

**Joint Communique from
Lowell School District and Mountain View Academy**

Over the last few months, the media has covered our efforts to review and update our emergency preparedness. The administration of both schools have been working together to create action plans that address the range of potential emergencies, including fires, earthquakes, dam collapses, hazardous chemicals and the possibility of a school shooting.

Through the initial process we have realized that the existing plans are outdated and fail to address adequately the potential issues we may face. Ms. Kay Graham is leading the process of the updating of our emergency preparedness plan, in collaboration with Mrs. Laurie Cardwell and Mr. Johnie Lee Matthews III.

The area that has recently been the focus of the media are the plans we have in place for addressing a potential school shooting. The attention that has been generated has clearly shown that the **basic protections** for our schools are inadequate. Examples of the needs are:

- ✓ Creating a much more secure perimeter and entrance into the schools through **installing fencing to secure our buildings and entrances**;
- ✓ **Installing electronic door entrances**, which will limit individuals freely entering the schools; and,
- ✓ **Replacing old interior and exterior doors** that have locks that don't work and where door windows provide clear and open vision from the hallways, which would assist a potential shooter.

We are in the process of concluding the master facility planning for our schools, which will provide additional areas that will address school security and hazardous issues such as asbestos tiles and lead paints. Once completed we will be sending master facility information for each community member to consider. We will also hold community meetings, in our effort to inform. We will need the necessary and additional funding to address these basic needs.

Recently, Mountain View Academy and Lowell District leadership (Board Presidents and Chief Executives) met and discussed the many issues related to the potential arming of school staff. At this time, we agreed that the philosophical and logistical issues, along with the need for additional research regarding the risks and benefits of arming staff, demand that the staff continue to study the option. We believe that the optimum solution would be for the State or City to provide a School Resource Officer, a trained and armed police officer, to work in our schools. Since this is such a controversial and extremely complex issue, it is hoped that the recent media focus will motivate State and Federal experts to address this issue.

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