

## Gateway Community Charters: Community Outreach Academy

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TK-5, 5640 Dudley Boulevard, McClellan Park



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## Executive Summary

The Gateway Community Charters (GCC) Site Safety Report assesses the facility's current safety practices and infrastructure, providing actionable recommendations to enhance security, emergency preparedness, and operational efficiency. This report underscores the school's proactive approach to safeguarding its community.

### Key Recommendations:

- Exterior signage effectively marks the campus; however, additional wayfinding signs are needed to assist visitors.
- Cameras are present and monitored, but some are underutilized or require connectivity checks. Expanding coverage to blind spots and refining monitoring systems is essential.
- AEDs, first aid kits, and lockdown supplies are available but require better organization, accessibility, and maintenance scheduling.
- The well-maintained landscaping supports clear sightlines, while lighting enhances visibility. Additional tree trimming and evening lighting assessments are recommended.
- Fencing and access controls are generally effective but need reinforcement, gate monitoring, and the potential use of privacy liners to shield recreational areas.
- Managing access to school buildings remains a challenge, with unimpeded internal access from reception areas. Transitioning to keycard systems and enhancing visitor check-in protocols are suggested.
- Implement standardized access controls (e.g., keycards) and strengthen perimeter reinforcement with regular checks and privacy liners.
- Standardize "safer corners" in classrooms, integrate all-hazard flip charts, and relocate classroom phones for better accessibility during emergencies.
- Provide two-way radios for staff, train them on emergency protocols, and coordinate with duress alarm systems for consistent response capabilities.
- Address unlocked doors, cluttered exit pathways, and maintenance of utility areas for streamlined safety operations.

## Background

On Monday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, security expert Chris Usher and Dr. Chris Taylor visited the Community Outreach Academy TK-5 school to conduct a site safety review. The school has approximately XX staff and XXX students in attendance. It enrolls students from transitional kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade in the McClellan Park area and utilizes re-purposed buildings on a former Air Force base.

This survey is not meant to identify every potential hazard, safety concern, training need, or emergency supply requirement. While we have noted many positive aspects of your facility, this report focuses on areas that may require further attention. It is designed to assess your facility's current state and highlight areas for improvement based on the information provided.

Private and public organizations across America are responsible for providing safe and secure environments for work and learning. These are places where employees and students should feel protected from undue harm and risk. By conducting this vulnerability assessment, your facility is taking a proactive step toward enhanced safety.

This report provides an overview of your facility's current safety awareness, including findings and recommendations derived from on-site interviews, observations, and a review of materials provided by facility administrators.

## Scope

The following activities are within the scope of this project:

- Interviews with key staff members responsible for policy, administration, day-to-day operations, facilities management, and safety.
- A visual walk-through of the facilities with administrative and facilities personnel to assess physical site safety.

The following activities are NOT part of this security assessment.

- Testing current facility-developed safety plans or emergency response plans.
- DPrep/WVPA did not independently verify information provided by employees.
- This security assessment does not include any aspect of IT/Cyber vulnerabilities, which should be assessed independently.

## Disclaimer

Any action taken by a recipient of this report or by their representatives based upon this security assessment does not guarantee nor warrant in any way whatsoever that the assessed location(s), facility, its users, or visitors may or may not be rendered safer, invulnerable, or in any fashion impervious to successful penetration, attack, or other acts which could cause property damage and/or personal injury to the facility or its patrons. By accepting this security assessment report and/or by taking or avoiding taking any action based on its written or verbal content, Gateway Community Charters hereby agrees to release, waive, discharge, hold harmless, and not sue WVPA, DPrep Inc., any of their officers and/or employees, for any and all loss, harm, liability, or damage caused as a consequence of the security assessment, release of the written report, pictures, and assessors' opinions, including any loss arising from a claim of negligence. Further, by accepting this report, Gateway Community Charters agrees to indemnify WVPA, DPrep Inc., their agents, officers, and employees from any loss, harm, liability, lawsuits, damages, or costs, including court costs and attorney fees.



