



Press Release
Salida, Colorado
December 17, 2021

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City Hall at 719.539.4555
www.cityofsalida.com

City of Salida Completes School Incident Assessment

Salida, Co – The City of Salida has completed an assessment of its current policies and procedures related to school lockouts/lockdowns following an incident at Salida High School that occurred on September 23, 2021. An independent third-party analysis of internal responses, including communication procedures, incident command structure, and standard response practices was performed at the request of the Mayor and City Council.

Mayor Dan Shore commented, “The City of Salida and the Salida Police Department are currently reviewing this report and our standard protocol responses to incidents at all Salida schools. We’re grateful that there are lessons that can be learned and new policies that can be implemented to provide our children with the safest learning experience. We look forward to working with our partners at the Salida School District on implementation of best practices and following established protocols in the future.”

The City engaged Investigative Law Group (“ILG”) of Denver, Colorado, to assess the City’s coordinated response. ILG, founded in 1995, provides sophisticated response solutions to complex workplace issues as well as swift and impartial reviews. ILG gathered all relevant information, including dispatch calls, lockout/lockdown procedures, and recorded communications. ILG has assisted in evaluating whether actions were taken within the standard response protocols established between the City of Salida and Salida Public Schools, including where and how actions may not have followed protocol.

ILG’s independent report provides suggestions on improvement in the City’s response to school incidents, including improved communication techniques, better protocols around reverse-911 implementation, and updating standard responses to meet the demands of today’s emergency response expectations. New policies on use of body cameras for law enforcement officers have already been implemented in order to provide improved transparency for the community.

The community’s safety is the City’s top priority and trust in the City organization is very important to the City Council and staff. The Mayor and City Council continue to appreciate the hard work that our officers and staff put in each day for Salidans. Attached to this release is the independent report that reviewed actions taken and reasons why certain decisions were made by law enforcement on September 23, 2021. The City hopes that this report will help answer some questions we have received from members of our community.

For any questions, please contact City Hall at 719.539.4555.

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Executive Report
Salida Police Department Assessment

December 15, 2021

Travis Carr, Attorney Investigator
Investigations Law Group



SALIDA POLICE DEPARTMENT ASSESSMENT

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A. Introduction

Nina Williams, Esq, Wilson Williams LLP and City Attorney for the City of Salida (“Client”), retained Investigations Law Group (“ILG”) on October 9, 2021, to conduct an assessment into Salida Police Department’s (Salida PD) response to a school lockdown incident that occurred on September 23, 2021.

Concerns were raised by school officials regarding Salida PD’s overall response to the September 23, 2021, incident, when a grandmother reported her grandson had left her home that was near Salida High School (Salida High), was suicidal and was walking in the direction of Salida High with a gun.

Multiple officers from three (3) law enforcement agencies¹ responded, and Salida High was locked out and locked down during the incident. The event which is described in more detail below resulted in criminal charges against Principal Talmage Trujillo.

¹ Salida PD, Chaffee County Sheriff, and Colorado Parks and Fish and Wildlife.



Following the event, ILG was retained to assess the Salida PD's response on September 23, 2021, with respect to its standard response protocol. ILG was also hired to review Salida PD's communication procedures and incident command structure used on that day.

B. Independence, Standard of Review and Work Product Protection

Consistent with my role as an impartial third-party investigator, I determined the list of witnesses, the documents, and any other data required for this assessment. No one at the City of Salida attempted to, or in fact did, influence or steer the fact-finding or preparation of this Report. The City of Salida agreed to pay for the assessment regardless of its outcome. I conducted this assessment and reached my factual findings independent of any outside influence.

In this Report, I present the scope of the assessment, my methodology, a summary of facts I reviewed, and my factual findings.

In this Report, I do not offer legal advice, reach legal conclusions, or make recommendations for personnel action.

This assessment was conducted at the direction of counsel. As such, all materials in the file are presumably protected by the work product doctrine, whether marked as such or not.

C. Summary of Assessment Findings

Issue	Findings
Standard Response Protocol	Salida PD acted in accordance with their standard response protocol on September 23, 2021.
Communication Procedures	Salida PD acted within their communication procedures on September 23, 2021 with some opportunities for improvement.
Incident Command Structure	Salida PD responded using their incident command structure as law enforcement officers on September 23, 2021, with some opportunities for improvement.

Each respective topic is more fully explained in the assessment section below.

D. Scope and Methodology

Ms. Williams retained ILG to conduct this assessment on October 9, 2021. The retention agreement was signed on that date, and we began reviewing materials relevant to the assessment.



This assessment was limited in scope to specific issues regarding Salida PD's response on September 23, 2021. Accordingly, a full investigation surrounding Salida PD was not performed. I interviewed five (5) witnesses for this assessment including CJ Meseke, Officer, Spencer Blades, Lieutenant, Mark Willburn, Detective, Bre Tucker, Officer, and Rob Martellaro, Lieutenant. I also contacted the Crisis Manager at Sol Vista and obtained information.

There were numerous documents and audio recordings I reviewed relevant to this assessment including:

Exhibit No. or Document Ref.	Document Title
<i>On file</i>	21-2069 Salida PD incident report (Pgs. 1-92)
<i>On file</i>	21-2069- 16 Salida PD incident report (Pgs. 1-6)
<i>On file</i>	21-2069- 17 Salida PD incident report (Pgs. 1-3)
<i>On file</i>	Chaffee County Sheriff Office Report of Anthony Avila (Pgs. 1-5)
<i>On file</i>	21-2069 Salida PD Supplement incident report by Martellaro (Pgs. 1-12)
<i>On file</i>	21-2069 Salida PD Supplement incident report by Meseke (Pgs. 1-6)
<i>On file</i>	21-2069 Salida PD Supplement incident report by Flores (Pgs. 1-3)
<i>On file</i>	Salida PD Civil Commitment Policy
<i>On file</i>	Salida PD Crisis Intervention Incidents Policy
<i>On file</i>	Directive 19-2 Mental Illness Contacts
<i>On file</i>	Salida PD Hostage and Barricade Incidents Policy
<i>On file</i>	Salida PD Officer Response to Calls Policy
	Salida PD Organizational Structure and Response Policy
	Salida PD Rapid Response and Deployment Policy
1	Intergovernmental Agreement Between the City of Salida and The Salida School District (MOU)
2	Buena Vista Lockout (Chaffee County Times: All Clear Given...)
<i>On file</i>	Standard Response Protocol Training Guide (PowerPoint)
<i>On file</i>	Salida PD Temporary custody of Juveniles Policy
<i>On file</i>	324 Dispatch Audio Recordings
3	September 7, 2018 Lockout Notice and Salida PD Report
4	September 10, 2018 Lockout Notice and Salida PD Report
5	Picture of Superintendent Blackburn
6	Select pages from 21-2069 16 Salida incident report
7	Select pages from 21-2069 16 Salida incident report
<i>On file</i>	October 21, 2019 Salida PD Report
<i>On file</i>	Text Messages from September 23, 2021 (Discovery File)
<i>On file</i>	Video Recordings of September 23, 2021 (Discovery File)
<i>On file</i>	Standard Response Protocol K12-T
<i>On file</i>	Emails on the Reverse 911 Notification List
<i>On file</i>	Emergency Response and Crisis Management (ERCM) Express Volume 2



<i>On file</i>	Mental Health Technology Transfer Center, After a School Tragedy...Readiness, Response, Recover, & Resources
<i>On file</i>	Colorado School Safety Guide
<i>On file</i>	Two Audio Recordings of Dave Lugo
<i>On file</i>	Audio Recording of Brandon Hawkins
<i>On file</i>	Audio Recording of Larry Parks
<i>On file</i>	Audio Recording of Meredith Takacs
<i>On file</i>	Meryl Tolsma Written Statement

I submitted a Colorado Open Records Act (CORA) request to the district on November 29, 2021, which included six (6) requests. Shelia Moore, Salida School District (School District) Business Manager response is detailed in blue text below²:

1. Any and all information from the October 5, 2021, School District Executive Session Meeting - Recordings (Audio and/or Video), Notes, Records, Attendance sheets.

This request is denied pursuant to CRS 24-6-402(2)(d.5)(II)(D), which maintains the confidentiality of executive session recordings. If it is asserted that this request has been improperly denied, please proceed as provided in CRS 24-72-204(5.5) and CRS 24-7-402(2)(d.5)(II)(C).

2. Any and all documentation regarding the Salida High School Emergency Preparedness Checklist for 2021-2022 school year. (See attached example).

This request is denied pursuant to CRS 24-72-204(2)(VIII)(A), which maintains the confidentiality of specialized details of security arrangements.

3. Any and all documentation regarding the Incident Commander System and/or incident commanders at Salida High School during emergency situations (Diagrams, Charts, etc...).

This request is denied pursuant to CRS 24-72-204(2)(VIII)(A), which maintains the confidentiality of specialized details of security arrangements.

4. Any and all documentation regarding Salida High School's Standard Response Protocol in emergency situations; and

This request is denied pursuant to CRS 24-72-204(2)(VIII)(A), which maintains the confidentiality of specialized details of security arrangements.

5. Any and all emails sent or received from David Blackburn regarding the lockdown/lockout incident on September 23, 2021; and

The District can review the emails and determine if any are in a protected class. This would be handled at a rate of \$33/hour and would exceed the \$50.

6. Any and all documentation from any team or individual regarding safety assessments, safety audits, corrective actions, and/or future recommendations for the lockdown/lockout incident on September 23, 2021.

This request is denied pursuant to CRS 24-72-204(2)(VIII)(A), which maintains the confidentiality of specialized details of security arrangements.

Shiela Moore
Business Manager

² The School District did not object to the Colorado Sun when they requested some of the same documentation requested on November 29, 2021.



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Following this exchange, the School District, through their attorney, released very limited information. There is currently still documentation outstanding as of drafting this report.

The timeline of the assessment was longer than originally expected for a few reasons. First, there were hours of recordings, numerous documents and research that was required to thoroughly assess the Salida PD response. The School District's denial of the CORA request required additional research and evaluation to provide context on best practices. Lastly, the Thanksgiving Holiday caused an additional delay to complete the assessment and finalize this report.

E. Summary of Events

i. Background

Salida, Colorado, has a population of approximately 6,290 people.³ Salida PD has eighteen (18) police officers including Chief Russell Johnson. To provide context to the assessment and findings, some background information about how the School District and Salida PD have worked together over the years is helpful.

▪ 2017-2020

The School Resource Officer (SRO) program in Salida, Colorado, started in 2017 by written agreement between the Salida Schools and Salida PD.⁴ It is a two-year term for each respective SRO. The program was designed “to provide a school-based approach to the development of a positive relationship between students and the police and the prevention of delinquency, alcohol and substance abuse and other youth related problems[.]”

The program was recognized by the School District and Salida PD “as being effective in the development of a positive relationship between law enforcement, faculty and young people and in the prevention of delinquency.” During this time period, the SROs and school officials worked together to improve student safety and their working relationship.

Since the program's adoption, there has been a positive working relationship between the School District and Salida PD to manage incidents. For example, on September 7th and 10th, 2018, Salida

³ <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/salida-co-population>

⁴ David Blackburn signed the original MOU. See Exhibit 1.



School District worked in connection with Salida PD activating its lockdown procedures which resulted in lockdowns that “ran smoothly” according to School District.⁵ In both instances, Salida PD initiated lockdowns by contacting then Dean of Students, Jim Coscarella, at the Salida High. The School District went into lockdown until each scene was verified safe by Salida PD.⁶ School administration then lifted each lockdown. The same process occurred during a lockdown in a neighboring School District in Buena Vista, Colorado, in 2019 which is approximately 25 miles from Salida, Colorado, in which multiple law enforcement agencies responded.⁷

The SRO program worked to implement a reverse 911 system in September 2017 to improve school safety. As part of this program, Officer Meseke compiled a contact list for Chaffee Dispatch to notify in the event a Salida school initiated its lockdown/lockdown process.

The SRO program also worked to implement a uniform radio system which has not come to fruition over time. According to Officer Meseke and Lieutenant Blades, law enforcement has its own radio system specific to law enforcement, and Salida High has a separate radio system. Salida High’s system includes two (2) radio channels including one for the high school and one for the overall district.

There were several changes with Salida PD and Salida High’s radios since the program was adopted. Salida PD acquired new radios in 2018 and implemented a new radio channel called “Salida Schools.” According to Officer Meseke and Lieutenant Blades, they have never communicated with the school on this channel. Lieutenant Blades explained he was last briefed over a year ago that the schools were installing “repeaters or something of that nature” because the radios had difficulty exiting through the large structures. New radios have been secured since the program’s start, but according to Officer Meseke, the use of a radio to communicate with school officials has not been standard.

In March or April 2020 Officer Tucker⁸ started her tenure as the SRO. Officer Tucker said she had a good relationship with the principal, Tammy Thompson, at Salida High before she retired in May of 2020. Officer Tucker said that although there was a radio in the SRO office when she started the position, there have been challenges because the SRO channel was not coordinated with the schools’ channel. Although she carried a radio at times, she would still receive calls on her cell phone from Salida High administration that they were trying to reach her on the radio. Since then, she has not carried the radio.⁹ Officer Tucker said the school’s system is not set up correctly, and

⁵ http://salida.ss13.sharpschool.com/news/what_s_new/message_to_parents_about_lock_out_procedures

⁶ See Exhibit 2.

