

## **PROJECT AND BUDGET NARRATIVE**

**South Pemiscot R-V Schools**

**COPS-SVPP-APPLICATION-2019**

**ORI#: M0261ZZ**

### **Project Narrative**

#### ***School Safety Planning Efforts***

The South Pemiscot R-V District, situated in Pemiscot County, serves approximately 600 students K-12, on a campus that covers over 30 acres with seven separate buildings. The physical layout of the campus, which has evolved over the past 60 plus years, makes securing our facilities a unique challenge. Other common challenges we face as a small, rural district include a smaller local police force and extended law enforcement response times from county personnel. Within the city limits, only one local officer is available at any given time, and with our location at the southern-most tip of Pemiscot County, which is over 513 square miles, response time from county law enforcement can typically be as long as 15 minutes. Statistics show that the vast majority of casualties in a violent campus incident occur in far less time than that. This is why it is fundamentally important that we “harden” our campus to the greatest extent possible in order to deter potential intruders and to allow law enforcement sufficient time to respond in the event of a crisis.

Ten years ago, the South Pemiscot campus was typical of many small, rural districts, with a prevailing mindset among administrators and staff that “it wouldn’t happen here.” The district had few security measures in place, an outdated crisis plan that was rarely referenced, and minimal opportunities for staff training on safety issues. We were awakened from that misconception in a series of events that began in 2007 with one student attacking another with a knife on a school bus. The following school year (2008-2009), a student on a nearby county

school campus was arrested after a firearm was found in her backpack. And, in 2010, a physical struggle between our school resource officer and a student nearly resulted in the officer's firearm discharging. These specific incidents, along with various social media threats and the increasing occurrences of school violence nationwide, began to change the prevailing mindset and led the district to make student and campus safety a top priority.

In 2010, the district began this initiative by conducting a comprehensive school safety review, which involved risk assessment, faculty and staff input, informal observations and walk-throughs, and a student safety survey. We found that 24 of 37 entry doors on campus were unlocked for most of the school day, over 90% of classroom doors remained unlocked and/or open, neither of our schools or administrative building had a screening process for visitors, and the district had a generic and outdated crisis plan and evacuation maps. Moreover, teachers had no classroom emergency kits and little to no training on how to respond in an active shooter or intruder situation.

The district's immediate goal was to limit access points to "channel" traffic and lock all access points throughout the school day. The district also began the process of writing a crisis plan that included specific procedures for staff and students to follow in crisis situations. The district also implemented daily safety procedures, including requiring staff to keep classroom doors locked and closed at all times throughout the school day (with the exception of passing periods); assigning additional duty teachers before school, after school, and during passing periods; and implementing a specific screening process for visitors at each building on campus. These were immediate steps taken by the district at minimal to no cost, with the long-term goal in mind of completing more ambitious and costly projects that would continue to "harden" the campus. The following three years, however, were the largest deficit-spending years in the

district's recent history, at \$137,980, \$263,126, and \$278,596 respectively; therefore, district administrators were forced to be creative in terms of improving campus safety. Over that time period, administration focused on staff training and student/staff safety drills, the ongoing revision of the district crisis plan, classroom emergency kits, ALICE training, and the continual monitoring of compliance with daily safety procedures.

Beginning in 2014, with a more workable budget, the district began to take serious steps to harden its campus by installing controlled access and surveillance cameras at main entry/exit points. Each administrator and staff member, the Steele Police Department, and the Pemiscot County Sheriff's Office have access/identification badges to enter at controlled access points on campus. In 2016-2017, the district also installed window armor on glass entryways and administrative office windows and labeled exterior classroom windows to facilitate law enforcement response in the event of a crisis. Other safety initiatives over the past few years have included purchasing digital radios for key campus personnel and a phone intercom system that enables instant communication campus-wide.

In 2017-2018, having not had a school resource officer since 2010, the district also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with local and county law enforcement to begin using off-duty police officers and sheriff's deputies to provide additional security throughout each school day. This program, along with the district's record of safety initiatives, prompted the Missouri School Board Association to invite the district safety coordinator to speak at the 2018 Missouri Safe Schools and Colleges Conferences, where she presented a session entitled "Using Practical Measures to Enhance Safety In Rural Schools."

Each year, the district has taken definitive, proactive steps to make its campus more secure and ensure that students feel safe, while still preserving the small-school, friendly

atmosphere in which we believe students thrive. We are constantly examining current safety measures, revising crisis procedures, providing initial training to new staff and follow-up training with other staff and students, and exploring new ideas through professional development and research. We have also, unfortunately, had some real-world practice in terms of implementing crisis procedures, with incidents involving two social media threats, one of which led to a felony charge against a student, and threats of physical violence against teachers, which resulted in a number of parents being banned from campus events. These incidents have helped further inform our safety procedures.

