



Item #05c

Kensington Community Services District

DATE: June 25, 2026

TO: Emergency Preparedness Committee

SUBMITTED: Danielle Madugo, Director

STAFF REPORT: David Aranda, Interim General Manager & Mary A. Morris-Mayorga, Consultant

SUBJECT: School Evacuation Concerns

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is for the Emergency Preparedness Committee's discussion of school evacuation concerns.

BACKGROUND (provided by staff):

The Emergency Preparedness Committee held a special roundtable meeting on March 11, 2026 focused on Red Flag Days including evacuation. Chief Saylor specifically addressed the question of what the district should recommend to other entities, including the school. Chief Saylor responded, "...we don't have authority over everybody, specifically the schools. We don't have authority over the school district. The only person that can close the school is the school district, not the police chief, not the fire chief." The best venue for voicing concerns would be directly to the school district since the district does not have authority over the school; therefore, it would not be appropriate for the district to make recommendations based on the chief's discussion at that meeting. The chiefs discussed related school concerns raised during this meeting (beginning at 08:21 of the Zoom recordings) that can be reviewed here:

<https://www.kensingtonfire.org/2026-03-11-emergency-preparedness-committee-special-roundtable-meeting>

INTRODUCTION (provided by Director Madugo):

Kensington Elementary School (KES) recently adopted new safety protocols for Extreme Fire Hazard or Particularly Dangerous Situation (PDS) Days. Those safety plans and the potential evacuation of KES do not occur in a vacuum; it directly impacts not only their students but the safety of the surrounding Kensington residents. The goal of this item is to identify the broader impacts of KES's new safety protocols, e.g., closure and evacuation, and how they relate to resident safety, evacuation impacts, resources at the school for residents, and finally incorporate them into the EPC's "Evacuation is your responsibility campaign," and other ongoing EPC work plan objectives, as applicable.

Attached is a PDF with a few pages from KES's Comprehensive School Safety Plan and Berkeley Fire's Red Flag rubric to aid the discussion. A link to the entire 108-page of KES's Comprehensive School

Safety Plan is provided below for those who might want more information:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hq8-jYAdDNRIK6wKwsvl1RznaINldgiY/view?usp=sharing>

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact identified from this item.

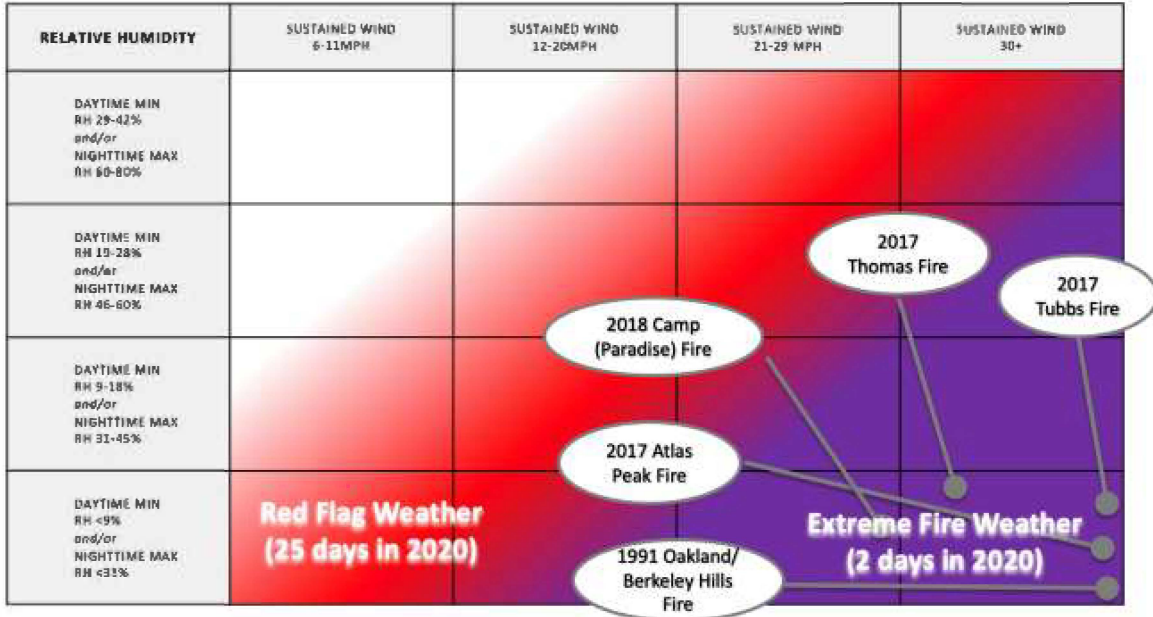
EXHIBIT(S):

- Berkeley's Recommendations Based on Research
- School Site Safety Plan, Kensington Elementary School - Section 5: Emergency Response Actions

BERKELEY'S RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON RESEARCH

The Berkeley Fire Department's recommendation to leave during Extreme Fire Weather is based on research and past fires. The 1991 Oakland/Berkeley Hills fire—and many recent major fires in California—started during similar weather.