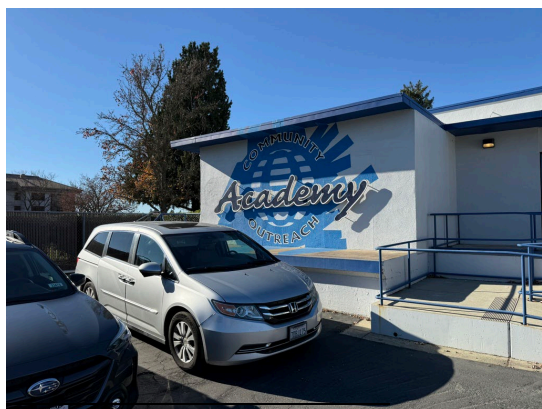
## Facility-Wide Suggestions

### Exterior Signage

Effective signage and wayfinding are fundamental to workplace security, as they provide clear directions, identify hazards, and establish boundaries, thereby enhancing safety and preventing accidents. Strategically placed signs guide employees and visitors, reducing confusion and ensuring efficient evacuation during emergencies.<sup>1</sup> Signage and a well-maintained site also convey a sense of preparation and attention to detail that can deter crime or other hostile actions. Clear and sufficient signage aids emergency services personnel with improved navigation and timeliness of response during emergencies and other critical incidents.

The Center for Safe Schools suggests exterior signage should be: 1) visible from the street or nearest driveway, 2) contrasting with their background, and 3) reflective for low light or smoky conditions. All exterior doors should be numbered in sequential order in a clockwise manner, with the main entrance designated as number one.<sup>2</sup>

Community Outreach Academy (COA) is comprised of eight buildings located on and adjacent to a large city block within a former military base. All buildings have their name and street address displayed in easily seen signs.



<sup>1</sup> American Society of Safety Professionals. (n.d.). Three ways signage can improve workplace safety. Retrieved December 1, 2024, from [https://www.assp.org/news-and-articles/three-ways-signage-can-improve-workplace-safety?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.assp.org/news-and-articles/three-ways-signage-can-improve-workplace-safety?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

<sup>2</sup> Center for Safe Schools (2024). Model Door and Window Classroom Numbering. Retrieved from <https://www.centerforsafeschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/CSS-Door-and-Window-Classroom-Numbering-2024.pdf>

**Moving Forward:**

- While the signage is good, the layout may be confusing for new visitors to the campus. Consider adding wayfinding signs at various exterior points for easier navigation.

## Cameras

Cameras play a vital role in safety by providing real-time surveillance that can help detect and deter potential threats, ensuring a quicker response to incidents. According to the U.S. Secret Service, monitored and strategically placed cameras are essential for identifying suspicious behavior and enhancing situational awareness in critical areas.<sup>3,4</sup> Reviewing camera footage after the fact may provide investigative material or document a critical incident but will not aid in preventing an incident.

Cameras provide three general functions when it comes to safety and security.

1. Cameras record what occurred on-site during a hazard, conflict, theft, crime, or other critical event, providing detailed documentation and legal risk mitigation when assessing how employees handle critical incidents. The footage is helpful in training scenarios and as part of an after-event review.
2. Cameras deter those who may be engaged in penetration testing or assessing the site as a potential target. Multiple cameras and signage warnings about being recorded offer a level of hardening a target location that is part of a layered safety and security approach.
3. Cameras that are live monitored by office staff at their desks or broadcast to a larger screen in a public area increase situational awareness and response time when reacting to threats, physical altercations, or an active assailant. Providing this live feed link to local law enforcement improves their awareness when responding to a crisis on-site.

Cameras at COA are monitored in each site manager and principal's office. They are currently installing upgraded cameras and have acknowledged a need for additional cameras.



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3 U.S. Secret Service, National Threat Assessment Center. (2019). Protecting America's schools: A U.S. Secret Service analysis of targeted school violence. Retrieved from [https://www.secretservice.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/Protecting\\_Americas\\_Schools.pdf](https://www.secretservice.gov/sites/default/files/2020-04/Protecting_Americas_Schools.pdf)

4 Alcatraz Lock. (n.d.). How CCTV cameras can help to prevent school shootings. Retrieved from <https://alcatrazlock.com/how-cctv-cameras-can-help-to-prevent-school-shootings/>



**Moving Forward:**

- Consider the addition of cameras to known blind spots.
- Two cameras in the theater (see yellow circle above) are still wrapped in dust covers used for shipping, and it is not clear that they are connected. Ensure that all cameras are connected and in working order.
- Since the monitoring software can be accessed from desktop computers, consider adding viewing access for reception staff in each building.
- The majority of monitoring screens appear to have a view of each camera at all times and may be difficult to monitor. Consider limiting this to no more than four cameras per screen and choose those strategically based on specific times of day or activity, known trouble spots, or entrances and exits.
- Confirm a schematic with all camera locations and coverage areas is available. An assessment should be conducted to confirm adequate coverage (DPrep Safety can assist in this process.)

