




September 9, 2008

To: District Superintendents

From: Randolph E. Ward, Ed.D. 
County Superintendent of Schools

**Invitation to Participate
In
The Great Southern California Shake Out
Earthquake Exercise**

On Thursday November 13, 2008 the State of California Governor's Office of Emergency Services will conduct a state-wide, full-scale earthquake exercise.

The exercise commences at 10 A.M. and will simulate a 7.9 magnitude earthquake occurring on the San Andreas Fault with the epicenter located near the Salton Sea. The scenario for San Diego County will involve potential road closures, dam failures, loss of utilities and an influx of evacuees from more severely impacted counties.

The purpose of the exercise is to test state, county, tribal and municipal governments' response and recovery capabilities. Hospitals, private sector entities, institutions of higher learning and school districts state-wide have registered to participate.

The San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE) will also participate in the exercise by conducting a drop, cover and hold drill for 60 seconds followed by an evacuation and an accountability check of all students and staff at all SDCOE locations throughout the county.

I invite you to register your district to participate in the exercise at the following website: www.ShakeOut.org/register. Attached are recommended steps recommended by SDCOE emergency response staff on how you may enhance your participation in the exercise. The degree of your involvement is up to you..

Collaborating in this state-wide earthquake exercise will improve our capability to prepare students and staffs in the event of an earthquake. It is hoped that participation will reinforce previous earthquake preparedness efforts at schools and in the homes. Please join us and others as partners in this effort, and if you have questions about the November 13 exercise, contact Jess Martinez, Emergency Crisis Response Management coordinator, at (858) 292-3569, or jess.martinez@sdcoe.net

Recommended Steps To Enhance Your District's Participation and Readiness

1. At the appointed time on the exercise date conduct a district-wide earthquake drill.
2. Direct all students, staff and visitors to take cover under a desk or table for 60 seconds by dropping to their knees with backs toward windows and their heads protected by one arm while using the other arm to hold onto a desk or table. (Ed Code 35297)
3. After 60 seconds direct students, staff and visitors to evacuate to the pre-assigned on-campus evacuation area.
4. Once students, staff and school visitors are outside, each school should conduct an accountability check to ensure all personnel have evacuated.
5. Each school is encouraged activate their Incident Command System (ICS) by setting up a command post and deploying school staff in response teams deemed necessary after an earthquake (e.g. search & rescue, first-aid, parent & student reunification teams). Once all students, staff and visitors are accounted for and response teams have reported they may return to class.
6. District offices should activate their ICS and Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in order to conduct an accountability check of all their school sites. (The exercise allows for a continuation of phone and electrical utilities during the first 2 hours of the scenario).
7. At 11 A.M. SDCOE will conduct an accountability check of all participating school district offices via a conference call line. (Number and password to be provided later.)
8. By 12 P.M. SDCOE will provide an accountability report regarding the "status" of participating districts to the County of San Diego Office of Emergency Services.

Debriefing

Soon after the exercise each school site is strongly encouraged to conduct a debriefing with its staff to discuss:

1. What went well during the exercise?
2. What could be improved?
3. Timeline to address improvements and conduct next earthquake drill.

Once all schools have conducted their site debriefing, principals should debrief with their superintendents. The recommended debriefing agenda should include:

1. Sharing debriefing notes from the schools. What went well during the exercise and what could be improved?
2. Prioritizing debriefing notes into next steps for a district-wide effort to improve emergency readiness.
3. Determine a timeline to implement improvements.
4. Select a date for the next district-wide earthquake drill.

Resources and Reminders

Districts willing to participate must register at The Great Southern California Shake Out website at www.ShakeOut.org/register . Additional information and resources are available at www.ShakeOut.org/schools . A brief earthquake preparedness video and drill script are available for schools at www.sdcoe.net/ssp/support/?loc=welfare-crisis&m=5 . Free ICS training for district office and school staff is also available at <http://training.fema.gov/IS/> .

For more information please contact the Shake Out websites provided above. You can also contact Jess Martinez at SDCOE at 858-292-3569 or at jess.martinez@sdcoe.net .

Participating districts will receive an SDCOE reminder the week of November 3rd. This reminder will include a conference call phone number and password to be used on the day of the exercise to report your district exercise “status” to SDCOE.