⁷ See Exhibits 3 and 4.

⁸ Officer Tucker went on maternity leave in late August 2021 and was not working at the time of the September 23rd incident.

⁹ According to Officer Tucker, Dean Scheffel’s wife joked with her about the school radio because Officer Tucker responded once and then she never heard it again.



Superintendent David Blackburn told her he had someone coming in to fix it or had attempted to fix it.

- **2021-2022 School Year**

Salida High changed administration at the end of the 2020-2021 school year. Tammy Thompson, the former principal, retired from her position and Talmage Trujillo was hired as principal. Since the change, the relationship between Salida PD and Salida High has changed and has been less cooperative.¹⁰

During the first week of school in 2021 an incident was reported by a parent to Salida High administration regarding their child. The parent wanted to pursue criminal charges based on an assault that occurred. Salida High reported to the parent that Salida PD was not pursuing criminal charges, but Salida PD was not notified of the incident. According to Lieutenant Blades and Officer Meseke, Principal Trujillo referred the case directly to Full Circle Restorative Justice. The parent contacted the school SRO to discuss Salida PD's decision to not pursue criminal charges, which prompted a meeting between Chief Russell Johnson and Salida High administration. Ultimately, the case was investigated and resulted in felony charges for a suspect that was involved.

Salida PD said that Principal Trujillo has instructed school staff that they were not allowed to contact Salida PD regarding the school without permission from him. Officer Meseke stated he received text messages "nonchalantly" from staff at Salida High in the 2021-2022 school year keeping him informed. As an example, on August 19, 2021, Officer Meseke noted a drill was being performed, but Salida PD was not initially invited by the Dean of Students or Principal as was the practice in prior years. Officer Meseke received a message from a different school staff member, and he sent an officer to participate. Salida PD alleged Dean Scheffel was "rude" with the officer during the event.

- **History of school shootings in Colorado**

It is important to note that since 1999, Colorado has been the home of multiple school shootings including: 1) April 20, 1999, Columbine High School, 2) September 27, 2006, Platte Canyon High School, 3) February 23, 2010, Deer Creek Middle School, 4) December 13, 2013, Arapahoe High School, and 5) May 7, 2019, STEM School Highlands Ranch.¹¹

¹⁰ There was also a change in the Dean of Students from Jim Coscarella to Corey Scheffel in recent years.

¹¹ Since September 23, 2021, there was an additional school shooting on November 15, 2021, in Aurora, Colorado.



On September 23, 2021, the incident occurred in which three (3) independent law enforcement agencies including Chaffee County Sheriff, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and Salida PD responded near Salida High. Details of this situation follow.

ii. Event on September 23, 2021

▪ **11:49 a.m. Dispatch Call**

On September 23, 2021, at approximately 11:45 a.m., a grandmother called 911 Dispatch stating her grandson tested positive for COVID 19 and was screaming about suicide. She reported he left her home and was walking in the direction of the high school. She also alerted that he had a gun, and he said he could show it to her. She said they lived about two (2) blocks from the Salida High School, and he is “rather tall so he walks fast.” The original Dispatch call lasted approximately three (3) minutes.

In the original 911 call, Dispatch was not provided, nor did they request, a description of the child’s physical appearance including his height, weight, age, or clothing.

A limited version of that information was relayed to Salida PD at 11:49 a.m. Five (5) Salida PD responded to general area of the high school but were not able to locate the Subject.

▪ **11:51 a.m. Lockout¹²**

At approximately 11:51 a.m., Officer Meseke contacted Dean of Students, Mr. Scheffel (Dean Scheffel), who initiated a lockout at Salida High.¹³ Officer Meseke also contacted Will Wooddell, Salida Middle School principal, and a teacher at Horizon’s Exploratory Academy (Horizons) to place their schools on lockout.¹⁴ Officer Meseke also communicated with Chaffee Dispatch which resulted in Dispatch records stating “will have school go on lockdown¹⁵ till we can locate party.”

The reverse 911 system was not deployed by Dispatch at this time.

¹² According to the Standard Response Protocol (SRP), Volume 2 issued in 2015, a lockout is when the school secures the perimeter of the school and differs from a lockdown.

¹³ This was pursuant to the SRP that Officer Meseke provided. The School District provided the same SRP through their attorney.

¹⁴ Officer Meske initially attempted to call Principal Kristie Servis at Horizons to lock it down, but she did not answer so he stepped into the academy and spoke with said teacher.

¹⁵ Dispatch used the term “lockdown” when in fact the school was in “lockout.”



At 11:53 a.m., a school administration official¹⁶ notified Dispatch there was a student on the football field with the principal. She also reported that she didn't know what was going on, but she was told there was an event of a violent nature. Officers were already in the football field area and responded they could not see either party.

At 12:04 p.m., Dean Scheffel and Officer Meseke spoke with Principal Trujillo who refused to provide his location and hung up the phone.

Principal Trujillo then text messaged Dean Scheffel at 12:06 p.m. that he was "At McDonalds grabbing lunch."

While these events unfolded, Officer Meseke and Lieutenant Blades finished a "lengthier" conversation over a law enforcement radio channel. After their conversation, Lieutenant Blades went inside the school and learned that Principal Trujillo had just texted Dean Scheffel he was at McDonalds, and then he returned to his car.

According to Officer Meseke, he had a conversation with Lieutenant Blades on a separate radio channel. When he requested to have the channel cleared, Dispatch cleared the wrong one. It resulted in Lieutenant Blades attempting to reach Officer Meseke on a different channel for approximately five minutes.

▪ **12:08 p.m. Lockdown¹⁷**

At approximately 12:08 p.m., Dean Scheffel placed the school on lockdown according to Jennifer Campbell, a secretary at the school. He did so by pulling the fire alarm. Officer Meseke indicated he was not near Mr. Scheffel when the lockdown was activated, but it was after Officer Meseke told him to lockdown. Officer Meseke stated he and Lieutenant Blades collaborated and were exercising a perimeter immediately around the school in the event of the Subject's arrival.

Officers then responded to McDonalds but were not able to locate either party.

While Officers were continuing their search, at 12:15 p.m. Officer Meseke attempted to contact Superintendent Blackburn on his cell phone¹⁸ and at the same time Dean Scheffel texted Principal Trujillo indicating "We are in lockdown. Let me know when we can end." Principal Trujillo responded with "End Now." He also said "Everything is okay. I'm working. Going in the right direction." Dean Scheffel then released the lockdown without communicating with Salida PD.

¹⁶ This individual did not identify herself on the call nor did Dispatch ask for her name.

¹⁷ The exact times were difficult to discern since witness statements were conflicting.

¹⁸ Exhibit 8 - Call logs from Officer Meseke's cell phone listing calls he made to school officials and others.



▪ **12:16 p.m. Release of Lockdown and Lockdown of 12:17 p.m.**¹⁹

At approximately 12:16 p.m. Officer Meseke questioned why Salida High was released from the lockdown. Dean Scheffel told Officer Meseke that Principal Trujillo authorized the release.

Officer Meseke requested Dean Scheffel to lockdown the school, but Dean Scheffel instructed Officer Meseke to do it. Officer Meseke activated the fire alarm and placed the school back on lockdown.

While these events occurred at 12:16 p.m., Principal Talmage continued to text message Dean Scheffel “No access to firearms.”

▪ **12:21 p.m. Superintendent Blackburn’s Arrival**

At approximately 12:21 p.m. Superintendent David Blackburn arrived at the Salida High. He was wearing a hooded sweatshirt, hat, and mask.²⁰ According to Detective Willburn and school official Meryl Tolsma, Superintendent Blackburn was not immediately identifiable. Sheriff Avila’s report included “Superintendent Blackburn walked to the back door and would not identify himself after multiple requests.”

Sheriff Avila also reported the Superintendent flicked his ID cards hanging from his belt line and walked past Sheriff Avila as he opened the back door. Further, Sheriff Avila reported the Superintendent was “irate” and wanted to know why he wasn’t notified of the situation.

At approximately 12:27 p.m., Superintendent Blackburn met Detective Willburn inside the school. Bodycam captured Superintendent Blackburn asking Detective Willburn who was in charge. Detective Willburn responded “Blades” was in charge and then Superintendent Blackburn stated that he was the “incident commander here and you are not.”²¹ Superintendent Blackburn then walked away to find Lieutenant Blades.

Ms. Campbell indicated in her report that was submitted to Salida PD days after the incident:

“[i]t was around this time a figure appeared at the commons door. I could hear yelling; however, I don’t know what was said by the outside figure. It was then Avila slightly opened the door and again asked who you are? David Blackburn pushed past Avila and announced he was David Blackburn the superintendent. He then proceeded into the building asking Cory to release the lockdown.”

¹⁹ It was difficult to discern exact times based on witness statements.

²⁰ See Exhibit 5.

²¹ This specific remark was caught on body cam.



On September 29, 2021, Chris Bainbridge, Captain at Salida Fire Department, was interviewed. He said he knows Superintendent Blackburn and did not recognize him when the Superintendent arrived. Captain Bainbridge said that Superintendent Blackburn's arrival "caught everybody's attention." The Captain said the Superintendent did not want law enforcement at the school and he initially thought it included the Fire Department personnel. Captain said the Superintendent looked at the group and said "everybody out" before Detective Willburn stepped outside with the Superintendent.²²

Larry Parks, a former School District employee, gave a statement on October 14, 2021, and reported he went to the school after he heard there was a fire alarm. Mr. Parks reported he did not recognize Superintendent Blackburn at first but identified him by his voice. Mr. Parks stated Superintendent Blackburn "immediately" went on the defense with the police and fire department and stated "I am in charge of this building and I will get every f***ing cop out of this building now." Mr. Parks reported that he felt the police were not being given information and being "lead on."

Brandon Hawkins, who was the Facilities and Maintenance Director at Salida High at that time, gave a statement on October 13, 2021. In his statement, Mr. Hawkins said he received a call about a fire alarm on September 23rd and tried to call Principal Trujillo who didn't answer. Immediately after the call, Mr. Hawkins received a text from Principal Trujillo stating he should text him. Mr. Hawkins stood by while the fire alarm was silenced and saw Superintendent Blackburn arrive at the door. Mr. Hawkins heard Superintendent Blackburn tell the officers to get the "f**k" out of the way and identified himself as the Superintendent. He then heard Superintendent Blackburn say, "I will clear the building of every one of you f**king cops right now, I am the incident commander."

▪ **12:28 p.m. Superintendent Blackburn and Detective Willburn**

Superintendent Blackburn and Detective Willburn continued their conversation outside of the school at approximately 12:28 p.m. about Salida PD being kicked out of the school which was recorded on body cam. Detective Willburn stated "if you don't care about the safety of the kids." Superintendent Blackburn interrupted "Oh don't even go there."

Detective Willburn replies well "why are you kicking us out?" Superintendent Blackburn responds "because I need to talk to people and because you shut everything down and didn't come and communicate the way all the protocols are set up. The way CJ has been trained and knows all protocols are set up."

²² Kathy Rohrich, Assistant Fire Chief, Doug Bess, Fire Chief, and Brian Jefferson, Firefighter, also gave statements to Salida PD following the incident and reported Superintendent Blackburn told the group to get out.



Almost simultaneously at approximately 12:27 p.m., Officer Meseke contacted the Subject at the Crest Academy located at 627 Oak Street in Salida, CO. Officer Flores and Officer Osborn also responded. At 12:29 p.m. officers reported they were 10-4 to Dispatch indicating they were okay.

Ms. Campbell stated in her report:

David Blackburn proceeded out to the outside of the front of the building, just outside the office windows. He was talking with the police and fire department, it looked to be a very intense discussion, Mr. Blackburn appeared to be yelling the entire time, all conversation could not be heard, but at times terse/profane language would filter through. Fire and law enforcement lead by Det. Wilburn, remained calm.”²³

Meryl Tolsma, a Salida High School Counselor, explained in her report that Superintendent Blackburn was “aggressively walking in and out of the office and then standing outside yelling at the officers and deputies on scene, as well as firefighters who were all present. His behavior was truly shocking to where it was hard not to watch as it was unbelievable to me.”²⁴

- **Sol Vista Engagement and Release of Lockdown**

Officer Flores requested Dispatch have Sol Vista contact Officer Meseke at approximately 12:30 p.m.²⁵

Lieutenant Blades dispatched he released the lockdown at approximately 12:36 p.m.

iii. Events following September 23, 2021

There have been multiple developments since the incident, including the Salida High decision to suspend the SRO program following the events of September 23, 2021.

On September 27, 2021, Principal Trujillo was arrested for Harboring a Minor/Runaway (M2), Obstructing Governmental Operations (M3), Obstructing a Peace Officer/Police Animal/Fireman (M2), and 1st Degree Official Misconduct (Misd).

²³ See Exhibit 6.

²⁴ See Exhibit 7.