## Emergency Medical Supplies/Lockdown Supplies

First aid response is dependent on two central concepts: materials and training. Having materials available without knowing how to use them is equally problematic as having people trained without providing access to materials. The American Red Cross recommends that first aid kits and AEDs (Automated External Defibrillators) be available in multiple locations and that all employees be trained in their use.<sup>5</sup>

With one exception, all AEDs and first aid kits are in the reception area. Some reception areas also have bloodborne pathogen kits, epi-pens, and overdose kits. Lockdown supplies and basic first aid supplies are available in buckets in most classrooms. In some cases, these were difficult to locate. We recommend storing lockdown supplies in the designated "[Safer Corners](#)" in each room.



### Moving Forward:

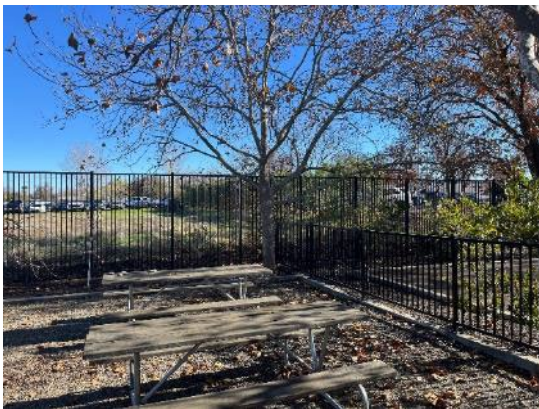
- Ensure Dudley A has an easily accessible AED and first aid kit in the reception area.
- Relocate the first aid kit in the Rafferty B reception area, as it is currently blocked by a door and time entry computer.
- Designate a staff member (perhaps the site manager) to inspect and maintain the lockdown supplies on a semesterly basis.

<sup>5</sup> American Red Cross. (n.d.). *Workplace safety training courses*. Retrieved December 1, 2024, from <https://www.redcross.org/take-a-class/organizations/workplace-safety>

## Landscaping

According to the American Society of Landscape Architects, maintaining landscaping can enhance safety by creating clear sightlines, removing hiding spots, and creating opportunities for natural surveillance, all principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). Well-maintained landscaping can also reduce the perception of neglect, further aiding in crime deterrence.<sup>6</sup>

The landscaping was generally well maintained and allowed for good sightlines throughout the campus. There is some concern, particularly near the Skvarla building, that some trees may allow climbing access to the property.



### Moving Forward:

- Consider trimming the trees near the Skvarla building playground to deny climbing access.
- Continue to maintain good landscaping practices as well as the CPTED guidelines. Shrubbery should be no higher than two feet, and tree canopies should be trimmed to hang no lower than six feet.

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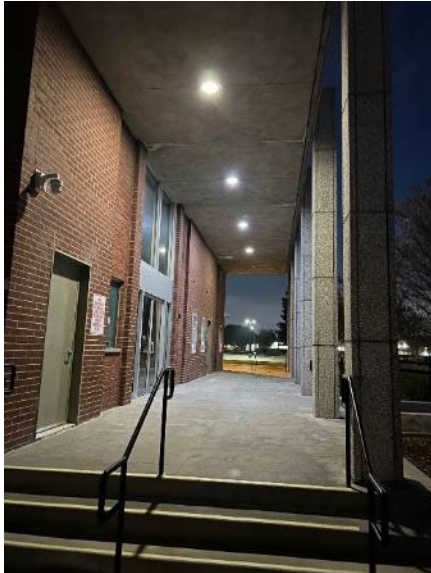
<sup>6</sup> American Society of Landscape Architects. (n.d.). *Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) presentation*. Retrieved December 1, 2024, from [https://www.asla.org/uploadedFiles/CMS/PPNs/Landing\\_Pages/ASLA\\_Urban\\_Design\\_PPN\\_CPTED\\_Presentation.pdf](https://www.asla.org/uploadedFiles/CMS/PPNs/Landing_Pages/ASLA_Urban_Design_PPN_CPTED_Presentation.pdf)



## Lighting

Lighting is important as it enhances natural surveillance by improving visibility at night, deterring potential offenders. According to the International CPTED Association, well-designed exterior lighting reduces dark areas and increases the likelihood of criminal activities being observed.<sup>7</sup>

COA appears to have great lighting on the exterior of buildings, on pathways, and in parking lots.