Extreme Fire Weather means very high winds and very low humidity. These conditions make fires more likely and more dangerous.



Many major fires in California started during Extreme Fire Weather. Berkeley Fire Department recommends leaving the hills during this weather, which is typically forecast once every few years.

Berkeley's evacuation instructions use findings from the 2025 Evacuation Time Study. Learn more about evacuations in Berkeley by visiting the [Evacuation StoryMaps](#) or downloading the [Evacuation Time Study](#).

Berkeley also performed an analysis to comply with State evacuation planning requirements. Download the [Access Impaired Neighborhoods Analysis](#) and the [Evacuation Route Safety, Capacity, and Viability Analysis](#) to learn more.

Section 5: Emergency Response Actions

The following emergency response actions refer to the Principal, Site Manager, or appropriate designee as the “School Administrator.” In addition, Public Information Officer (PIO) for the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) is referred to as the Director, Communications and each site must assign an Emergency Planning Coordinator who is responsible for emergency response actions at each individual school site.

Every effort has been made to address the requirements for the special needs population, where appropriate. It is the responsibility of the school administrator, individual teachers, and other classroom aides to ensure that hearing, sight, mobility impaired students, as well as other special needs students, are accounted for and receive appropriate instructions.

Emergency Notification Procedures:

Purpose:

To ensure critical information is shared with the departments and positions responsible for providing support and to communicate relevant information with senior leaders and elected officials.

Criteria:

- Power outage
- Fire
- Lockdown / suspicion of weapons
- Students involved in a shooting (includes weekend activity)
- Hospitalization (Student or staff injury requiring medical assistance.), 5150
- Police Activity / Student or Staff arrest
- Missing student
- Schoolwide impact
- Pandemic response (Covid-19)
- Could it make the news?

Notification Process:

1. Immediate notification:
 - a. Principal to Executive Director
 - b. Executive Director to Chief Academic Officer (CAO)
 - c. CAO or CBO to Superintendent
 - d. ERT or Communications sends to Cabinet via text, Union Partners where needed

2. Recovery Stage:

At the earliest possible convenience (within 24 hours), the Principal will share a written summary of the event with clarity around injuries, schoolwide implications, arrests as well as next steps.

3. Debrief:

Director, Safety Coordinator and Principal will debrief events within 7 days to garner any learning from the event and course correction that can be made.

Definition: Lockdown / Shelter-In-Place

Lockdown

A Lockdown is defined as those conditions requiring complete separation and protection of school staff and students from any situation regarding an existing internal or external situation that could directly threaten their safety. All school activity ceases, doors are locked, windows covered, no movement outside of the classroom. Examples: Intruder on Campus, Active Shooter on/off campus, Police Activity within close proximity of the school where activity may overflow onto the school campus.

Shelter-in-Place

A Shelter-in-Place is defined as, provides refuge for students, staff and public within a school building during an emergency. Shelters are located in areas that maximize the safety of inhabitants. Safe areas may change depending on emergencies.

Class activities may continue, but students should stay in classrooms, other than to use the bathroom.

Examples: Police Activity in local community, but with no immediate threat to school. Environmental emergencies; gas leak, chemical release.

Please note that Shelter-in-Place may be upgraded to a Lockdown and Lockdown may be downgraded to a Shelter-in-Place.

Fire

Fire in a School Building

- The School Administrator will:
 1. call 9-1-1,
 2. sound the fire alarm, and
 3. notify the Executive Director.
- School Staff will:
 1. supervise evacuation according to the Emergency Evacuation Plan posted in every classroom,
 2. close doors upon evacuating,
 3. take roll books and take roll at the evacuation site, and
 4. report missing students to the School Administrator.
- The Custodian or ERT member will open necessary gates for emergency vehicles.
- Re-occupy buildings when ordered to do so by the Fire Department and the School Administrator

Fire in Surrounding Area During Low Risk Fire Day

School Administrator will:

- Notify the Executive Director who will contact Superintendent through chain of communication
- Monitor the situation via official channels (local fire department, law enforcement, and emergency alerts).
- Assess proximity and severity of fire in consultation with emergency services.
- In coordination with district personnel and emergency agencies, determine if shelter-in-place or evacuation is necessary based on current threat level.

