5

DSO should assess security needs at schools lacking surveillance cameras and prioritize funding allocations where security concerns are highest. It should also evaluate cost-effective solutions, such as centralized monitoring or longer footage retention periods, to enhance security without requiring individual schools to assign staff to real-time monitoring.

District's Response

The Division of School Operations agreed with the recommendation and stated that Phase I of the District's safety camera upgrades is nearing completion, with nearly 380 school installations. However, they noted that funding originally designated for Phase II of the project has been diverted, limiting the District's ability to expand the program at this time. They also reported that longer footage retention periods have been explored, but the associated technology costs remain prohibitive.

ITS reported that, as of June 2025, three of the ten schools identified during the audit as lacking surveillance cameras have received new systems. Construction is underway at three additional schools, and funding has not yet been secured for the remaining four. ITS also confirmed that all three schools with non-operational cameras during the audit now have fully functional surveillance systems.

Visitor Management System

District Requirements

Bulletin BUL-6492.2 requires all exterior gates and doors to remain locked during school hours, except for the main entrance, which must be monitored at all times. In addition to these requirements, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security recommends that schools implement access control measures—such as secure entry systems and controlled access points—to help prevent unauthorized entry and enhance overall campus security.[2]

Previous Audit Results

17 out of the 24 (71%) schools we visited did not have secure entry systems installed.

Current Audit Results

During our recent visit to 24 schools, we noted the following regarding the visitor management systems:

- Nine schools that did not have secure entry systems during the last audit have had the systems installed.

- Eight (33%) out of the 24 schools still do not have secure entry systems installed.

Cause

Due to limited funding, secure entry system installations at elementary schools were prioritized. FSD's Maintenance & Operations (M&O) has been planning to present a new program to the Board of Education for funding through Measure US, focused on installing secure entry systems at middle and high schools. Due to the large number of schools, full implementation will span over several years. At this time, specific timelines for individual projects are not yet available.

Effect

The absence of secure entry systems increases the risk of unauthorized access to school premises. Without a controlled entry system, campus security is compromised, allowing unapproved individuals onto school grounds and putting the safety of students and staff at risk.

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[2] *Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans*, U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, June 2013.

Recommendation No. 6

DSO should assess funding opportunities for the installation of secure entry systems at schools without them and explore interim security measures for schools still awaiting installation in an effort to mitigate the risks associated with unauthorized campus access.

District Response

DSO agreed with the recommendation and stated that secure entry systems have been installed at all elementary schools. Additionally, an upcoming round of installations—funded through Measure US—will include a significant number of secondary schools. This project is being led by M&O in coordination with FSD. The District acknowledged that implementation across all campuses will take time due to the scope and funding limitations but remains committed to expanding secure entry system coverage.

Homeless Encampments

Previous Audit Results

12 out of the 24 (50%) schools we visited reported issues related to the homeless population surrounding the area. Some schools had homeless encampments along the school sidewalks adjacent to the campus, which raised concerns about restricted pedestrian access, sanitation issues, and overall campus security.

Current Audit Results

During our recent visit to 24 schools, we noted the following regarding homeless encampments:

- Eight schools (33%) had homeless encampments.

- Six of these schools had homeless encampments identified in the last audit.

- Two schools were newly identified with this issue.

Cause

Schools are often located in busy, visible urban areas, where nearby sidewalks and streets may attract homeless individuals seeking shelter in public spaces. Although the Division of School Operations (DSO) has taken proactive steps — including conducting monthly assessments, collaborating with city agencies such as the Los Angeles Police Department, LA Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), and the Department of Sanitation, participating in weekly coordination meetings, and working with the Mayor's Office to clear encampments through initiatives like Care Plus — these efforts have not fully resolved the persistent challenges posed by homelessness near school campuses.

Effect

Homeless encampments surrounding schools do not create an environment that supports student learning.

Recommendation No. 7

DSO should continue and strengthen its efforts to monitor and address the impact of homeless encampments near school campuses. This includes maintaining regular assessments, sustaining collaboration with city and county officials (such as the Los Angeles Police Department, LAHSA, the Department of Sanitation, and the Mayor's Office), and exploring additional strategies or partnerships to more effectively mitigate the risks posed by nearby encampments and create a safer environment that supports student learning.

District Response

DSO agreed with the recommendation and reported that Region Operations teams survey all campuses monthly and provide specific reports and updates to the Office of Government Relations (OGR) for support through municipal programs. Within the City of Los Angeles, DSO personnel submit MyLA311 service requests when homeless encampments are observed near campuses. In addition, the Division of School Operations holds weekly meetings with Council Districts 1, 8, and 9 to coordinate efforts in addressing encampments located within 500 feet of school sites. These ongoing efforts reflect the District's commitment to sustained collaboration with city and county partners to mitigate the risks posed by nearby encampments and promote safe learning environments.