### Moving Forward:

- A further assessment of exterior lighting during the evening hours is recommended.
- The school's proximity to the military base/airport may place restrictions on the brightness of exterior lighting.

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<sup>7</sup> International CPTED Association. (n.d.). *Primer in CPTED – What is CPTED?*. Retrieved December 1, 2024, from <https://www.cpted.net/Primer-in-CPTED>

## Perimeter

Territorial reinforcement involves designing spaces to clearly define ownership, using elements like fences, signage, and landscaping to discourage unauthorized access and promote a sense of ownership by employees. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, establishing clear territorial boundaries enhances security by fostering ownership and responsibility among occupants.<sup>8</sup>

COA's campus is large, and maintaining an adequate perimeter in such a sprawling space can be challenging. COA has done an excellent job creating territorial reinforcement using fencing and the existing building structure. The center of campus is open for recreation and other activities but is generally inaccessible if proper access control is maintained (gates locked after student drop-off, etc.). Some gates were found unlocked well into the day, past the time for drop-off.

The center play area is highly visible from the surrounding streets. It was also noted that there have been issues with the unhoused population in the area, and there is at least one public transport stop with a clear view of the recreation area. There are also instances where publicly accessible parking lot spaces allow a direct view into classrooms if the doors are open (in the modular classrooms P1, P2, and P3).



### Moving Forward:

- Some areas of fence reinforcement need maintenance (see highlight above left). Consider adding this to the regular maintenance schedule.
- We recommend adding a privacy liner inside the fence in some or all areas. This will prevent direct sightlines into the recreation areas. Using liners in school colors or using the school mascot and name can add to territorial reinforcement. If only some areas are chosen for liners, we suggest the Skvarla building, the area near the modular classrooms, and the area facing the public transport stop on James Way.
- There are parts of campus, particularly near the theater, where traffic control gates are left open. Closing and locking these when not in use will further minimize access.
- Consider tasking a staff member to walk the fenced area after drop-off and pick-up to check that all gates are locked.

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<sup>8</sup> Zahm, D. L. (2007). *Using crime prevention through environmental design in problem-solving*. U.S. Department of Justice. Retrieved from <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/using-crime-prevention-through-environmental-design-problem-solving>



## Exterior Facility Access

### Access Control

Access control is the ability to secure a site and regulate the keys and electronic systems that allow staff to access the worksite.<sup>9</sup> Access control includes both after-hours and how employees and the public access the site during operation hours. Common systems include master keys and keys with more limited access, key fobs, locked doors, turnstiles, locked fences, sally ports/man traps, counters, and glass/plexiglass barriers.

This is one of the most challenging issues for COA. In the majority of buildings, once a person enters the reception area, there is unimpeded access to the remainder of the school. Additionally, while there is a sign-in for visitors in a logbook, IDs did not appear to be checked when visitors entered. Knox boxes (locked and marked boxes on the outside of buildings with keys) for fire department access are located on most buildings. Access for police is unclear.

### Moving Forward:

- Consider moving away from keys and installing a card swipe or key fob access system for staff. While potentially costly, this allows for quick and easy changes should a staff member leave, transfer to a different building, or if they need access to areas other than their classroom. It also negates the need for costly lock changes should a key be lost.
- Consider working with facilities staff or outside contractors to determine if there is a cost-effective way to enclose reception areas and close off unimpeded access to other school areas. Because of the nature of the buildings, a custom solution will likely be required for each area.
- Consider a visitor management system that both checks IDs and allows for the creation of reports or quick access to data. These systems can also check sexual offender status and allow for notes.
- Explore the need for additional fire Knox box access and work with local police to help determine police access.

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<sup>9</sup> School Safety Working Group. (2020). Ten Essential Actions to Improve School Safety. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. Department of Justice.

McPhaul, K., London, M., Murrett, K, Flannery, K, Rosen, J. and Lipscomb, J. (2008). Environment Evaluation for Workplace Violence in Healthcare and Social Services. Journal of Safety Research, 237-250.