²⁵ Salida PD and Sol Vista have since deployed a co-responder unit in which Sol Vista will respond alongside Salida PD on certain calls.



On September 28, 2021, Officer Meseke attempted to take a statement of a Salida High staff member who originally agreed. The same day he received a message they were not allowed to give a statement “according to admin.”

Officer Meseke ultimately obtained statements from Salida High staff including Ms. Campbell and Ms. Tolsma whose comments are detailed above in part.

Officer Meseke also received a text message stating “[e]verything was chaos that day and I haven’t had a moment to see you and then I was told I was not allowed to speak to you. But I just want you to know I appreciate everything you did that day to keep everyone in that building safe. I just want you to know that you were truly appreciated.”²⁶

Since September 23, 2021, concerns were raised regarding the overall law enforcement response. There were also concerns raised about potential communication issues and the incident command structure between the school and police.

An assessment of each scope area for this audit follows.

F. Assessment

Chaffee County Dispatch received a report on September 23, 2021, of a suicidal child who was near the high school at approximately 11:45 a.m. The school was placed on lockout, lockdown, and at one time released the lockdown without consulting with law enforcement. Salida PD located the Subject at 12:27 p.m.

Relevant policy excerpts are listed under section (iv) at the end of this report.

- i. **Standard Response Protocols:** Salida PD acted within their standard protocols during the September 23rd incident.*

In making my determination about the Salida PD response to the September 23rd incident, I reviewed Salida PD’s Policy Manual including, but not limited to, Crisis Intervention Incidents; Officer Response to Calls; and Rapid Response Policy. I also reviewed documentation that provides guidance to school threat response, including Colorado School Safety Guide; National Incident Management System; and Standard Response Protocol. I then reviewed the School District’s Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and considered the history of prior lockouts that involved Salida PD and Salida High.

²⁶ Name Redacted



Given the history of school violence in Colorado and across the Nation, Salida PD's decision to exercise extreme caution to prevent a potential gun incident at a Salida school was appropriate and necessary. Lieutenant Blades pointed out that the 10-year anniversary of the Bailey High School shooting was approaching, heightening awareness and a precaution for law enforcement. This was an important backdrop that I used when I evaluated the Salida PD response in accordance with their policies and historical practices.

The data reviewed in my analysis showed alignment between Salida PD's Policy Manual, the School District's EOP, and Salida PD's response on September 23, 2021. It was also in accordance with the Intergovernmental Agreement (MOU) between the parties and prior lock-out practices. There was one exception which is noted in the timeline below. Specifically:

- *This began as a community incident.* Initially this was not a school incident as the Subject was not on school grounds, thus Salida PD was responding to a community event, *not* a school incident. Had the Subject been contacted by Salida PD before he arrived at the school, the incidents with school officials likely would not have occurred.
- *Salida PD's level of response was appropriate.* Deploying five (5) officers and exercising a perimeter around the three (3) schools was within their standard protocols. Law enforcement's overall response with seven (7) officers was reasonable considering the number of schools in the area and the threat of violence that was present.
- *Salida PD operated within the supervisor and officer's respective responsibilities.* Lieutenant Blades said a standard response is "all hands-on deck" when there is an issue potentially involving guns and children. Because of this threat, it was imperative that Salida PD locate the Subject.
- *Communication from school staff demonstrated Salida PD presence and support was necessary.* The message Officer Meseke received from school staff about the situation being "chaotic" and that they appreciated him, and the PDs responsiveness was persuasive evidence that PD intervention was expected and welcomed.
- *Lockout practices were handled by Salida PD on September 23rd in accordance with historical practices.* Historical review of Salida PD and Salida High lockout practices demonstrated that lockouts were not released until Salida PD deemed the scenes safe. School administration at Salida High then released each one. While this is not what occurred on September 23, 2021, Salida PD attempted to follow this same practice. Ultimately, they were overruled by school officials.



- *Lockdown / Lockout decisions were aligned with guidance on best practices.* Salida PDs determination that a Lockdown/Lockout should be imposed was in accordance with The Standard Response Protocol K12-T, Training Workbook, “I love U Guys” Foundation²⁷ with the exception listed in (b).
- *The 11:51 lockout decision was in accordance with policy and necessary given the safety concerns at the time.* Officer Meseke’s decision to instruct Dean Scheffel to lockout the school was reasonable given the location of the Subject was unknown, that he was reported to have a weapon, and the close proximity of the school to his grandmother’s home. I explored reasons to avoid the lockout at 11:51 a.m. including the inconvenience, delay of normal activities, and future inquiries by the community,²⁸ none of which would have overridden student and staff safety.
- *Administration’s instruction to end the lockout at 12:15pm, before the Subject had been contacted by Salida PD and the school deemed secure was premature.* The lockout was lifted at 12:15p.m. when Principal Trujillo texted Dean Scheffel “end now.” This instruction was a departure from past practices between the two entities and did not take into consideration the overall safety of staff and students. Although this message was presumably sent from Principal Trujillo’s phone, given the circumstances, Dean Scheffel could not confirm that Principal Trujillo sent the message himself and was not sending the message under duress. Only minutes before, at 12:04 p.m., Principal Trujillo verbally communicated with Dean Scheffel and Officer Meseke but refused to provide his location and hung up on them. He then sent a text message that he was at McDonalds at approximately 12:06 p.m. but was not found at McDonald’s when the PD arrived at 12:08 p.m. Principal Trujillo’s failure to cooperate was an understandable concern for Salida PD.
- *The decision to lockdown the school again at 12:17pm was a reasonable response by Salida PD given the Subject had yet to be located.* Lieutenant Blades and Officer Meseke requested the school lock down at 12:17pm due to concern that the Subject had not been located and may have made his way into the building. Video revealed that when the lockdown was lifted, students were exiting the building which could have provided the Subject a clear path to enter the school.²⁹

²⁷ Both the School District and Officer Meseke provided the same Standard Response Protocol which was K12-T, Version 2.0, issued in 2015.

²⁸ I hoped to obtain why the school’s administration position directly from them before reaching my findings. However, the school declined to participate in this assessment.

²⁹ Since there was a contention with Dean Scheffel implementing the lockdown at 12:17 p.m., I hoped to gain information from him directly regarding his position. Unfortunately, the school refused to participate in this assessment.



- *The decision to move from lockdown to lockout at 12:30pm by Superintendent Blackburn was appropriate. Between 12:17pm and 12:30pm there were no reports of violence or threats within the school, or near school grounds. The decision to release the lockdown was in accordance with prior practices and included communication between Superintendent Blackburn and Detective Willburn. At that time, Superintendent Blackburn notified Detective Willburn that the school would move from lockdown to lockout status with a secure perimeter.*
- *The decision to release the lockout occurred pursuant to procedure and past practices. The Subject was located and Salida PD dispatched the scene was safe. School officials communicated with Lieutenant Blades before releasing students at Salida High.*

It has been suggested that the Salida PD could have engaged Sol Vista sooner in the process to locate the Subject to ensure proper mental health support was on site. However, the data I reviewed indicated that Sol Vista typically would not respond to a scene until a Subject is located and the scene was deemed safe by law enforcement, which is what occurred on September 23, 2021.

- ii. **Communication Procedures:** Salida PD acted within their communication procedures on September 23, 2021, but also have opportunities to improve.*

I also determined that Salida PD acted within their communication procedures but have room for improvement based on the events of September 23, 2021. In reaching my finding, I reviewed Salida PD's policy manual. I then reviewed Salida PD's specific audio recordings of their communications with different parties on September 23, 2021, including Dispatch, law enforcement officers, Salida High administration, and the Subject.

In my review, I identified opportunities for improvement for Dispatch, noted below.

- **Salida PD Communications with Dispatch**

In assessing Salida PD's specific communications with Dispatch there are positives to highlight. For example, communication was prompt and professional. The communications were also clear enough that they weren't repeated. The content of the communications accurately relayed the situation at hand. Moreover, the two successfully communicated about the locations of individual officers and the potential locations of the Subject. Ultimately, their communications resulted in finding the Subject.

- ❖ *Dispatch opportunities for improvement.*



- *Failure to activate reverse 911.* The process of activating the 911 system has room for improvement when the original 911 call occurred. In my opinion, the reverse 911 system should have been activated by Dispatch during the original 911 call. It would have placed all schools on notice there was an incident near Salida High. It would have also potentially resolved radio communication issues. The fact the system has been in place since 2017 and it wasn't immediately activated when Salida High locked out at 11:51 a.m. is a process that needs to be evaluated by Dispatch for future incidents.
- *Failure to gather specific details about the appearance of the Subject.* During the original 911 call, Dispatch failed to gather information about the Subject's description. It took Salida PD approximately four (4) minutes to request a clothing description. During this time, it is not clear if Salida PD could have identified the Subject since there was so little information available. Soliciting detailed information about a subject's clothing, height, weight and other identifying information during a 911 call is a standard practice that was missed. It also caused Salida PD to spend critical time attempting to find the information.
- *Clearing the wrong channel.* After Officer Meske and Lieutenant Blades communication on a separate radio channel, Officer Meseke said that Dispatch cleared the wrong channel resulting in Officer Meske and Lieutenant Blades on different channels. If Dispatch cleared the wrong channel, ensuring Dispatch and Salida PD are on the same page regarding which radio channels are cleared and which are reserved for lengthier radio communications should be addressed.

- **Salida PD Communications with Law Enforcement**

When Salida PD communicated with other law enforcement officers on September 23, 2021, they were prompt and professional. Their communication was clear and specific. Salida PD accurately explaining how the situation was developing and they were generally on the same page. Salida PD's communications resulted in successfully finding the Subject.

- ❖ *Salida PD's opportunities for improvement.*

- *Failure to activate reverse 911.* The process of activating the 911 system has room for improvement as detailed above when the original 911 call occurred. Specifically, it should be addressed if Dispatch will active the system automatically in the event a Salida school is placed on lockout or lockdown or if an officer should make the decision and notify Dispatch.
- *Miscommunication on wrong channel.* There was a mishap about which channel to be used for lengthier communication between the Salida PD officers. Lieutenant Blades



communicated with Officer Meseke on a private channel and then may have returned to the same radio channel attempting to contact Officer Meseke again. This caused Officer Meseke to not hear the first communication from Lieutenant Blades directing him to call Superintendent Blackburn, which resulted in a delay of information being relayed. Ensuring Salida PD officers are on the same page with other Salida PD officers regarding which radio channels are reserved for lengthier radio communications should be reviewed for future incidents.

- *Recording all communications on body cameras.* Salida PD has historically had a positive working relationship with school officials and have not used body cameras when interacting with officials. Because of the prior amicable relationship, Salida PD incorrectly assumed they were entering a friendly environment that would be cooperative with them on September 23, 2021. Because of this, they did not initially record the interaction with Superintendent Blackburn, resulting in an incomplete recording with school officials on September 23, 2021. Salida PD should evaluate when body cameras should be used during interactions with school officials moving forward.

- **Communications with Salida High and other school officials**

In assessing Salida PD's specific communications with Salida High there are some positives. For example, there was clear direction which resulted in the school being placed on lockout ensuring the safety of students and staff. It also resulted in locating the Subject.

- ❖ *Salida High's opportunities for improvement.*

- *Relationship with Salida PD.* The relationship between the school and Salida PD was congenial and collaborative until this school year. The departure from their prior working relationship caused confusion about how to manage the incident on September 23rd and could have endangered students and staff.
- *Incident commander.* When Superintendent Blackburn entered the school, he informed officers that he was the incident commander, which was contrary to past practices and guidance to schools. As highlighted above, this departure from past practices caused confusion and was disruptive at the site. Detective Willburn and Superintendent Blackburn were arguing on school property at the time the Subject was located, delaying closure of the incident. Salida High and Salida PD need to determine how incidents will be handled in the future to ensure the safety of students and staff.
- *Cell phones.* When Officer Meseke attempted to contact Principal Servis at Horizons, he was not able to reach her on the phone. It prompted him to step inside and communicate



with a teacher which potentially caused delays in locking out Horizons. Salida PD should evaluate the communication practice of using cell phones to communicate with Salida High and other school officials.

- **Communications with Subject**

Salida PD's communications with the Subject resulted in a positive outcome. Upon locating the Subject, Salida PD spent several minutes with him, they contacted Sol Vista immediately to provide support and violence was averted.

iii. Incident Command Structure: Salida PD responded using their incident command structure as law enforcement officers on September 23, 2021 but have opportunities for improvement.

In assessing Salida PD's incident command structure, I have determined that Salida PD acted within their incident command structure as law enforcement officers. I also find there are opportunities to more clearly define roles and responsibilities based on the events of September 23, 2021.

In reaching my finding, I began my analysis by reviewing Salida PD's policy manual and the Colorado Safety Guide. I noted that there are two different command structures for school incidents depending on whether emergency personnel are involved, outlined below.

- **Police**

The Salida PD Policy Manual provides the organizational structure for the Salida Police Department including the command protocol. It notes that there is a "Unity of Command" that ensures "efficient supervision and control." According to the manual, the Chief of Police has command over all personnel at Salida PD. In the Chief's absence the command authority includes:

- (a) Division Lieutenant
- (b) Shift Sergeant
- (c) In the absence of either the Operations Commander or the Shift Supervisor the command presence shall be by order of rank/or seniority[.]

