

# Mira Costa student arrested for posting criminal threats on Snapchat

Larry Altman Feb 16, 2018



file photo by Brad Graverson



Two students arrested for criminal threats at Mira Costa High School



A Mira Costa High School student was arrested Thursday after he allegedly posted on social media a photo of a gun pointed at students, Manhattan Beach police said.

Police determined there was no immediate threat to students, but planned extra patrols around the city's schools for the next few weeks, Manhattan Beach police Sgt. Tim Zins said.

School staff notified police about 2:50 p.m. of a Snapchat photo sent out by the student of an Airsoft gun pointed at students. Officers identified the sender, who admitted to "sticker" the photo over a photo of students on campus.



Manhattan and Redondo Beach schools reevaluate emergency response procedures

recommended the district spend the money.

The new security initiatives add approximately \$1.4 million to the budget already allocated under Measure C, a \$114 million ballot measure approved by voters in November 2016, according to Dawnalyn Murakawa-Leopard, deputy superintendent. With the city's contribution of \$1 million, the district needs just \$400,000 to cover the rest.

At the top of the priority list is perimeter fencing at four district campuses. To fortify Mira Costa High School as well as Pennekamp and Grand View elementary schools in addition to a section of Pacific Elementary not currently enclosed would cost an estimated \$500,000, Murakawa-Leopard said.

"You look at it from the perspective: If I were to come to one of these schools what would be the easiest access?" Abell asked. "And it isn't just fencing. Who's watching the entry points? Do you have someone manning or is it a door that opens or closes based on some sort of device?"

In addition to fencing, Abell advocates district-wide sign-in procedures so visitors cannot enter campuses unless they have signed in at the front office. Similar sign-in and perimeter fencing measures have been in place at Redondo Union School District campuses for several years.

School district officials are also considering the purchase of new radios for communication district-wide at a cost of roughly \$200,000.

Radios used now by campus security have limitations, said Abell. A new system would function district-wide while the current radios do not reach every campus. Radios too function when cell phones are inoperable as people flood the airwaves.

The district will also consider improving its cell phone coverage on campuses, especially Mira Costa, with a series of boosters

at a cost of about \$150,000.

The biggest expense would be the purchase of security cameras, for which district officials received an estimate of \$2.1 million. That allocation would likely not be made immediately and would need further consideration, Murakawa-Leopard said.

Torrance School District recently authorized the purchase of security cameras and perimeter fencing at a cost of \$15 million.

"When you invest in cameras, you have to have someone available to watch the cameras and that storage of the information is at a cost as well," Abell said. "Thinking about that in the future and how to accomplish that is something you may table for now, but you may look at in the future."

Since the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida that killed 17 people Feb. 14, Manhattan Beach officials have been thinking differently about campus safety. For weeks, police officials toured district campuses and assessed what security measures could be improved.

"The schools were built many years ago, some 40 or 50 years ago, when safety was not necessarily the discussion point. It was about learning," Abell said.

Some of the measures recommended by the chief did not involve money, but rather procedures and staffing. Already implemented was a change to the emergency response procedures in the event of a fire alarm.

Instead of rushing out of the classroom, teachers are now instructed to take a moment to determine whether there is an actual emergency or a drill. During the Parkland shooting, the perpetrator used the fire alarm to draw victims into a

courtyard.

"We are asking (teachers) to use their senses to observe the environment around them before they decide whether to leave the classroom or not," Murakawa-Leapord said.

Another suggestion Abell made was to audit the locking system throughout the district, assess who had access to certain locks possibly and consider a universal locking system. Police officials will also hold live active shooter drills with teachers and district officials later this spring, Abell said.

School board member Christine Cronin-Hurst said she worried especially about the check-in procedures and how it might alter the culture between parents and teachers.

"We have to be careful about what we're losing in order to have these citadels with gates and locks and check-in procedures," she said. "Parents like to be able to walk their kids to the classroom, maybe talk to the teacher. That's something that's part of our culture."

Abell said there was always a balance with security. Fencing and communication, though, Abell said were top priorities.

School board member Ellen Rosenberg said she wanted more evidence fencing was the best use of resources.

"We should take a good hard look at fencing," Rosenberg said. "They make people feel good, but there is not a lot of information that it's useful. I would like to see a lot more evidence that is the highest and best use of the funds before we proceed."

The school board will take up the matter at an upcoming meeting on exact allocations while the City Council will also have a say in its final approval, though Mayor Amy Howorth indicated the council was not interested in micro-managing the

district.