## Doors & Windows

Implementing physical security measures like locked doors is a fundamental step in securing a workplace environment. Locked doors help prevent unauthorized access, protect sensitive information, and ensure the safety of employees and assets.<sup>10</sup>

Many exterior doors at COA were found to be unlocked or propped open. Most of these face the fenced areas of campus, but in at least one instance, a publicly accessible exterior door to a classroom was found unlocked while the class was in session. Doorstops are regularly left near doors. In some cases, exit doors were blocked by stored items, preventing a swift evacuation in the event of an emergency.



### Moving Forward:

- All exterior doors should be kept closed and locked, even if they lead to fenced recreation areas.
- Remove any door wedges that are used to prop open doors.
- Consider an educational campaign that will aid in preventing students and staff from propping doors or letting in people without the proper ID. Our team would be able to help design and implement this program if needed.
- Regularly check that all exit doors are clear and free of clutter.

## Roof Access

Roof access, while needed for maintenance, can be problematic if it is accessible to others intent on bad acts or who may put themselves in a dangerous situation, increasing risk and liability for the facility.<sup>11</sup>

COA does not appear to have any roof access issues. Most buildings are taller and do not lend to climbing. Any interior roof hatches were found to be locked.

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<sup>10</sup> National Center for Education Statistics. (1998). *Creating safe and drug-free schools: An action guide - Chapter 5: School security technology*. Retrieved December 1, 2024, from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs98/safetech/chapter5.asp>

<sup>11</sup> Utah State Board of Education. (2019). *School safety*. Retrieved December 1, 2024, from <https://schools.utah.gov/schoollandtrust/resources/02.2019.SchoolSafety.pdf>

## Facility Interior

### Doors

Locked interior doors are vital for workplace security because they prevent intruders from freely accessing the facility. By limiting internal movement, they help protect sensitive information and assets, and ensure employee safety. Implementing access controls like locked interior doors is essential for safeguarding organizational assets.<sup>12</sup>

Interior door access varied greatly across and within buildings, with some doors secured or closed and some unsecured or left open. Locking hardware varied as well. Many doors had items stored near or in front of them, potentially impeding egress. In some cases, portable gates are used to close off hallways that lead to exit doors. Staff carry classroom keys but do not appear to have keys to lock external doors.



### Moving Forward:

- Ensure that all doors are free of clutter and stored items.
- Consider standardizing interior door locks or employing a key card system. Ideally, there should be a consistent access control system for all interior doors, with staff having access in case of an emergency. While there may be some reason to have different locks on

<sup>12</sup> National Institute of Standards and Technology. (1995). *An introduction to computer security: The NIST handbook* (NIST Special Publication 800-12, Chapter 15). Retrieved from <https://csrc.nist.gov/publications/nistpubs/800-12/800-12-html/chapter15.html>

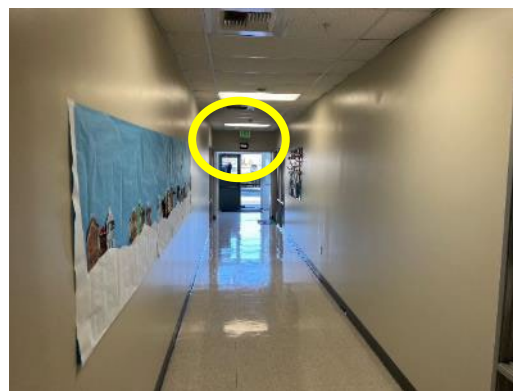
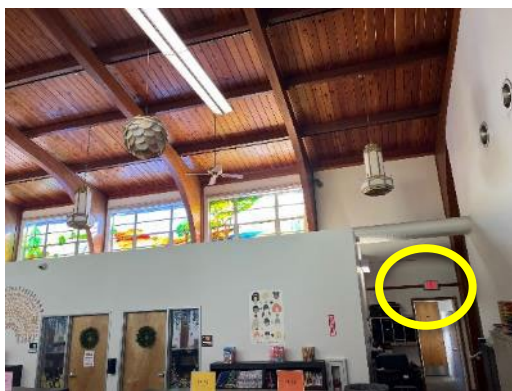
certain doors (exterior access, bathrooms, fire code), the goal is to have these consistent across all rooms.

- Staff should have keys to exterior doors so they can remain locked.
- Consider a more secure method for hallway access control instead of portable gates in accordance with fire codes.

## Interior Signage

Signage in the building conveys a sense of order, preparedness, and professionalism to visitors and those who may look to cause harm to the facility. The Center for Safe Schools offers the following guidelines for interior door numbering: 1) always place them on the hinge side of the door near the bottom so they can be viewed in smokey conditions, 2) contrast with their background, and 3) be retroreflective for low light and smokey conditions.<sup>13</sup> This helps emergency responders and those evacuating navigate the space during a critical incident.

