

## Manhattan Beach pledges \$1 million toward school safety

David Rosenfeld Mar 21, 2018



The flag at Manhattan Beach Middle School rests at half staff in response to shooting death of special education teacher Sandra Casey in Las Vegas, Sunday night October 1, 2017.

Photo by Robert Casillas



Mira Costa and Redondo Union students join national walkout for gun safety

Just a week after hundreds of Mira Costa High School students joined thousands across the country in walking out of class for gun safety, the Manhattan Beach City Council unanimously agreed to contribute \$1 million to the school district to beef up campus security.

Exactly what the money will be spent on has not been



**Hermosa Beach police chief and superintendent talk school safety**

determined, however, police department and school district officials were busy in recent days making assessments of all campuses district wide.



**Heroic actions by Redondo Beach police in Las Vegas came days after trauma training**

Superintendent Mike Matthews said the school district intended to address perimeter fencing at the high school and other enhanced security measures in the near future and pay for it through the district's Measure C funds. But that money is not immediately available.

In making the motion to allocate \$1 million from the city's reserve funds, which totaled about \$3 million, Councilmember Steve Napolitano said it was the right thing to do. He pointed out that roughly 20 percent of the city's population attend or work at district schools.

"It's not a schools issue," he said. "It's a community issue."



**Mira Costa parents upset with administration after walkout**

MBUSD officials convened an ad hoc sub-committee March 8 with members from both the district and the city that normally worked on issues related to field usage and instead shifted the conversation to school safety.

On March 14, the day of the student walkout, Matthews along with Manhattan Beach Police Chief Derrick Abell issued a joint statement directly addressing a key issue in the debate that has swept the country in the wake of the school shooting in Parkland, Florida that killed 17 people Feb. 14.



**'March for Our Lives' South Bay set for Strand March 24**

Although police and school district officials have enjoyed a partnership over many years, times have changed, they wrote.

"Our schools were not designed during a time when controlled campus access was as important as it is today," wrote Abell and Matthews in a joint statement. "However, we are now experiencing a paradigm shift that requires us to address school safety in so many different ways, including school infrastructure, internal and external communication, and



**Manhattan Beach police address residents in first townhall since 2013**

emergency planning."

Included in the announcement were several steps the police and MBUSD plan to implement in the near future. Among them is active shooter training to MBUSD staff in addition to its lock-down drill. Police will also conduct enhanced active shooter scenarios at the high school similar to those conducted at Redondo Union High School as recently as this week.



**Mira Costa and Redondo Union students walk out to protest gun violence**

Michael Hayden, choral teacher at Mira Costa and 2014 California Teacher of the Year, said that in his opinion the high school could use more security, but he worried about the campus turning too much into a prison.

Mira Costa, unlike, Redondo Union High School and Manhattan Beach Middle School, does not have perimeter fencing. School administrators have also reacted twice this school year to potentially violent threats made on social media.



**Manhattan Beach details upgraded campus security spending**

"We have a very open campus that makes us very vulnerable," Hayden said. "What we don't want to do is create schools to be prisons, these hard locked down places. Our kids don't want to be educated like that, and we don't want to teach like that."

One thing clear to Hayden and the vast majority of teachers he has spoken with in the beach cities and beyond is that they do not want teachers to be armed with guns. Arming teachers has not been part of the conversation in any of the beach city districts so far.

The Manhattan Beach police department will hold a town hall event 6 p.m. March 27 at the Joslyn Center. Chief Abell will lead a discussion about issues such as patrol, traffic, parking enforcement and crime statistics.