

Orinda Intermediate School is a tale of two campuses. It is in an idyllic setting, nestled in the foothills of a San Francisco Bay suburb considered one of the safest in Northern California. But the campus is also in a kind of physical turmoil. One of its primary buildings has been leveled to make way for a Student Services Center that will eventually house administration offices, counseling, a wellness center, and a conference room. The much-needed renovations to its 60+ year old buildings have caused major upheaval in the availability of bathrooms and classrooms on campus, as well as a major rethinking of foot and vehicle traffic on campus.

As the Assistant Principal, Bruce Giron and I surveyed the school we both became aware of the potential dangers presented by active construction on a middle school campus. The contractor has erected fences to prevent students from entering the construction zone where workers are digging up sewers, laying electrical line, and building support systems for the new building. Heavy machinery is all around us, yet there are students who have tried to create shortcuts from one part of campus to another by walking through the construction area. Giron said he wasn't aware of this problem. I suggested our campus safety supervisor increase her patrols around the construction area, particularly during the mostly unsupervised times of brunch and lunch and then tie down the two fences to prevent student from wiggling between them, go onto the construction site and potentially get hurt.

The construction has also made parent drop-offs and pick-ups in the traffic circle in front of the school more of a challenge. This

was a hotly debated issues by key stakeholders in a meeting I attended before the start of school. Because of the extreme lack of parking in front of the administration building, Principal Stacy Wayne decided to severely limit parents' ability to drop off items during the school-day. Administrators decided to bar parents from parking at the school in the middle of the day when they arrived to pick up, or drop off their children for a sports event, doctor's visit, or other exceptional reasons. This decision satisfies the safety problem that is created if too many cars are allowed on the campus at once.

One last security issue that needs to be remedied involves security cameras on the OIS campus. There are only three cameras and they are all positioned in the Orinda Intermediate School cafeteria. But Giron told me none of the three cameras are working. The cameras were primarily installed following a major security issue. Up until this year, an outside vendor supplied our brunches and lunches that charged for their services. The students had to pay for all the food they received which made theft a serious problem. This year California Governor Gavin Newsome and the legislature mandated free breakfasts and lunches at all public schools in the state. The theft problem has fallen dramatically.

But Giron still says one of his top priorities is to get those cameras repaired and operating again. The security cameras are examples of a physical promise we make as administrators to keep our students safe and secure. Updating and maintaining our school is also part of the promise we make to parents and our wider community, and it's a promise I intend to keep as an

administrator. Encouraging our students to be a “respectful, responsible, considerate” community member is a pledge the school makes to families. PSEL 5 compels administrators to reflect that same kind of consideration by upholding the well-being of our students. (PSEL, 2015) It is critical administrators uphold that same standard by being responsible for the safety of our children wherever they are on campus and especially during this upheaval.

National Policy Board for Educational Administration (2015).
Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015. 13-14.
Reston, VA: Author.