COA has excellent interior signage in classrooms and hallways, including lighted exit signs. Most classrooms had exit diagrams hanging on the wall near the door.



### Moving Forward:

- Consider adding emergency egress signage to hallways.
- Highlight "shelter in place" areas or "safer rooms" in existing diagrams. Bathrooms and utility closets are good options for safer rooms. These areas should not be defined/labeled on the maps, as this could give potential assailants the knowledge of secure areas. Staff and students should be trained on their locations.
- Add exit diagrams to any classroom that doesn't have them.

<sup>13</sup> Center for Safe Schools (2024). Model Door and Window Classroom Numbering. Retrieved from <https://www.centerforsafeschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/CSS-Door-and-Window-Classroom-Numbering-2024.pdf>



## Electrical Panels and Utility Areas

Implementing physical access controls for sensitive areas is essential for protecting organizational assets and ensuring safety. Securing utility areas prevents unauthorized individuals from tampering with critical systems like electrical, plumbing, and HVAC equipment, reducing the risk of accidents, service disruptions, and security breaches.<sup>14</sup>

Access to utility areas was generally unimpeded, with most, if not all, accessible. In many cases, keys for the panel were left hanging in the lock. In some cases, utility panels were blocked by furniture or other items.



### Moving Forward:

- Secure all utility areas and panels and maintain keys for authorized access.
- All access panels must be properly closed and locked, and the keys must be secured.
- Clear the area in front of all utility panels.

<sup>14</sup> National Fire Protection Association. (n.d.). *NFPA 730: Guide for premises security*. Retrieved from <https://www.nfpa.org/codes-and-standards/nfpa-730-standard-development/730>

## Windows and Window Coverings

Windows enhance natural surveillance by allowing visibility into and out of a building, thereby deterring potential offenders. According to the International CPTED Association, properly designed and placed windows can increase security by promoting observation, while window coverings can balance privacy needs.<sup>15</sup> Window coverings are also important during active assailant incidents to provide concealment from the attacker. Temporary coverings are preferable to permanent ones to allow monitoring of classroom activities and prevent unauthorized use of empty classrooms.<sup>16</sup>

COA has covers for the majority of windows. Some were open, and some were closed.



Installing quick pull shades helps reduce the visibility of targets from outside the school. An alternative would be to ensure students and staff understand that in any event of an active shooting critical incident, they should move quickly to a safer corner away from exposed windows.

<sup>15</sup> International CPTED Association. (2020). *What is CPTED?* <https://cpted.net/what-is-cpted>

<sup>16</sup> Keehan, A. (2023). Secure Classroom Doors to Stop Active Shooters. Retrieved on November 15, 2024 from <https://www.ue.org/risk-management/premises-safety/secure-classroom-doors-to-stop-active-shooters/>

Some examples of these are pictured here and included in [Appendix A](#).



### **Moving Forward:**

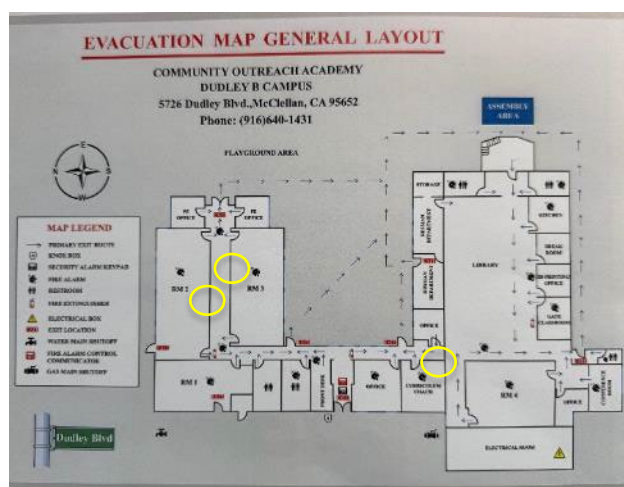
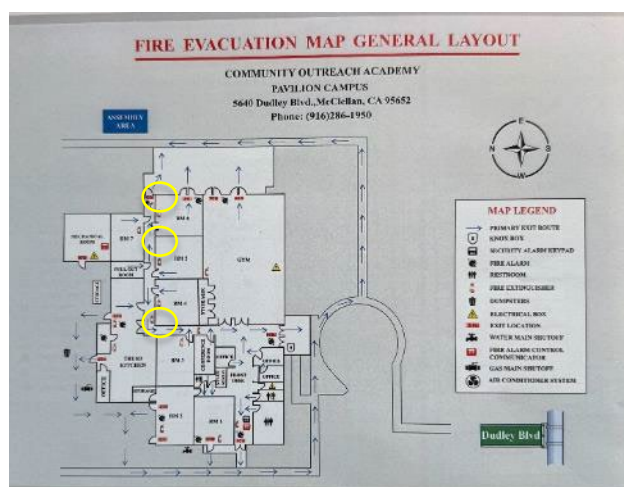
- Consider installing shatter-resistant glass near all reception areas.
- Consider installing weather film to windows (as noted in the Dudley B building above) that will allow seeing outside but won't allow those outside to see in.
- Ensure all classroom windows have covers and standardize whether they will be open or closed. If open, staff should review how to quickly cover the windows in the event of an emergency.