- **School**

The Colorado School Safety Guide offers information on evidence-based programs to prevent violence in school settings. The guide references the National Incident Management System (NIMS) which gives a framework for coordination between multiple agencies like the School District and Salida Police Department in emergency situations.

NIMS provides guidance for all school-related incidents including those that involve law



enforcement, also known as an Incident Command System (ICS). The ICS details the operational structure, establishes a command center and team, and an incident commander in school incidents. The Colorado School Safety Guide states that NIMS provides information to help schools collaborate with first responders and is called the Emergency Response and Crisis Management (ERCM) Volume 2. It states:

Command. This function is performed by the incident commander, who coordinates and manages all ICS functions. The person serving in this position may be replaced to correspond with different types of incidents and may be replaced during an incident depending on its level of severity and the level of activation. For example, since the majority of school-based incidents do not require police or fire department assistance, a school official may serve as the incident commander and lead a command team of school personnel. A bomb threat, however, would definitely involve the fire and police departments and **would require the school's incident commander to transfer command to law enforcement.** The commander's role and the transfer of command are determined in advance through the partnership agreements and memoranda of understanding that are fundamental to all effective emergency management plans. [emphasis added]

According to the Colorado Safety guide,

In general, if a crime has occurred, law enforcement is in charge of the scene; most other emergencies will be handled by the first department or local emergency responders to arrive on the scene. School staff should be knowledgeable of their local jurisdiction's ICS to prevent confusion when responding to a crisis. In addition, schools should identify a liaison officer for the school (eg, principal).

❖ *Assessment of Command Structure*

The command structure which formed on September 23, 2021, between law enforcement and the school, was initially correct in that the highest-ranking officer for Salida PD would serve as Incident Commander. During the response, Salida PD followed law enforcement policy establishing Lieutenant Blades as the incident commander. He was the highest-ranking officer on scene. Lieutenant Blades was aware of the situation that was developing since he was involved from nearly the beginning. He was aware of the communications with Dispatch and that the school was locked out. He was also aware that there was an active search for the Subject. All officers considered Lieutenant Blades the incident commander and the only issue was with Superintendent Blackburn. Because the incident started as a community incident, not a school incident, it would follow that the Salida PD command structure would remain in place throughout the incident.

As described above, NIMS observes that in most cases, the incident commander of a school incident is a school official. However, when there is a threat of violence the school incident command would “transfer command to law enforcement.” While the example in the ERCM was a bomb threat, the threat of an armed, suicidal subject on school grounds or in the school would reasonably apply here.



Superintendent Blackburn’s proclamation that he was incident commander and his subsequent removal of law enforcement from the school was not in alignment with best practices defined by NIMS, was contrary to previous incidents, and put the students and staff at risk.

I requested to meet with school officials to understand their policies, practices, and thoughts on the topic of incident command and the relationship between Salida PD and the school, but the district did not agree to participate in this assessment. My attempt to gather information through a CORA request was denied in bad faith and without cause as described in the beginning of this report. My finding on the above may be different if other information is available and relevant to the analysis.

G. Appendix: Policy excerpts reviewed for this assessment

Police Department Policies

Response

07.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides for the safe and appropriate response to all emergency and non-emergency situations.

307.2 RESPONSE TO CALLS

Officers responding to any call shall proceed with due regard for the safety of all persons and property.

Officers not responding to a call as an emergency response shall observe all traffic laws and proceed without the use of emergency lights and siren.

Officers responding to a call as an emergency response shall continuously operate emergency lighting equipment and shall sound the siren as reasonably necessary (CRS § 42-4-108(3) and CRS § 42-4-213).

Responding with emergency lights and siren does not relieve the an officer of the duty to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons and property and does not protect the officer from the consequences of reckless disregard for the safety of others (CRS § 42-4-108(4)).

The use of any other warning equipment without emergency lights and siren does not generally provide an exemption from the vehicle laws (CRS § 42-4-108(3)).

Officers should only respond to a call as an emergency response when so dispatched or when responding to circumstances the officer reasonably believes involves the potential for immediate danger to persons or property. Examples of such circumstances may include:

...

- A person brandishing a weapon.
- An apparent homicide.
- A suicide in progress.
- An assault or other violence in progress.

...



307.3 REQUESTING EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

Officers may request emergency assistance when they reasonably believe that there is an imminent threat to the safety of officers, or assistance is needed to prevent imminent serious harm to a citizen.

If circumstances permit, the requesting officer should give the following information:

- The unit number
- The location
- The reason for the request and type of emergency
- The number of units required

Where a situation has stabilized and emergency response is not required, the requesting officer shall promptly notify the Dispatch Center.

307.3.1 NUMBER OF UNITS PARTICIPATING

Normally, only those units reasonably necessary should respond to a call with an emergency response. The Shift Supervisor or the Senior Officer should monitor all emergency responses and reduce or enhance the response as warranted.

307.4 INITIATING EMERGENCY CALL RESPONSE

If an officer believes an emergency response to any call is appropriate, the officer shall immediately notify the Dispatch Center. An emergency response of more than one unit should initiate notification of and coordination by the Dispatch Center to avoid any unanticipated intersecting of response routes.

An emergency response of more than one unit should initiate notification by the Dispatch Center to the Shift Supervisor or Senior Officer. The Shift Supervisor or Senior Officer will make a determination regarding the appropriateness of the response and reduce or enhance the response as warranted.

307.5 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE RESPONDING OFFICER

Officers shall exercise sound judgment and care with due regard for life and property when responding to a call with an emergency response. During a call involving an emergency response officers may (CRS § 42-4-108(2)):

- (a) Disregard regulations governing parking or standing when using a warning lamp.
- (b) Proceed past a red or stop signal or stop sign, but only after slowing down as may be necessary for safe operation.
- (c) Exceed any speed limits, provided this does not endanger life or property.
- (d) Disregard regulations governing direction of movement or turning in specified directions.

The decision to continue as an emergency response is at the discretion of the officer. If, in the officer's judgment, the roadway conditions or traffic congestion does not permit such a



response without unreasonable risk, the officer may elect to respond to the call without the use of red lights and siren at the legal speed limit. In such an event, the officer should immediately notify the Dispatch Center. An officer shall also discontinue an emergency response when directed by a supervisor or as otherwise appropriate.

Upon determining that an emergency response is appropriate, an officer shall immediately give the location from which he/she is responding.

The first officer arriving at an emergency response scene should determine whether to increase or reduce the level of the response and notify the Dispatch Center of their determination. Any subsequent change in the appropriate response level should be communicated to the Dispatch Center by the officer in charge of the scene unless a supervisor assumes this responsibility.

307.6 COMMUNICATIONS RESPONSIBILITIES

A dispatcher shall ensure acknowledgment and response of assisting units when an officer requests emergency assistance or when the available information reasonably indicates that the public is threatened with serious injury or death and an immediate law enforcement response is needed. The dispatcher should:

- (a) Attempt to assign the closest available unit to the location requiring assistance.
- (b) Immediately notify the Shift Supervisor or Senior Officer.
- (c) Confirm the location from which the unit is responding.
- (d) Notify and coordinate outside emergency services (e.g., fire and ambulance).
- (e) Continue to obtain and broadcast information as necessary concerning the response, and monitor the situation until it is stabilized or terminated.
- (f) Control all radio communication during the emergency and coordinate assistance under the direction of the Shift Supervisor or Senior Officer.

307.7 SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon being notified that an emergency response has been initiated, the Shift Supervisor or the Senior Officer shall verify the following:

- (a) The proper response has been initiated.
- (b) No more than those units reasonably necessary under the circumstances are involved in the response.
- (c) Affected outside jurisdictions are being notified as practicable.

The Shift Supervisor or Senior Officer shall, whenever practicable, monitor the response until it has been stabilized or terminated, and assert control by directing units into or out of the response if necessary. If, in the supervisor's judgment, the circumstances require additional units to be assigned an emergency response, the supervisor may do so.

It is the supervisor's responsibility to terminate an emergency response that, in his/her judgment, is inappropriate due to the circumstances.



When making the decision to authorize an emergency response, the Shift Supervisor or Senior Officer should consider the following:

- The type of call or crime involved
- The necessity of a timely response
- Traffic and roadway conditions
- The location of the responding units

Rapid Response and Deployment

412.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Violence that is committed in schools, workplaces and other locations by individuals or a group of individuals who are determined to target and kill persons and to create mass casualties presents a difficult situation for law enforcement. The purpose of this policy is to identify guidelines and factors that will assist officers in situations that call for rapid response and deployment.

412.3 FIRST RESPONSE

If there is a reasonable belief that acts or threats by a suspect are placing lives in imminent danger, first responding officers should consider reasonable options to reduce, prevent or eliminate the threat.

If a suspect is actively engaged in the infliction of serious bodily harm or other life-threatening activity toward others, officers should take immediate action, if reasonably practicable, while requesting additional assistance.

Officers should remain aware of the possibility that an incident may be part of a coordinated multi-location attack that may require some capacity to respond to other incidents at other locations.

When deciding on a course of action officers should consider:

- (a) Whether to advance on or engage a suspect who is still a possible or perceived threat to others. Any advance or engagement should be based on information known or received at the time.
- (b) Whether to wait for additional resources or personnel. This does not preclude an individual officer from taking immediate action.
- (c) Whether individuals who are under imminent threat can be moved or evacuated with reasonable safety.
- (d) Whether the suspect can be contained or denied access to victims.
- (e) Whether the officers have the ability to effectively communicate with other personnel or resources.
- (f) Whether planned tactics can be effectively deployed.



- (g) The availability of rifles, shotguns, shields, breaching tools, control devices and any other appropriate tools, and whether the deployment of these tools will provide a tactical advantage.

412.4 CONSIDERATIONS

When dealing with a crisis situation members should:

- (a) Assess the immediate situation and take reasonable steps to maintain operative control of the incident.
- (b) Obtain, explore and analyze sources of intelligence and known information regarding the circumstances, location and suspect involved in the incident.
- (c) Attempt to attain a tactical advantage over the suspect by reducing, preventing or eliminating any known or perceived threat.
- (d) Attempt, if feasible and based upon the suspect's actions and danger to others, a negotiated surrender of the suspect and release of the hostages.

5 PLANNING

The Patrol Lieutenant should coordinate critical incident planning. Planning efforts should consider:

- (a) Identification of likely critical incident target sites, such as schools, shopping centers, entertainment and sporting event venues.
- (b) Availability of building plans and venue schematics of likely critical incident target sites.
- (c) Communications interoperability with other law enforcement and emergency service agencies.
- (d) Training opportunities in critical incident target sites, including joint training with site occupants.
- (e) Evacuation routes in critical incident target sites.
- (f) Patrol first-response training.
- (g) Response coordination and resources of emergency medical and fire services.
- (h) Equipment needs.
- (i) Mutual aid agreements with other agencies.
- (j) Coordination with private security providers in critical incident target sites.

Crisis Intervention Incidents

430.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for interacting with those who may be experiencing a mental health or emotional crisis. Interaction with such individuals has the potential for miscommunication and violence. It often requires an officer to make difficult judgments about a person's mental state and intent in order to effectively and legally interact with the individual.



430.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Person in crisis - A person whose level of distress or mental health symptoms have exceeded the person's internal ability to manage his/her behavior or emotions. A crisis can be precipitated by any number of things, including an increase in the symptoms of mental health disorder despite treatment compliance; non-compliance with treatment, including a failure to take prescribed medications appropriately; or any other circumstance or event that causes the person to engage in erratic, disruptive or dangerous behavior that may be accompanied by impaired judgment.

430.2 POLICY

The Salida Police Department is committed to providing a consistently high level of service to all members of the community and recognizes that persons in crisis may benefit from intervention. The Department will collaborate, where feasible, with mental health professionals to develop an overall intervention strategy to guide its members' interactions with those experiencing a mental health crisis. This is to ensure equitable and safe treatment of all involved.

430.3 SIGNS

Members should be alert to any of the following possible signs of mental health issues or crises:

- (a) A known history of mental health disorder
- (b) Threats of or attempted suicide
- (c) Loss of memory
- (d) Incoherence, disorientation or slow response
- (e) Delusions, hallucinations, perceptions unrelated to reality or grandiose ideas
- (f) Depression, pronounced feelings of hopelessness or uselessness, extreme sadness or guilt
- (g) Social withdrawal
- (h) Manic or impulsive behavior, extreme agitation, lack of control
- (i) Lack of fear
- (j) Anxiety, aggression, rigidity, inflexibility or paranoia

Members should be aware that this list is not exhaustive. The presence or absence of any of these should not be treated as proof of the presence or absence of a mental health issue or crisis.

430.4 COORDINATION WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

The Chief of Police should designate an appropriate Operations Commander to collaborate with mental health professionals to develop an education and response protocol. It should include a list of community resources to guide department interaction with those who may be suffering from a mental health disorder or who appear to be in a mental health crisis (CRS § 30-10-527; CRS § 31-30-109).