School Staff will:

- Remain alert and follow directions from administration.
- Prepare students for possible evacuation or shelter-in-place.
- Limit outdoor activities and close windows/doors if air quality is affected.

Custodian will:

- Ensure all gates and access points are ready for emergency personnel if needed.
- Monitor air filtration systems and maintain indoor air quality.
- Support communication and logistical needs of school administration.

- All communication will be coordinated by the principal and district communication team in collaboration with emergency agencies.

Coordinated Communication

All communication related to fire safety issues will be coordinated by the principal and district communication team in collaboration with emergency agencies.

Communication Tools:

- **ParentSquare:** Send Initial alert and updates to families
- **Internal Group Text/Email:** Staff alert

After-School Programs:

- Will be included in all communication chains
- Informed and coordinated with for any changes or emergency procedures.
- May be canceled if conditions worsen or as a precaution.

Extreme Red Flag Days or other High Fire-Risk Events

To ensure safe and consistent actions are taken during Red Flag Warnings or extreme fire weather conditions, this plan prioritizes the safety of students, staff, and community members while minimizing disruption.

1. Definitions

- **Extreme Weather:** Includes sustained winds over 45 mph and critical fire weather conditions.
- **Red Flag Warning:** Issued by the National Weather Service (NWS) indicating elevated fire risk due to dry conditions, low humidity, and high winds. Typically issued 48 hours in advance when possible.
[NWS Zone 508 Info](#)
- **Particular Dangerous Situations (PDS)** or Extreme Red Flag Days forecasted by NWS
- **Weather Zone:** Kensington School is located in NWS Zone 508 (San Francisco Bay Shoreline).

2. Authority to Close

The decision to close Kensington Hilltop School due to fire danger or extreme weather will be made by the **WCCUSD Superintendent or designee**, in consultation with **local fire and emergency response agencies** and the **Contra Costa County Superintendent**.

3. Criteria for Closure

Closure may be enacted if:

- Particular Dangerous Situations (PDS) or Extreme Red Flag Days is forecasted by NWS
- Active wildfire within 10-mile radius
- Evacuation warning/order issued

4. Decision Timeline for Closure

- **48 Hours in Advance (if possible):** Based on early NWS alerts
- **Day Before (Preferred):** If forecast certainty exceeds 80%, closure decision by 2:00 PM
- **Morning Of:** If overnight changes occur, closure decision by 6:00 AM
- **During School Day:** Emergency release protocols initiated if needed

5. Coordinated Communication

All communication related to closures or fire-related safety issues will be coordinated by the principal and district communication team in collaboration with emergency agencies.

Communication Tools:

- **ParentSquare:** Initial alert to families
- **Internal Group Text/Email:** Staff alert
- **Local Media:** If broader area closures occur
- **After-School Programs:** Will be included in all communication chains

6. Safety Considerations

- Office staff works with families to maintain updated emergency contact lists
- Ensure availability of battery-powered walkie talkies
- Establish direct coordination with fire departments for threat updates
- Integrate after-school programs into all emergency planning

7. Reserve Days for Closure

The academic calendar includes reserve days for emergency closures. These dates will be used if school is closed due to fire-related emergencies:

Reserve Days for 2025-2026 School Year

- November 10, 2025
- March 27, 2026
- May 22, 2026

Earthquake

Earthquake Procedures Inside

- DROP to the ground. For those students and staff who are physically unable to drop to the ground, they should remain seated and cover their heads with their arms and hands.
- COVER under or near desks, tables, or chairs in a kneeling or sitting position.
- HOLD onto table or chair legs. Protect eyes from flying glass and debris by using your arm to cover your eyes.
- Remain in the DROP position until ground movement ends. Be prepared to DROP, COVER, and HOLD during aftershocks.
- School staff should check for injuries and assess the general safety of the room.
- Report any hazards to the school Damage Survey Team.
- All Emergency Response Teams (ERTs) should report to the School Administrators Office or pre-designated location.

Earthquake Procedures Outside

- Move away from overhead hazards such as power lines, trees, and buildings. DROP to the ground and COVER the back of the neck with your hands.
- Do not enter buildings until it is safe to do so.
- School staff should check for injuries.
- Report any hazards to the school Damage Survey Team.
- All ERTs should report to the School Administrator's Office or pre-designated location.

Intruder on Campus

A campus intruder is defined as an individual who loiters or creates disturbances on school property. If an intruder is found on campus:

- Assess the situation and if it appears safe to approach the intruder, greet the individual in a polite and non-threatening manner.