## Safer Corners

Designating "*safer corners*"—areas within rooms that offer protection and are not visible from doorways—is important for enhancing occupant safety during emergencies. According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, identifying secure locations within a building can increase personal safety during incidents like active shooter situations.<sup>17</sup>

Safer corners are considered essential for school safety, based on lessons learned from previous school shootings, such as the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School incident.<sup>18</sup>

Currently, there are no designated safer corners at COA. There are lockdown supplies in the majority of classrooms, but there is no standardization of where they are kept. Additionally, classroom phones appear to be wired for convenience as opposed to safety.



In rooms with no clear safer corner due to the size or exposure to the outside, the identification of a “safer room” that students and staff should evacuate to should be encouraged. Bathrooms or a utility closet would be options.

## Moving Forward:

- Designate safer corners in each classroom and create a policy that lockdown supplies are to be kept in these areas. These areas can be designated with a picture of the mascot so that children of all ages can be aware of the areas. The areas circled on the map above serve as possible safer corners. This should be accompanied by additional training and align with the Comprehensive School Site Safety Plan (CSSP).
- Move the classroom phones into the safer corner where possible.
- Ensure that each room has lockdown supplies that are kept updated and stored in the safer corner.

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Department of Homeland Security. (2015). *Active Shooter Emergency Action Plan Guide*. <https://www.dhs.gov/publication/active-shooter-emergency-action-plan-guide>

<sup>18</sup> New Hampshire Department of Safety. (2019). *Recommendations: Hard corners*. Retrieved from <https://schoolsafetyresources.nh.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Recommendations-Hard-Corners.pdf>



## Visibility

Natural surveillance is a CPTED concept that involves designing and positioning features and people to enhance visibility and make it easier to observe activities. The goal is to remove potential hiding spots and improve the ability of authorized personnel to monitor and respond effectively. This approach helps deter aggressive behaviors by increasing the likelihood of detection and enhancing the sense of safety.<sup>19</sup>

There are typically good sightlines inside and outside of buildings with good lighting at night, as previously noted. The hallways, while decorated for the season, did not have sightlines blocked by decorations or other items. The ability to see who is entering the building from the reception area varies by building, with some having a good view of visitors before their entry and others not being able to view visitors until they are standing at the reception desk.



### Moving Forward:

- Where possible, consider retrofitting reception areas with windows that allow views of the entry to the building. Where this is not possible or cost-prohibitive, an alternative solution is to install additional cameras with a view of the entry and give reception staff and others access to this view.

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<sup>19</sup> National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (U.S.). Division of Violence Prevention. (2017). Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) School Assessment (CSA).



## Communication

The ability to communicate with staff, administrators, and teachers throughout the school during a critical incident requires each staff person to have access to a two-way radio, with appropriate training on how to use this radio and which channels should be utilized.

The site does not have any two-way radios for administrative team members. These devices provide immediate contact among school staff, which helps both in everyday management and daily operations.<sup>20</sup> These radios are reliable through both power outages and network issues that may impact the internet or cellular services. They also offer a relatively low-cost solution that can scale with the schools' needs.