430.5 FIRST RESPONDERS

Safety is a priority for first responders. It is important to recognize that individuals under the influence of alcohol, drugs or both may exhibit symptoms that are similar to those of a person in a mental health crisis. These individuals may still present a serious threat to officers; such a threat should be addressed with reasonable tactics. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to limit an officer's authority to use reasonable force when interacting with a person in crisis.

Officers are reminded that mental health issues, mental health crises and unusual behavior alone are not criminal offenses. Individuals may benefit from treatment as opposed to incarceration.

An officer responding to a call involving a person in crisis should:

- (a) Promptly assess the situation independent of reported information and make a preliminary determination regarding whether a mental health crisis may be a factor.
- (b) Request available backup officers and specialized resources as deemed necessary and, if it is reasonably believed that the person is in a crisis situation, use conflict resolution and de-escalation techniques to stabilize the incident as appropriate.
- (c) If feasible, and without compromising safety, turn off flashing lights, bright lights or sirens.
- (d) Attempt to determine if weapons are present or available.
- (e) Take into account the person's mental and emotional state and potential inability to understand commands or to appreciate the consequences of his/her action or inaction, as perceived by the officer.
- (f) Secure the scene and clear the immediate area as necessary.
- (g) Employ tactics to preserve the safety of all participants.
- (h) Determine the nature of any crime.
- (i) Request a supervisor, as warranted.
- (j) Evaluate any available information that might assist in determining cause or motivation for the person's actions or stated intentions.
- (k) If circumstances reasonably permit, consider and employ alternatives to force.

430.6 DE-ESCALATION

Officers should consider that taking no action or passively monitoring the situation may be the most reasonable response to a mental health crisis.

Once it is determined that a situation is a mental health crisis and immediate safety concerns have been addressed, responding members should be aware of the following considerations and should generally:

- Evaluate safety conditions.
- Introduce themselves and attempt to obtain the person's name.
- Be patient, polite, calm, courteous and avoid overreacting.



- Speak and move slowly and in a non-threatening manner.
- Moderate the level of direct eye contact.
- Remove distractions or disruptive people from the area.
- Demonstrate active listening skills (e.g., summarize the person's verbal communication).
- Provide for sufficient avenues of retreat or escape should the situation become volatile.

Responding officers generally should not:

- Use stances or tactics that can be interpreted as aggressive.
- Allow others to interrupt or engage the person.
- Corner a person who is not believed to be armed, violent or suicidal.
- Argue, speak with a raised voice or use threats to obtain compliance.

430.7 INCIDENT ORIENTATION

When responding to an incident that may involve a mental health disorder or a mental health crisis, the officer should request that the dispatcher provide critical information as it becomes available. This includes:

- (a) Whether the person relies on drugs or medication, or may have failed to take his/her medication.
- (b) Whether there have been prior incidents, suicide threats/attempts, and whether there has been previous police response.
- (c) Contact information for a treating physician or mental health professional. Additional resources and a supervisor should be requested as warranted.

430.8 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

A supervisor should respond to the scene of any interaction with a person in crisis.

Responding supervisors should:

- (a) Attempt to secure appropriate and sufficient resources.
- (b) Closely monitor any use of force, including the use of restraints, and ensure that those subjected to the use of force are provided with timely access to medical care (see the Handcuffing and Restraints Policy).
- (c) Consider strategic disengagement. Absent an imminent threat to the public and, as circumstances dictate, this may include removing or reducing law enforcement resources or engaging in passive monitoring.
- (d) Ensure that all reports are completed and that incident documentation uses appropriate terminology and language.
- (f) Evaluate whether a critical incident stress management debriefing for involved

430.9 INCIDENT REPORTING

Members engaging in any oral or written communication associated with a mental health crisis should be mindful of the sensitive nature of such communications and should exercise appropriate discretion when referring to or describing persons and circumstances.



Members having contact with a person in crisis should keep related information confidential, except to the extent that revealing information is necessary to conform to department reporting procedures or other official mental health or medical proceedings.

430.9.1 DIVERSION

Individuals who are not being arrested should be processed in accordance with the Civil Commitments Policy.

430.10 CIVILIAN INTERACTION WITH PEOPLE IN CRISIS

Civilian members may be required to interact with persons in crisis in an administrative capacity, such as dispatching, records request, and animal control issues.

- (a) Members should treat all individuals equally and with dignity and respect.
- (b) If a member believes that he/she is interacting with a person in crisis, he/she should proceed patiently and in a calm manner.
- (c) Members should be aware and understand that the person may make unusual or bizarre claims or requests.

If a person's behavior makes the member feel unsafe, if the person is or becomes disruptive or violent, or if the person acts in such a manner as to cause the member to believe that the person may be harmful to him/herself or others, an officer should be promptly summoned to provide assistance.

School EOP:

HUMAN-CAUSED HAZARDS: INTRUDER

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this annex is to ensure that there are procedures in place to protect staff/students and school property in the event of an intruder onto school grounds or in the school building.

II. SCOPE

The annex outlines additional responsibilities and duties as well as procedures for staff responding to an intruder on school grounds or in the school building.

III. CORE FUNCTIONS

Salida School District will post signs at points of entry to the campus and buildings from streets and parking lots.



To prevent intruders on campus, Salida School District administrators will keep doors secure, require sign-in sheets for visitors, and use cameras and staff to monitor entryways.

In the event of an intruder, Salida School District will contact law enforcement agencies for their assistance. Practiced procedures may be put into action to alert and protect students and faculty/staff.

Precautionary measures are outlined below to keep school personnel and students from undue exposure to danger. Efforts should be made to remain calm, to avoid provoking aggression, and to keep students safe.

A. Operational Functions/Procedures That May Be Activated

Operational functions or procedures that may be activated in the event of an intruder on campus include the following:

- Evacuation
- Reverse Evacuation
- Lockout
- Lockdown
- Parent-Student Reunification
- Recovery: Psychological Healing

B. Activating the EOP

The principal will determine the need to activate the EOP and designate an Incident Commander to implement the procedures specified in this annex. The school Incident Commander will transfer command upon the arrival of a law enforcement Incident Commander who has authority to manage the incident.

1. Incident Commander Actions

- Issue stand-by instruction.
- Determine what procedures should be activated depending on the location and nature of the intruder.
- Consult with local law enforcement and emergency management agencies and monitor the situation.
- If appropriate and safe to do so, request intruder to leave campus in a calm, courteous, and confident manner.
- Notify law enforcement and School Resource Officers to assist if necessary. Provide a description and location of intruder.
- Keep subject in view until police or law enforcement arrives.
- Activate communications plan.



- Designate an administrator or staff member to coordinate with public safety at their command post; provide a site map and keys to public safety personnel.
- Notify the principal/Policy Group of the status and action taken. The principal/Policy Group shall notify the superintendent of schools.
- Be available to deal with the media and bystanders and keep site clear of visitors.
- Activate the Crisis Response Team to implement recovery: psychological healing procedures.
- Update the principal/Policy Group, Incident Management Team, and Section Chiefs of any significant changes.
- Do not allow staff and students to enter or leave the building until proper authorities have determined that it is safe to do so.
- Give the “all clear” signal after the threat has passed.
- Determine whether school will be closed or remain open.
- Document all actions taken.

2. Staff Actions

- Notify the Incident Commander or designee. Provide description and location of the intruder. Visually inspect the intruder for indications of a weapon.
- Keep intruder in view until police or law enforcement arrives. Stay calm. Do not indicate any threat to the intruder.
- Isolate intruder from students. Lock classroom and office doors. Close blinds and stay clear of windows and panes of glass.
- Remain inside rooms until the “all clear” instruction is announced.



**INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN
THE CITY OF SALIDA
AND
THE SALIDA SCHOOL DISTRICT**

THIS INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT ("Agreement") is made and entered into by and between the **CITY OF SALIDA** ("City") and the **SALIDA SCHOOL DISTRICT R-32J** ("District") hereinafter referred to as "Party", and collectively referred to as "Parties."

WITNESSETH

WHEREAS, intergovernmental agreements to provide functions or services including the sharing of cost of such services or functions, by political subdivisions of the State of Colorado are specifically authorized by C.R.S. 29-1-203; and,

WHEREAS, the City is a unit of local government and a political subdivision, and the District is a public school district and political subdivision; and,

WHEREAS, the problems of delinquency, alcohol and substance abuse and other youth related problems which negatively affect the community and the schools can best be addressed in a proactive and preventive manner; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Salida and the Salida School District have jointly developed a School Resource Officer Program to provide a school-based approach to the development of a positive relationship between students and the police and the prevention of delinquency, alcohol and substance abuse and other youth related problems; and,

WHEREAS, such programs are recognized as being effective in the development of a positive relationship between law enforcement, faculty and young people and in the prevention of delinquency;

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the above recitals and of mutual promises, covenants, and agreements of the "parties", the City and District hereby agree as follows:

Article 5, Title 29, Colorado Revised Statutes, as amended, is incorporated herein by this reference. This statute shall control in the event of a conflict between the statute and this Intergovernmental Agreement.

1. It is understood and agreed that this Intergovernmental Agreement is intended to facilitate cooperation between the Parties in the provision of the services provided herein, but does not establish a separate legal entity to do so, and except as set forth herein, this Intergovernmental Agreement does not authorize any Party to act for any purpose whatsoever, nor does this Intergovernmental Agreement establish any employee of any Party as an agent of any other Party for any purpose whatsoever. This Intergovernmental Agreement shall provide only for sharing of in-kind services and costs by the Parties in the achievement of a common mutual goal, said goal being the sharing of the information and resources to maximize the safety and security of the community and its children.
2. That it is understood and agreed to that the Parties have a common desire to promote a safe, orderly and secure school environment conducive to learning will best serve the school community. A School Resource Officer ("SRO") shall be engaged as hereinafter provided and shall be assigned as a school official to work with the administration, faculty, and students of the Salida School District and may perform the following functions in furtherance of this goal:
 - a. To foster educational programs and activities that will increase students' knowledge of, and respect for, the law and function of law enforcement agencies;

- b. Become familiar with District polices, regulations, guidelines and codes of conduct. The SRO will abide by all relevant District polices except to the extent it would create a conflict with the SRO's responsibilities as a law enforcement officer.
 - c. Attend extra-curricular activities, such as athletic events and concerts, to the extent practicable.
 - d. Participate in school meetings with students, parents, and staff as requested.
 - e. Assist in the prevention and control of crime, delinquency, truancy and disorder on the campuses and in the immediate area of the schools if students are involved.
 - f. Conduct or assist in the investigations of offenses that occur on campus.
 - g. Provide traffic control when necessary for the safety and protection of students and the general public when a regular patrol officer is unavailable.
 - h. Provide presentations and available educational resources in the areas of alcohol and substance abuse, law related education, criminal justice orientation, delinquency prevention, community responsibility for students, parents and other groups associated with the schools.
 - i. Provide visible uniformed presence on the school campuses.
 - j. Provide or assist campus monitors with appropriate monitoring and enforcement in the parking lots and crosswalks.
 - k. Contribute to the positive police-school community relations efforts, especially as these efforts relate to the students and parents.
 - l. Assist and work with any other enforcement agencies on the campuses.
 - m. Serve as a resource to connect students with social agencies and other needed services.
 - n. Assist the administration and faculty in the development and execution of crisis response plans.
 - o. Provide physical intervention in safety emergencies involving staff and/or students.
 - p. Provide a monthly report of activities to the school's **Superintendent** and the **Chief of Police**.
3. That it is understood and agreed to by both Parties that the City will provide through the Salida Police Department ("Department") two (2) SRO's during the term of this Agreement.

That it is understood and agreed to by both Parties that the cost of employing the SRO shall be shared as set forth as follows:

- a. The District shall pay fifty (50%) percent of the officer's total annual salary and benefits;
 - b. The District shall pay fifty (50%) percent of any accrued overtime that is a result of the officer's assignment and at the District's request, beyond normal hours and approved by the Department supervisor;
 - c. The parties will maintain a budget for expenditures under this Agreement; and Semi-Annual payment from the District shall be due on or before July 1st and on or before January 1st of each school year. upon receipt of an itemized statement of costs from the City.
 - d. The City, to the best of their ability, will prepare and present the annual salary, benefits cost to the District on or before April 15th of each year for budgetary purposes.
5. That it is understood and agreed to by the Parties that, subject to cost sharing under Paragraph 4, the City will provide and be responsible for the SRO's salary and employment benefits in accordance with the applicable salary schedules and employment practices of the City, including but not limited to: sick leave (including FMLA leave as applicable), holiday leave, compensatory time, retirement compensation, disability salary continuation, worker's compensation, unemployment compensation, life insurance and medical/dental insurance.
6. That it is understood and agreed to by the Parties that, as an employee of the City, the SRO shall be subject to all personnel policies and practices of the City and follow chain of command as set forth in the Department's Policies and Procedures manual.
7. That it is understood and agreed to by the Parties that the SRO shall be an employee of the City and shall be subject to the administration, supervision and control of the Department and that the SRO shall execute and perform his duties pursuant to this Agreement in accordance with the standard operating procedures as set forth and modified from time to time by the Department.