<u>**Campus Security Concerns**</u>

Previous Audit Results

In the previous audit, the principals at 18 of the 24 schools (75%) reported concerns about campus security due to increased incidents.

Current Audit Results

During our recent visit, we found that the 18 schools that previously reported campus security concerns due to increased incidents no longer identified this as an issue, and all 24 schools reported no such concerns.

AUDIT TEAM

This audit was conducted by the Office of the Inspector General's Audit Unit Team:

Stella Lai, Audit Manager
Luceli Ceja, Principal Auditor
Victor Reyes, Senior Auditor

Appendix A – Response from the Division of School Operations

Response to Follow-up Audit-Physical Security of Schools
Division of School Operations Response

Recommendation No. 1 (Pg: 9)-The Division of School Operations should promptly address the push bar safety concerns by ensuring all schools comply with fire safety regulations and immediately remove unauthorized locks:
- DSO will continue to advise Region Operations Teams to reinforce physical security policies at Principal's meetings and provide refresher training on fire safety and emergency egress.
- DSO will continue to work with the Region Administrator of Operations and their team to reinforce and train on physical security policies at the Principal's meetings.
- DSO will work with Maintenance of Operations and their teams to survey campuses monthly and report any violations to Region Operations and the Administrator of Operations for follow-up.

Recommendation No. 3 (Pg: 10) The Division of School Operations should collaborate with ITS and ensure the completion of the phone system upgrades at the remaining schools to ensure all classrooms can directly dial 911.
- ITS will continue to oversee the progress of the phone system upgrades at the identified schools. DSO will request updates during monthly ITS/DSO Meetings.

Recommendation No. 4 (Pg. 12) The Division of School Operations should ensure the repair or replacement of malfunctioning alarms and PA systems
- Facilities Services Division (FSD) will continue to upgrade PA systems as well as repair/replace malfunctioning intrusion alarms. DSO will engage with FSD monthly to obtain status updates.

Recommendation No. 5 (Pg: 14) The Division of School Operations should assess security needs at schools lacking surveillance cameras and prioritize funding allocations where security concerns are highest. It should also evaluate cost-effective solutions, such as centralized monitoring or longer footage retention periods, to enhance security without requiring individual schools to assign staff to real-time monitoring.
- Phase I of the safety camera upgrades is approaching completion with nearly 380 school installations.
- Funds for Phase II of the safety camera project have been diverted to another source
- Longer footage retention has been investigated but with current technology, costs remain prohibitive

(Pg.9) Nine schools that did not have visitor entry buzzers during the last audit have had the buzzers installed.
- According to FSD, M&O has installed secure entry systems at all elementary schools and thanks to Measure US, an additional 85 secondary schools will be included within the current round of installations

Recommendation No. 6 (Pg: 15)- The Division of School Operations should assess funding opportunities for the installation of visitor entry buzzers at schools without them and explore interim security measures for schools still awaiting installation in an effort to mitigate the risks associated with unauthorized campus access.
- This was addressed at the Board Meeting – all elementary schools have received secure access cameras at entrances.

Recommendation No. 7 (Pg: 15)-The Division of School Operations should continue monitoring and addressing the impact of homeless encampments near school campuses through collaboration with city and county officials.
- Region Operations teams survey all campuses monthly and provide specific reports and updates to OGR for support through municipal programs. Additionally, within the City of Los Angeles, MyLA311 calls are made by Operations personnel.

Appendix A – Response from the Division of School Operations

- DSO will work with the Region Administrator of Operations and their team to survey all campuses monthly and provide specific reports and updates to OGR for support through municipal programs.
- The Region Operations team and DSO will continue to report incidents to MyLA311 when there are homeless encampments near campuses.
- DSO will continue to meet weekly with Council Districts 1, 8, and 9 to collaborate on addressing the homeless encampments within 500 feet of the school.

INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE
LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Information Technology Services

TO: Mark H. Pearson, Assistant Inspector General   **Date:** June 23, 2025
                Office of the Inspector General

FROM: Soheil Katal, Chief Information Officer
                Information Technology Services

SUBJECT: **RESPONSE TO DRAFT AUDIT REPORT OF FOLLOW-UP AUDIT – PHYSICAL SECURITY OF SCHOOLS**

The following is in response to the draft audit report of Follow-Up Audit – Physical Security of Schools. The results of the audit indicated the following:

Executive Summary Alarm Systems: Page 1
Report states: One school (4%) had a non-functional alarm system, while the alarms at the other 23 schools were operational.