### Moving Forward:

- Develop a plan to purchase and train all staff on using two-way radios.
- A two-way radio should always be kept at each front desk.
- Ensure coordination among the various communication methods to be used in an emergency, including the phone system, two-way radios, and duress/panic alarms.
- Implement an all-hazard training plan with wall flip charts.
- During critical incidents, using clear communication is critical. Larger rooms or areas on campus should be referred to by one name (e.g., cafeteria, theater), and areas such as the close and crypt should be referred to consistently in all communications. This prevents missed communication and confusion during a critical incident where outsiders to the school may not understand the dual meanings.

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<sup>20</sup> Dougherty, K. (2024). Prioritizing School Safety: The Value of Two-Way Radios in School Administration. Retrieved on December 23, 2024 from <https://marketscale.com/industries/podcast-network/icom/prioritizing-school-safety/>  
Bryant, K. (2020). The Role of Communications in Implementing a FEMA Emergency Response. Retrived on December 23, 2024 from [www.ehstoday.com/safety-technology/article/21135511/the-role-of-communications-in-implementing-a-fema-emergency-response](http://www.ehstoday.com/safety-technology/article/21135511/the-role-of-communications-in-implementing-a-fema-emergency-response)

## Duress Alarms

Providing staff with access to duress alarms (more commonly known as 'panic' alarms) helps improve emergency service reaction time during a critical incident.<sup>21</sup> Ideally, there should be several of these alarms, some stationary and some mobile (to be used during tense meetings or customer interactions). These alarms should be tested quarterly to ensure they are in proper working order. Staff should be trained to understand how and when to use the alarm and who the alarm notifies.

Most reception areas have a duress alarm that contacts local police and installed under the counter/desk in the reception area. When asked, most staff were unaware of how often or if the devices had ever been tested. Many were not clear on whom the alarm contacted. One staff member indicated that they tested it but did not contact the police prior to that test. Additionally, there are lockdown alarms in most reception areas and other areas, but they do not appear to be connected to any outside agency, requiring that staff either push the duress alarm to contact police or contact police by phone.



### Moving Forward:

- Consider working with the alarm company to determine if the alarm systems can be tied into each other.
- Additional mobile panic or duress buttons should be reviewed with the alarm company.
- Consider if software-based duress alarms can be used at workstations instead of physical ones.
- Conduct regular (we suggest quarterly) tests of the alarm systems. Be sure to contact local police to inform them of the testing.
- Ensure that all alarms are accessible and not blocked.

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<sup>21</sup> Hattersley, R. (2024). More Campuses Adopting Panic Alarm Tech, Most Satisfied with System Performance. Published by Campus Safety Magazine. <https://www.campusafetymagazine.com/insights/more-campuses-adopting-panic-alarm-tech-but-satisfaction-with-system-performance-is-slipping/161115/>

## **Additional Information and Recommendations**

- It was noted that traffic near the school moves at a high rate of speed at times.
  - Consider the addition of speed control devices, particularly along Skvarla Avenue. It was noted that this road belongs to the county and may be beyond the purview of COA, but signs identify it as a non-county road. Identify which municipality is involved and work with them.
- COA does not currently use all hazard flip charts.
  - While the wall diagrams in classrooms are excellent, we suggest the addition of all hazard flip charts to each classroom and administrative area.

## Appendix A: Sample Products

### Medical

- Smaller “boo-boo” first aid kits: [Johnson & Johnson Travel Ready Portable Emergency First Aid Kit](#)
- Tourniquet: [Stop The Bleed® Basic Kit with CAT Tourniquet](#)
- Wound packing: [Critical Essentials Bleeding Control Kit for Chest & Limb Wounds](#)
- Security seals for AEDs: [Security Control Locks](#)
- Overdose kits: [Naloxone Overdose Emergency Kit Cabinet](#) and [Narcan medication](#)
- Anti-choking kits: [VitalVac](#), [LifeVac](#) and [Arixmed](#)

### Fire

- Fire blanket: [Prepared Hero Emergency Fire Suppression Blanket for Kitchen](#)

### Lockdown/Barricade

- Window pulls: [Nightlock window shade](#) and [Hideaway Helper window shade](#)
- Door locking devices: [TeacherLock](#), [SAFEbolt](#), [Brinks door security bar](#), [Door armor max](#), [DoorJammer Lockdown](#), [The Boot](#), [Bolo Stick](#), [Rhino Ware](#)
- Mobile panic/duress apps: [SHEQSY app](#), [Blackline Safety](#), [OK Alone](#), [Lone Worker app](#)
- Summary article on panic/duress alarms: [Deepdive: 2023 Panic Alarm and Mobile Duress Systems and Apps](#)