

Manhattan Beach

District-wide security measures detailed

by David Rosenfeld

Along with perimeter fencing around four school campuses in Manhattan Beach, city and school district officials are looking at purchasing new radios, cell phone boosters and security cameras as well as revising its sign-in procedures for visitors.

For the first time since the city earmarked \$1 million a month ago toward school security measures, Manhattan Beach Police Chief Derrick Abell in a joint meeting of the City Council and school board detailed how exactly the department 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 also function when cell phones are inoperable as people flood the airwaves in an emergency.

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

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Manhattan Beach Young soap maker takes business pitch national



Mira Costa sophomore Paloma Burgos in her lavender garden. *courtesy p...*

by David Rosenfeld

When Paloma Burgos and her family traveled to France several years ago, they were awed by fields of lavender. So, when they returned home to Manhattan Beach, they decide to replace the grass in their yard with drought-tolerant lavender plants.

Burgos, a sophomore at Mira Costa High School, started making soap of the lavender last year and she after launched a small business. She sells the soap, lavender sachets and bouquets at area farmers markets and festivals. Her business, Lavande Paloma, donates all its profits toward purchasing vitamins for medical donations to under-served countries such

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Community, start your engines!



An assortment of Pinewood Derby cars from past competitions make up the collection of Connor and Brendan Keller. The brothers will compete in a community-wide Pinewood Derby race May 28 for a Scout House fundraiser. See story on page 8.

photo by David Rosenfeld

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