ITS Response:
The one school site identified in the audit as having a non-functional alarm system has been made operational by ITS staff but due to its age, stability, and condition, is scheduled for replacement in January 2026 under the COPs funded Campus Safety Systems Improvement (291 Sites), Phase 1.

Executive Summary Phone Systems: Page 1
Report states: Currently, 21 out of 24 (87%) have phone systems that allow direct 911 dialing. However, three schools still lack this capability.

ITS Response:
The three school sites identified in the audit as lacking direct 911 dialing experienced the issue due to having outdated phone systems. The phone systems have since been updated under the bond funded School Network Systems Upgrade Phase 2 (349 sites). Two were completed in February of 2025 and one in April 2025 and all now support direct 911 dialing.

Executive Summary Public Address Systems: Page 2
Report states: The public address (PA) system at one school (4%) was non-functional during the current audit. This was a new issue identified at the school. It is scheduled for a replacement by March 2025.

ITS Response:

The one school site identified in the audit as having a non-functional PA system experienced the issue due to age of the PA system. The PA system has since been replaced under the bond funded School Network Systems Upgrade Phase 2 (349 sites) and has been fully operational since March 2025.

Executive Summary Surveillance Cameras: Page 2
Report states: 10 of the 24 schools (42%) did not have surveillance cameras.

ITS Response:
The status of the ten school sites identified by the audit as not having surveillance cameras is as follows:

- Three school sites had new camera systems installed in May 2025 (one site) and June 2025 (two sites) under the COPs funded Campus Safety Systems Improvement (291 Sites), Phase 1.
- Three school sites are scheduled to have new camera systems installed in August 2025, October 2025, and January 2026 using COPs funded Campus Safety Systems Improvement (291 Sites), Phase 1.
- Four school sites currently have no funding identified for new camera system upgrades.

Executive Summary Surveillance Cameras: Page 2
Report states: Three schools (13%) had non-operational cameras.

ITS Response:
The status of the three school sites identified by the audit as having non-operational surveillance cameras is as follows:

- One site had a new camera system was installed in March of 2025 under the COPs funded Campus Safety Systems Improvement (291 Sites), Phase 1. Two cameras were found to be defective and replaced in June of 2025.
- Two school sites had cameras replaced or reconfigured. No funding is currently identified for new camera system upgrades for these sites.

Recommendations Response:

Recommendation No. 2:
Report States: Collaborate with Information Technology Services (ITS) to prioritize and expedite the repair or replacement of malfunctioning alarm systems, ensuring that all affected schools receive necessary upgrades in a timely manner.

ITS Response:

ITS has completed alarm system upgrades at 71 school sites (30 under bond funded School Network Systems Upgrade Phase 1 and 41 under COPs funded Campus Safety Systems Improvement Phase 1) and has COPs funding approved for 248 more school sites. ITS plans to take 394 additional school sites to the Board of Education in September 2025 for bond funding approval.

Recommendation No. 3:

Report States: Collaborate with ITS and ensure the completion of the phone system upgrades at the remaining schools to ensure all classrooms can directly dial 911.

ITS Response:

All schools have 911 access. ITS has completed phone system upgrades at 547 school sites under various bond programs (such as Telecommunications and Network Upgrades and School Network Systems Upgrade Phase 1 and Phase 2) so those schools have direct 911 access in the classroom. ITS will complete an additional 166 school sites under bond funded School Network Systems Upgrade Phase 2).

Recommendation No. 4:

Report States: Ensure the repair or replacement of malfunctioning PA systems.

ITS Response:

ITS has completed PA system upgrades at 578 school sites using various bond programs (such as Telecommunications and Network Upgrades and School Network Systems Upgrade Phase 1 and Phase 2) and has bond funding approval for an additional 135 school sites under School Network Systems Upgrade Phase 2.

Recommendation No. 5:

Report States: Assess security needs at schools lacking surveillance cameras and prioritize funding allocations where security concerns are highest. Evaluate cost-effective solutions, such as centralized monitoring or longer footage retention periods, to enhance security without requiring individual schools to assign staff to real-time monitoring.

ITS Response:

ITS has completed surveillance camera upgrades at 123 school sites under bond funded School Network Systems Upgrade Phase 1 and COPs funded Campus Safety Systems Improvement Phase 1 and has an additional 196 school sites approved.

Of the remaining 394 school sites: 110 school sites have analog surveillance camera systems, 59 school sites have modern video camera systems, and 225 school sites are unfunded.

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