8. That it is understood and agreed to by the Parties that the Department shall set and revise from time to time, the standard operating procedures to address circumstances under which the SRO may be required to act and to coordinate with school officials. The City shall provide to the District, as soon as practicable after adoption or revision thereof, copies of such operating procedures as are pertinent to the District.
9. That it is understood and agreed to by both Parties that the Department will assign the SRO's to the Salida School District, to include the High School, Middle School and Elementary School. The time spent by the SRO in each school shall be divided to reflect the needs of all the schools, as determined by the Department and District.
10. That it is understood and agreed to by both Parties, the SRO will work a schedule, consistent with the City of Salida policies and procedures and subject to the Fair Labor Standards Act. Except as otherwise provided in this Agreement, during times when schools are in session, the SRO will devote his/her full shift to the school calendar day, except for required duties such as court appearances. During the school's summer vacation, spring break, holiday breaks, and other days when school is not in session, and the SRO is not involved in assigned School-related activities, the SRO will be assigned to duties in the Department. In the event of an emergency, as determined by the City, the SRO may be required to perform general law enforcement duties. The SRO shall attend in-service training conducted by the City scheduled throughout the year.
11. That it is understood and agreed to by the Parties that the Department will provide the SRO with the following equipment:
 - a. Police Vehicle. Department will provide this and agrees to provide all vehicle maintenance and insurance.
 - b. Uniforms, Weapons, Tools needed for police work, all provided by the Department.
 - c. Office Needs. The District agrees to provide adequate office space, accessible by the students and a computer for the SRO job duties.
12. That it is understood and agreed to by the Parties that the District shall allow the SRO to inspect and copy any public record maintained by the school including student directory information, such as yearbooks. However, it is understood that the SRO or Department may not inspect and/or copy any confidential records, access of which is restricted to school personnel only, except as follows:
 - a. That it is understood and agreed to by the Parties that should information in a student's cumulative record be needed in an emergency to protect health or safety of the student or other individuals, school officials may disclose to the SRO the information needed to respond to the emergency situation based on the seriousness of the threat to the student's health and safety; the need of the information to meet the emergency situation and the extent to which time is of the essence.
 - b. The Parties may agree that the SRO will, among other duties, perform institutional services or functions for which the District would otherwise use employees, such as participation on threat assessment teams and consulting and intervening in certain school discipline situations. If the Parties so agree, the SRO shall be designated as a "school official" as authorized by 34 CFR § 99.31(a)(1)(B). While providing such services as a "school official" the SRO shall be under the direct control of the District with respect to the use and maintenance of education records disclosed to the SRO in the course of providing such services, and shall be subject to the requirements of 34 CFR § 99.33(a) governing the use and redisclosure of personally identifiable information from education records. Without limiting the foregoing and except as otherwise provided in this Agreement, the SRO shall not disclose any personally identifiable information to any other party without the prior consent of the parent or eligible student, and may use such personally identifiable information only for the purposes for which the disclosure was made, and shall otherwise comply with all applicable Federal and State laws governing confidentiality of records and information, including without limitation the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Colorado Open Records Act (CORA) and any and all other laws pertaining to the protection of information regarding students and/or their families, and shall safeguard any personally identifiable information that is protected under FERPA or CORA, that the SRO has use of or has in the SRO's possession while performing services as a "school official" under this IGA.

c. In addition to and without limiting or changing the designation of the SRO as a "school official" if so designated for certain purposes under subparagraph b. above, the SRO shall be and hereby is designated as part of the District's "law enforcement unit" pursuant to 34 CFR § 99.8 that is officially authorized or designated by that agency or institution to (i) enforce any local, State, or Federal law, or refer to appropriate authorities a matter for enforcement of any local, State, or Federal law against any individual or organization other than the agency or institution itself; or (ii) maintain the physical security and safety of the agency or institution. It is acknowledged that records created and maintained by the SRO for a law enforcement purposes are not subject to FERPA.

13. The Department and the SRO shall share student criminal justice records with the appropriate District representatives under the following conditions:

- a. When the District Superintendent or a Principal or Principal's designee of a District school requests the law-enforcement records of a student who will be enrolled in his/her school.
- b. When information about a student rises to the level of public safety concern.
- c. When information about a student is required to fulfill the district's legal obligations.
- d. When information about a student is required by law to be disclosed to the District.

A request for confidential student law-enforcement records must be made in writing with an explanation of their use. Any confidential student law-enforcement records that are released to the District may not be shared with any other person or agency and are to be used only for the necessary District activities identified in the request.

14. That it is understood and agreed to by both Parties that the Department shall purchase and maintain a general comprehensive police liability insurance policy with sufficient coverage for any acts or omissions that occur or claims that are made during the term of the Agreement.

15. That it is understood and agreed to by both Parties that the principal of each school to which the SRO is assigned shall evaluate annually the SRO program and the performance of the SRO, on forms developed jointly by the Department and District. A copy of the evaluations will be provided to the Department supervisor. The Department will use the Districts evaluations to assist in an annual department performance review.

16. That it is understood and agreed to by both Parties that notice shall be deemed to have been sufficiently given for all purposes if sent by certified mail or registered mail, postage and fees prepaid, addressed to the Party to whom such notice is to be given at the address set forth below, or at such other address as has been previously furnished in writing, to the other Party or Parties. Such notice shall be deemed to have been given when deposited for delivery by the United States Postal Service.

If to the City: Russell Johnson, Chief of Police
 Salida Police Department
 448 E. 1st St suite 274
 Salida, Co 81201

If to the District: David Blackburn, Superintendent of Schools
 Salida School District R-32J
 349 E. 9th St
 Salida, Co 81201

17. Any claim made against a Party or a Party's employee or agent as a result of any act or omission by that Party or its employee or agent, pursuant to the terms of this Agreement or the provisions of C.R.S. 29-5-103, 29-5-104 and 29-5-108, shall follow the provisions of Article 10, Title 24, C.R.S.

18. The Parties covenant that they will do, execute, acknowledge and deliver or cause to be done, executed, acknowledged, and delivered such acts, instruments and transfers as may reasonably be required for the performance of their obligations hereunder.
19. The Parties enter into this Agreement as separate independent governmental entities and shall maintain such status throughout the term hereof.
20. Each term, provision or condition herein is subject to and shall be construed in accordance with the provisions of Colorado Law, the Rules and Ordinances of the City of Salida, and the ordinances, regulations and policies enacted by all Parties hereto.
21. It is expressly understood and agreed that enforcement of the terms and conditions of the Agreement, and all rights of action relating to such enforcement, shall be strictly reserved to the named Parties hereto. Nothing contained in this Agreement shall give or allow any such claim or right of action by any third person. It is expressed intention of the named Parties that any person other than the named Parties receiving services or benefits under this Agreement shall be deemed an incidental beneficiary only.
22. This Agreement embodies the entire agreement of the Parties. The Parties shall not be bound by or liable for any statement, representation, promise, inducement or understanding of any kind or nature not set forth herein. No changes, amendments or modifications of any kind of any of the terms or conditions of this Agreement shall be valid unless reduced to writing and signed by the Parties.
23. All obligations under this Agreement are subject to the appropriation process and budgeting requirements of Colorado Law.
24. This Agreement may be signed in counterparts and each Agreement shall be deemed an original and all the Agreements taken as a whole shall constitute the same instrument.
25. The term of this Agreement shall begin on August 13, 2018, and shall continue through May 31, 2019 unless mutually voided by both Parties in writing, or otherwise terminated as provided in paragraph 27 below.
26. The Parties, agents and employees agree to cooperate in good faith in fulfilling the terms of this Agreement. The Parties agree they will attempt to resolve any disputes concerning the interpretation of this Agreement and unforeseen questions and difficulties which may arise in implementing the Agreement by good faith negotiations before resorting to termination of this agreement and/or litigation.
27. This Agreement may be terminated by either party by giving ninety (90) days' notice to the other Party that it has failed to substantially perform in accordance with the terms and conditions of this Agreement, or upon the failure of the governing body of either Party to budget and appropriate sufficient funds to meet such Party's obligations hereunder in any fiscal year during the term hereof. Upon termination, any funds provided by the District shall be prorated and returned to the District.

This Agreement is subject for review by both Parties after appropriate notification by the other Party to create, adjust, or otherwise terminate the agreement at the conclusion of the 2018/2019 school year.

PRESERVATION OF IMMUNITY. Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed: (i) as a waiver by either party of immunity provided by common law or by statute, specifically including the Colorado Governmental Immunity Act, Section 24-10-101, et seq., C.R.S. as it may be amended from time to time; (ii) as creating an assumption of any duty or obligation with respect to any third party where no such duty previously existed; or (iii) as creating any rights enforceable by such third Parties.

EXECUTED THIS 24th DAY OF August, 2018

CITY OF SALIDA

SALIDA SCHOOL DISTRICT R-32J

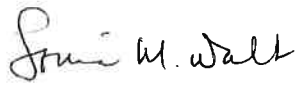
By: 
P.T. Wood, Mayor of Salida

By: 
David Blackburn, Superintendent

Date: 4/15/19

Date: 4/15/19

ATTEST:


City Clerk
City of Salida



https://www.chaffecountytimes.com/free_content/all-clear-given-bvpd-puts-schools-in-lockout-students-dismissed-to-parents/article_ac9f504c-072e-11ea-a53d-53c4684972a9.html

HOT FEATURED

All clear given: BVPD puts schools in lockdown; students dismissed to parents

Max R. Smith, Times reporter and Dave Schiefelbein, Times editor

Nov 14, 2019



Buena Vista Police Chief Jimmy Tidwell directs law enforcement stationed outside Avery-Parsons Elementary School Thursday afternoon during a lockdown of district schools in response to reports of a suspicious person.

Max R. Smith

The Buena Vista Police Department says all is clear following and incident in town today.

In a press release posted to the department's Facebook page at about 6:40 p.m., Thursday, BVPD received information about 2 p.m., "from another agency concerning a social media post concerning schools."

The release states BVPD made the decision to go into a lockdown "due to the nature of the post." Details were not released.



The release states law enforcement officers with Salida and BV police departments, Colorado State Patrol, Parks and Wildlife and Chaffee County Sheriff responded to the schools and coordinated with the district "to make sure students were safe."

"The students were in no danger at any time and the Buena Vista Police Department is assisting in the investigation with another law enforcement agency involved in the case," the release concludes.

The suspicious individual in the case has been located and is fully cooperating with the investigation, BVPD Sergeant Dean Morgan said.

No further information was provided in the release.

Buena Vista schools were placed on lockout Thursday afternoon by the Buena Vista Police Department following reports of a suspicious person.

The Buena Vista school district notified parents about 2:54 p.m., Thursday, that Buena Vista police had put the schools in lockout. The text and phone notifications stated the schools will dismiss on time with officers on duty to escort students.

Avery-Parsons Elementary School principal Judy Lynn told parents outside the school that the lockout was called due to reports of a person in the area who was deemed to be a possible threat.

Lynn said that students were safe and would be released at the normal time.

Law enforcement officers from BVPD, the Chaffee County Sheriff's Office and Colorado State Patrol were stationed outside the elementary school to escort students to their parents cars. Police were on duty to escort students at all schools, according to the school district.

Students who walk or ride to school must be picked up by their parents, according to a text and phone alert sent to families.



The Mountain Mail

September 7, 2018 · 🌐



UPDATE as of 1:27pm

Suspect is in custody, no shots were fired. US HWY 50 is reopened.

BREAKING: The Chaffee County Emergency Notification System has enacted a closure of US HWY 50 around the 7000 block due to an armed male suspect. Law enforcement does have eyes on the suspect. Hwy 50 will be closed until further notice please stay out of the area if you live in the area of the 7000 block of hwy 50 stay inside with doors and windows locked and closed.

Salida school district is issuing a lockout for all schools in the district. Operations inside the schools are as normal. Do not come to the schools or call until the all-clear is given by law enforcement.

** Update - As of 1:22 pm

Salida School District R32-J is no longer on Lock Out.



Andrea E. Morgan, Matt Kroschel and 32 others

14 Comments 16 Shares

 Like

 Comment

 Share

Dean Johnson

September 7, 2018 · 🌐

UPDATE: LAW ENFORCEMENT IS IN A BRIEFING ON THE INCIDENT NO ACCORDING TO DISPATCH. WE SHOULD KNOW WHAT LED TO THIS SOON. WE ALSO WANT TO PASS ALONG THAT THE ARMED SUSPECT NEVER DID FIRE A SHOT.

UPDATE: SUSPECT IS IN CUSTODY. HWY 50 IS NOW OPEN AND EVERYTHING IS BACK TO NORMAL. WE WILL CHECK IN WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT AND GET THE DETAILS SOON.

ARMED SUSPECT NEAR HWY 50 AT THIS HOUR.

Reverse 911 calls have been sent to residents in Salida as an Armed Suspect was spotted on Hwy 50. Hwy 50 is closed right now, please do not call dispatch. Law Enforcement has surrounded a male with eyes on him. If you live in the 7000 block of Hwy 50 stay inside with doors and windows locked.

And this from the Salida Public Schools as well....

Per School Resource Officer CJ Meseke. The Salida School District is in lockout. This is due to the armed suspect situation on Hwy 50. Operations within schools are business as usual. Doors will not to be answered.