Next year (2019-2020), in cooperation with and support from the Pemiscot County Sheriff's Office, the district will have a full-time deputy on campus throughout the school day to provide additional support with security and, if necessary, intervention in the event of a crisis situation. Pemiscot County Sheriff Tommy Greenwell realizes the critical importance of "hardening" our campus and, being acutely aware of the financial situation of our district and our track record on school safety, recommended that we apply for the COPS-SVVP grant. South Pemiscot R-V Schools has truly emerged as a leader among schools in Pemiscot County and the Bootheel of Missouri regarding low-cost, practical measures that work to enhance school safety.

### ***Funding Request and Integration***

Although the South Pemiscot School District has made a concerted effort over the past ten years to make its campus a hard target by limiting and securing access points and using KeyScan panels to control access via staff identification/key cards, one consistent challenge we have faced is the deterioration and design of our entry/exit doors in the older buildings. Securing access points is often difficult and inconsistent because the locks on these doors at times do not

operate as they should in conjunction with the KeyScan system, either due to worn-out locks or warped doors and/or door surrounds. Many of these doors are also composed of aluminum and glass; therefore, even our secured access points could potentially be compromised. This grant would allow the district to ensure that every access door in each of our buildings is composed of 16-gauge steel (with a peep window) and that updated locks operate correctly and predictably.

The grant monies would also provide additional controlled access (KeyScan) panels to allow secure and timely access into buildings from the playground/recess areas on our elementary campuses, as well as other highly-trafficked or especially-vulnerable entry/exit doors. The KeyScan access system on campus will be expanded to include all main entrance/exit doors to and from the playground areas at both of the elementary schools, the delivery entrance to the main cafeteria (used by grades 1-12), a frequently-used high school gym entrance, and the high school weight room entrance. Adding KeyScan access to these doors is necessary to facilitate quick entrance into the school from the playground areas, as currently, teachers supervising recess must use a key to unlock the doors to reenter the building. In case of an emergency situation outside, KeyScan access would allow students and staff to enter the safety of the building much more quickly. The addition of KeyScan access at the cafeteria delivery, high school gym, and weight room entrances is necessary because due to traffic patterns and heavy staff and student use of these doors, they are most often left unsecured or propped open (in violation of school policy).

The first step towards “building” a safe school is the “foundation” of physical security. We began taking that first step ten years ago, to the degree that the district’s financial budget would allow; however, this grant would allow the district to fully realize its goal for the physical security of its campus.

***Management and Implementation Plan***

The district has a good working relationship with both ESI Communications and Steward Steel Door Division, the companies that have provided quotes for the KeyScan controlled access system and steel doors respectively. ESI installed the original KeyScan system in 2014-15, and Steward has done some repair and maintenance work for the district in the past. Both vendors understand that project completion may take up to two years and have expressed their willingness to be flexible. If the district receives the SVVP grant, Superintendent Chris Moore will meet with both vendors to get input as to the timeline of project completion, as steel doors at controlled access points will most likely need to be installed prior to the KeyScan control panels. The district's goal is to have all primary access doors replaced with steel doors and all of the ESI KeyScan installation completed in the first fiscal year. This will account for approximately half of the grant budget. The remainder of the work will be completed in the next fiscal year.

***Sustainability Plan***

Upon project completion, there is little in terms of ongoing maintenance that would be outside the boundaries of the district's \$55,000 annual budget for "Repairs and Maintenance." The district's maintenance supervisor will handle any necessary minor repairs as needed on a door-by-door basis, and the technology supervisor will be responsible for monitoring control panels and ensuring that the appropriate software is updated as needed. In compliance with safety procedures already in place, the on-campus deputy and the district safety coordinator will conduct regular walk-throughs of the campus to ensure that doors remain closed and secured and that KeyScan access is working properly.

**Budget Narrative****C. Equipment & Technology****Total: \$115,884.45*****Doors & Locks (plus labor to install):***

Every aluminum/glass entry door on campus will be replaced with a 16-gauge galvanized steel door. This would include the purchase of 37 steel doors, along with the appropriate finish hardware necessary for installation. *(Total: 77,081.00)*

***KeyScan Control Panels & Readers:***

The KeyScan access system on campus will be expanded to include all main entrance/exit doors to and from the playground areas at both of the elementary schools, the delivery entrance to the main cafeteria (used by grades 1-12), a frequently-used high school gym entrance, and the high school weight room entrance. Adding KeyScan access to these doors is necessary to facilitate quick entrance into the school from the playground areas; currently, teachers supervising recess must use a key to unlock the doors to reenter the building. In case of an emergency situation outside, KeyScan access would allow students and staff to enter the safety of the building much more quickly. The addition of KeyScan access at the other doors is necessary, because due to traffic patterns and heavy staff and student use of these doors, they are the doors most often left unsecured or propped open (in violation of school policy).

Expanding KeyScan access would involve the purchase of two 8-door control panels, one 4-door control panel, and 8 KeyScan K-Prox3 Readers and Plates, along with the wire necessary for install. It would also include the purchase of 17 striker locking systems to replace worn out and/or less secure magnetic locks. *(Total: 38,803.45)*

**G. Other Costs**

**Total: \$13,000.00**

***Labor:***

The estimated cost for steel door installation is \$13,000.00. A quote was provided by Steward Steel Door Division.