The pictures are of CR 120 in front of the radio station where hwy 50 traffic is being directed during this emergency today.

  Anna Bustos and 3 others

5 Shares

 Like

 Comment

 Share



Salida School District is out of LockOut

Sep 10, 2018 3:18 pm

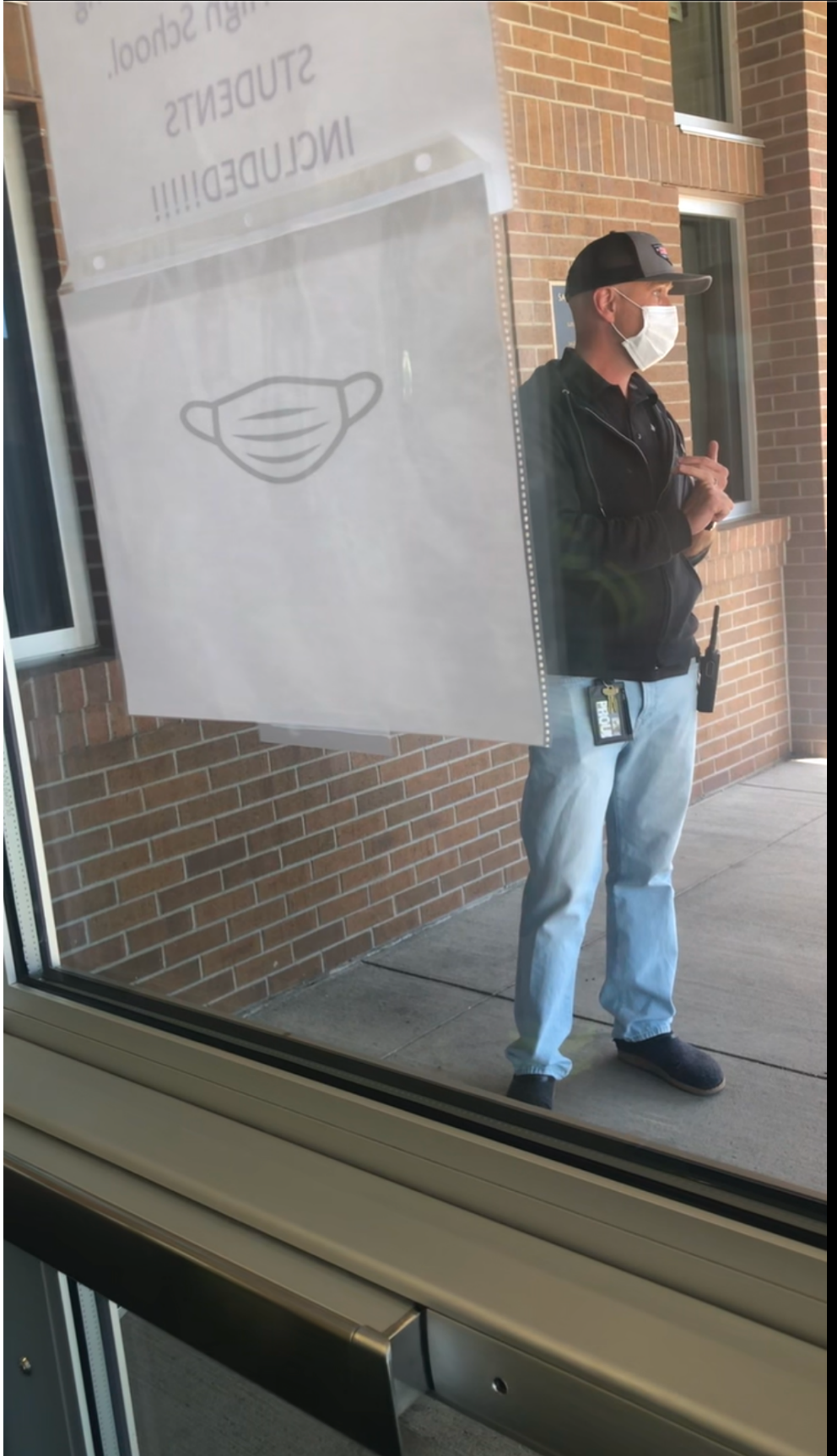


Per our Salida School Resource Officer CJ Meseke the Salida School District is no longer in LockOut. All school students and staff are safe. Schools are continuing with classes as scheduled.

Per School Resource Officer CJ Meseke of the Salida Police Department: Salida School District is currently on a LOCKOUT- This is due to a community event.

Operations within schools are business as usual. Doors are not to be answered during a lockout. Do not come to the school or call the schools. When there is more information available we will pass it along.

Salida School District R 32 J would like to continue connecting with you via email. If you prefer to be removed from our list, please contact Salida School District R 32 J directly. To stop receiving all email messages distributed through our SchoolMessenger service, follow this link and confirm: [Unsubscribe](#)



To Sheila, School Board members, and Salida School District legal council,

The following statement herein is being given to the best of my recollection, regarding the incident that occurred at Salida High School September 23, 2021.

At approximately 11:30 am on 9/23/21 a former HEA student came into the high school office and said he had been sent over to get a covid test. I did not initially recognize the student. Julie Spezze informed me it was [REDACTED] as he had attended SHS his freshman year of school at SHS. I was working on securing a substitute so I was not paying close attention to what happened with [REDACTED] while waiting for Rebecca our nurse. The next time I saw [REDACTED] he came down the hall into the main part of the front office visibly upset, stating "this is bullshit" as he walked out of the office and left the front entrance last mumbling I am assuming to Rebecca "Fuck off." Also shoving the door open angrily, it left me shocked. Within 30 seconds Rebecca followed after [REDACTED] with a look of concern on her face. Rebecca proceeded out the front door I am assuming to follow or check to see where [REDACTED] was headed. It was at this time, Talmage Trujillo was walking up returning after running an errand, Rebecca met Talmage, they talked for a couple of minutes, Rebecca returned to the school. Talmage came in to inform us he was going to find [REDACTED] he then walked to the semi-circle and got into his suburban and left.

The exact time that passed between Talmage leaving and Cory Scheffel coming through at roughly 11:55, just as the second lunch was underway is fuzzy. Cory Scheffel walked by in a hurry on a cell phone, he asked where is Talmage? I informed him he was gone. Cory then got on his radio asking for Talmage "Saying I need your help buddy." At this point Julie and I let Cory know Talmage left in his vehicle and was not on campus. Cory said I need help. Julie asked "Do you need teachers or CJ?" Cory's response was "Yeah." He went out the commons entry way to the football side of the high school. I made the decision to call CJ Meseke via my personal cell phone, Cj is acting SRO for SHS, by calling his cell phone number. I was unable to reach CJ. I looked up the non-emergency number for Salida Police dispatch giving the number to Ms. Spezze and she dialed the number on the phone from her desk. At this point Cory ran back into the building I proceeded out of the office letting him know we had dispatch on the line and that Salida PD should be enroute. It was then Mr. Scheffel pulled the fire alarm by the commons door initiating the first of our two lockdowns.

At this point myself and Julie, began assisting in funneling students who were eating lunch, into the auditorium. It was at this time Officer Meseke and Officer Osborn arrived at the school asking where Cory and Talmage were. We informed them that Talmage had left the building and Cory was out near student parking. Cj took off after Cory and Officer Osborn remained posted at the front of the school. As they had entered the office, it should be noted I heard via the radio that a student's grandmother had reported he had a weapon and was headed back to the high school.

As students proceeded to the auditorium a few commenting that this must be a drill. As a staff we handled the lockdown extremely well, we had everyone concealed in roughly 3-4 minutes.

Marko Hahn came into the commons area and posted just inside the commons door that led out to the football fields. Abigail Cooksey walked up from the first floor academic wing asking how to help and proceeded to the auditorium to help staff and students there. Officer Osborn proceeded out after CJ some time during this time.

At some point in the commotion LT. Spencer Blades, Salida PD and Commander Anthony Avila Chaffee County Sheriff, arrived on scene. Julie and I were standing just outside the office at this time, Immediately Blades asked where CJ was, I explained he proceeded out after Mr. Scheffel towards student parking. He also inquired about Mr. Trujillo and I explained he left the high school in his vehicle. Blades then attempted to make contact with CJ via radio at this time. I proceeded back into the office it was at this time I saw CJ Meseke round the front of the building, he met briefly with Spencer and proceeded back into the office, Officer Osborn following. Cory had re-entered the office after we knew students and staff were secure. He was texting on his phone. I don't recall if it was Cory who told them directly, but it got aired that the student and Talmage were at McDonalds. All law enforcement then left the building, I can only assume to head to McDonalds. It was at this time we were released from Lockdown by Talmage via text to Mr. Scheffel. Law enforcement returned to the school, CJ Meseke seemed agitated we had gone out of lockdown without his authority and that Talmage was not giving honest answers about his location. CJ requested that Cory pull an alarm to re-initiate lockdown. It was at this time Julie Spezze pushed on of our two panic buttons. CJ also proceeded out of the office to pull an alarm. The time of the first lockdown was approximately 12:08 pm. The time of the second lockdown was at 12:18 pm. I, then proceeded down the academic wing to make sure it was secure and all teachers understood we were once again back in lock down.

The next several minutes were very chaotic in the office. When I returned to the office I learned that Talmage had ██████ in his custody and that ██████ was the child threatening with a gun, their location unknown. Julie, Rebecca and I were in the office. Police personnel were scattered around the commons. I namely remember Commander Avila being posted at the commons door. Fire personnel came and went securing the building. Cory was in and out of the office. It was around this time a figure appeared at the commons door. He was wearing a mask, ball cap, dark hoodie and jeans. He appeared to be a student. Commander Avila asked who he was and the person began to bang on the door. I could hear yelling, however I don't know what was said by the outside figure. It was then Avila slightly opened the door and again asked who are you? David Blackburn pushed past Avila and announced he was David Blackburn the superintendent. He then proceeded into the building asking for Cory to release the lockdown. Cj Meseke then said something to effect of we can't lift the lockdown until we know where Talmage and ██████ are. Other LE also actively supported this stance as well. David then told Cory again to lift it. Cj and the rest of LE located in the office proceeded out front, Cj's last statement that I heard on his walking out the door was "why am I the only one trying to keep kids safe?" David Blackburn proceeded out to the outside of the front of the building, just outside the office windows. He was talking with the police and fire department, it looked to be a very intense discussion, Mr. Blackburn appeared to be yelling the entire time, all conversation could not be heard, but at times terse/profane language would filter through. Fire and law enforcement lead by Det. Wilburn, remained calm. Students were proceeding to classes and lunch, passing the front of the building during the heated discussion. At one point the door was opened and what could be

heard was one of the fire personnel stating "David if a fire alarm goes off at the school we will be responding whether you like it or not, it's our job." Which fire personnel stated this I am unsure. Shortly after Mark Willburn came in to begin taking statements. To the best of my recollection emergency personnel were gone from the building by around 1:00pm. We proceeded business as usual at this point. Mr. Trujillo returned to the building sometime around 3pm.

I, Jennifer Campbell, swear that information contained in the statement above is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Campbell", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Jennifer Campbell

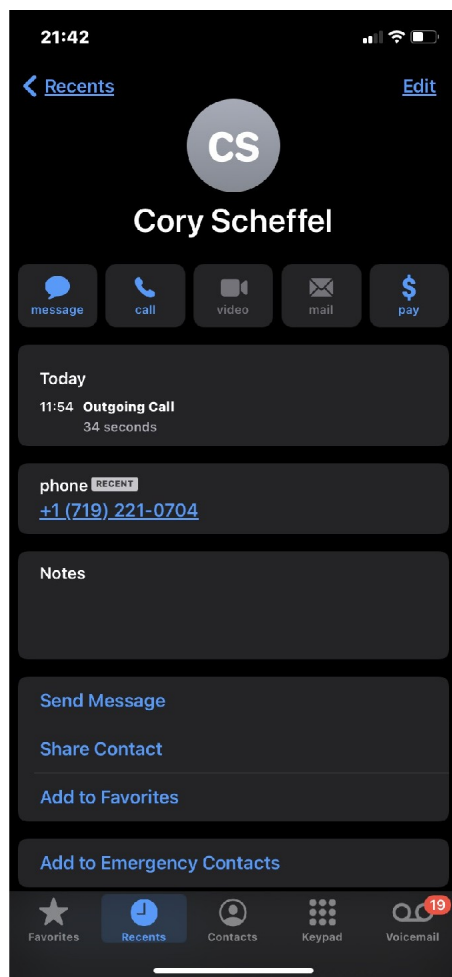
Statement regarding events on September 23, 2021:

On September 23, 2021, I was working at Salida High School in my capacity as the high school counselor. As I was walking through the office towards the lunch room to get some lunch, I heard the lockdown announcement and went to help watch the front doors. It was clear that there was confusion as to what we were supposed to do regarding letting students in who were outside, etc. It was also clear that the principal, Mr. Trujillo, was no longer in the building and that Dean, Cory Scheffel, was attempting to figure out what was going on. A lockdown was announced and I proceeded to the nurse's office with students from the commons area which is my typical location in lockdown drills. The lockdown was lifted and I proceeded out to the office and it was at that time that I could tell there was considerable confusion. Police officers from Salida Police Department (Mark Willburn and Aidan Osborn) were asking where the principal was, why he would not disclose his location so that they could verify where the youth in question was, and that there was no danger to the students. Students at this time were now leaving the building and Cory Scheffel was looking confused, flustered, and frustrated. More officers came and it was at this time that it was clear to me that frustration was growing due to lack of leadership, lack of ability to gain the necessary information, and the complete confusion. I told Mr. Scheffel that he needed to speak to the police as he was in the commons and not in the office. Officer Meseke told Mr. Scheffel that the school needed to be on lockdown as they could not verify any information, that Mr. Trujillo was withholding information, and refusing to communicate. Mr. Scheffel then told Officer Meseke, "you do it" and Officer Meseke pulled the alarm. I proceeded back to the nurse's office with students, one of whom was now very upset and fearful. Becky Capozza and I attempted to calm her down and support her. Once lockdown was lifted, we left the nurse's office and I witnessed a man in a hooded sweatshirt and hat who I eventually recognized was David Blackburn, aggressively walking in and out of the office and then standing outside obviously yelling at the officers and deputies on scene, as well as firefighters who were all present. His behavior was truly shocking to where it was hard not to watch as it was unbelievable to me.

Meryl Tolsma

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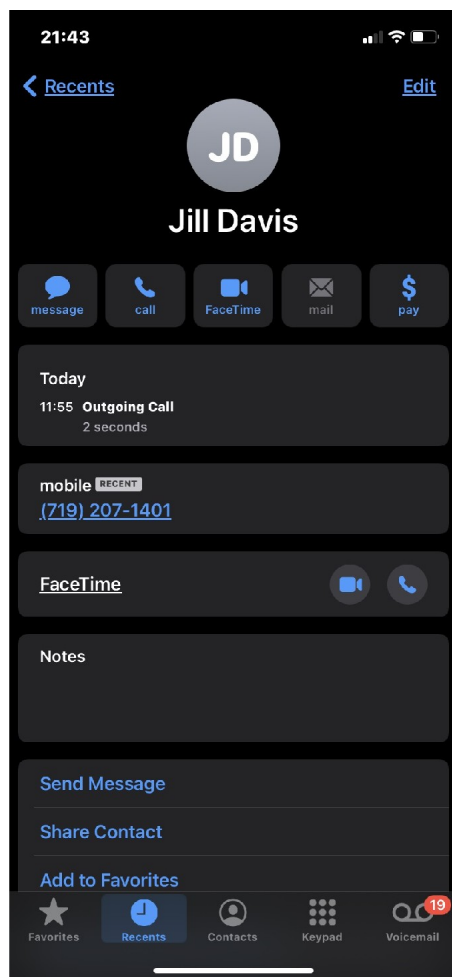
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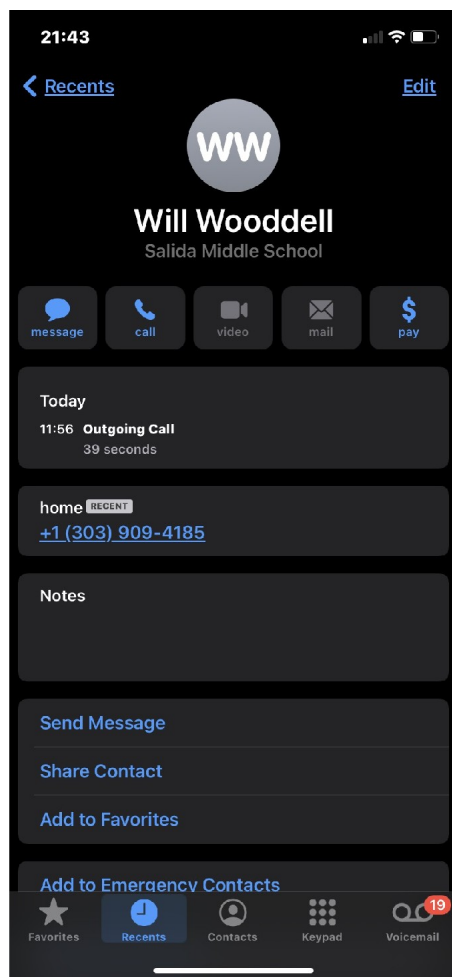
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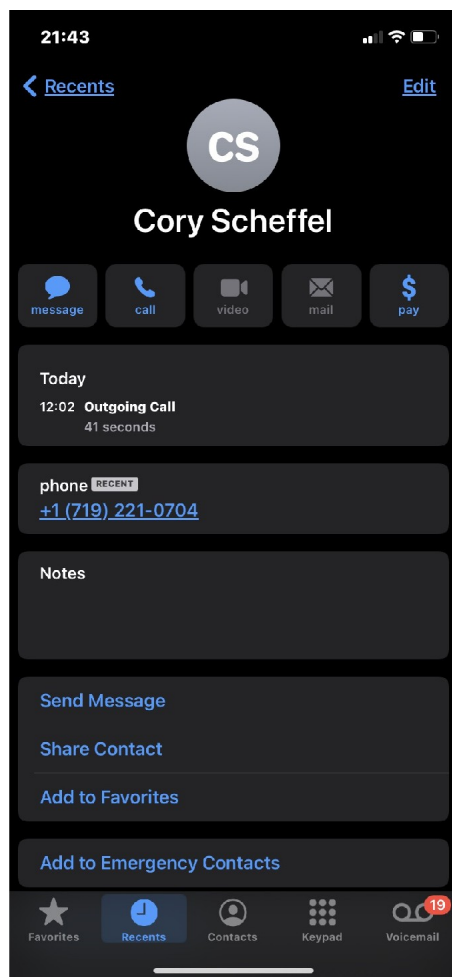
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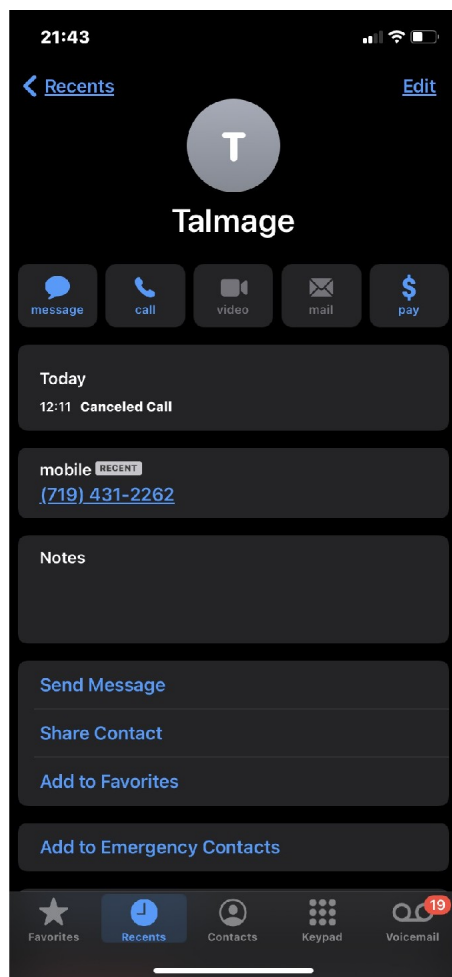
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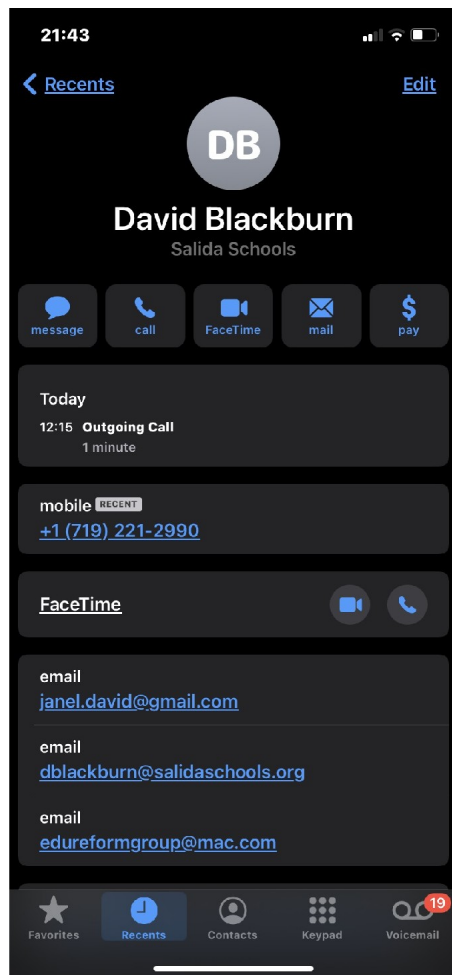
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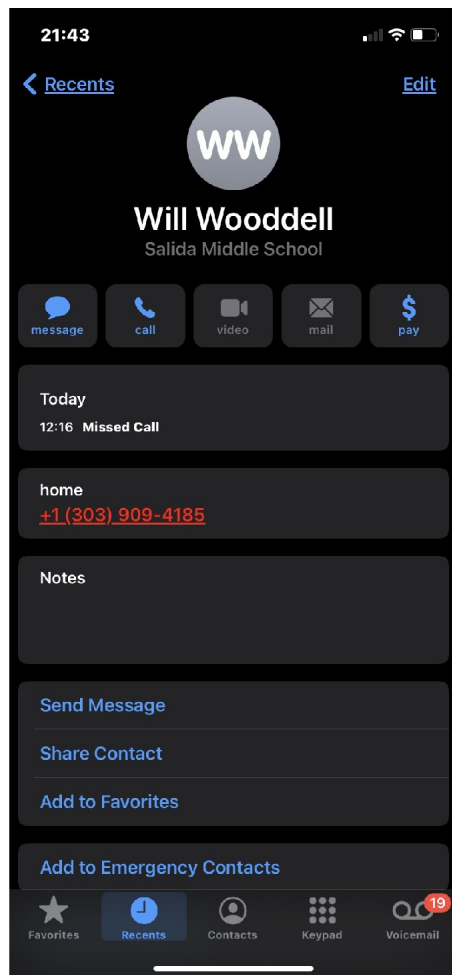
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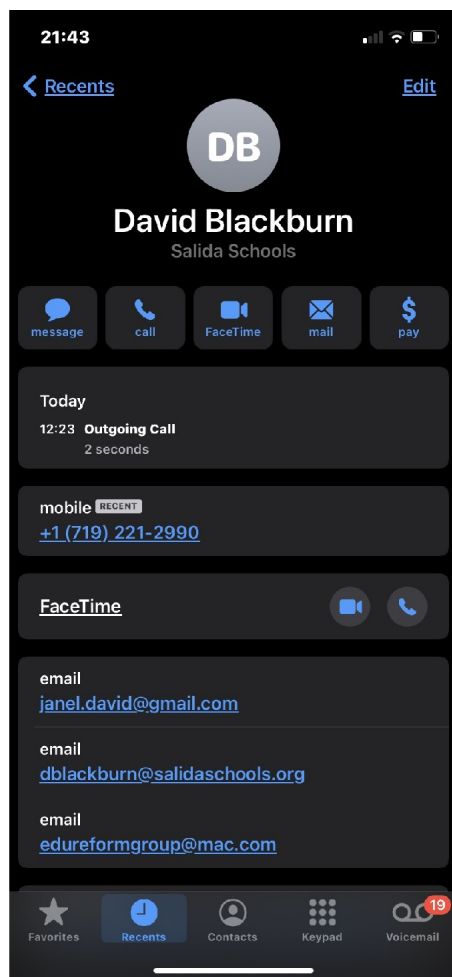
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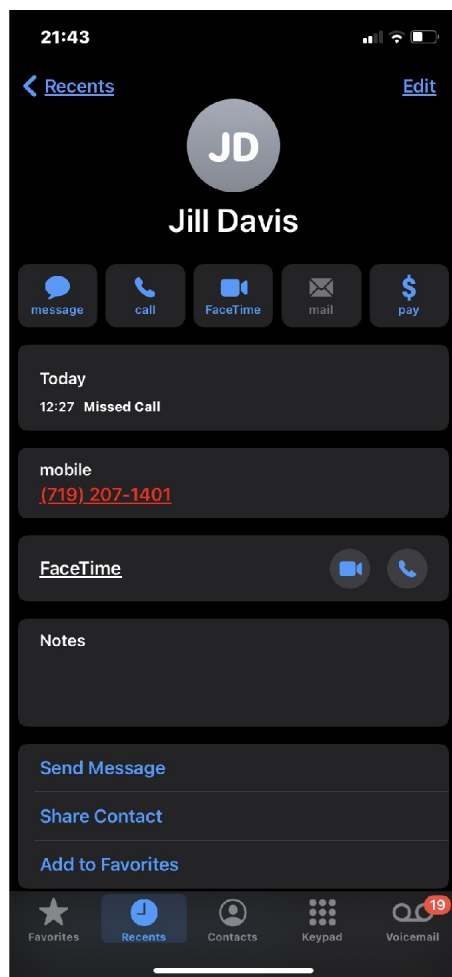
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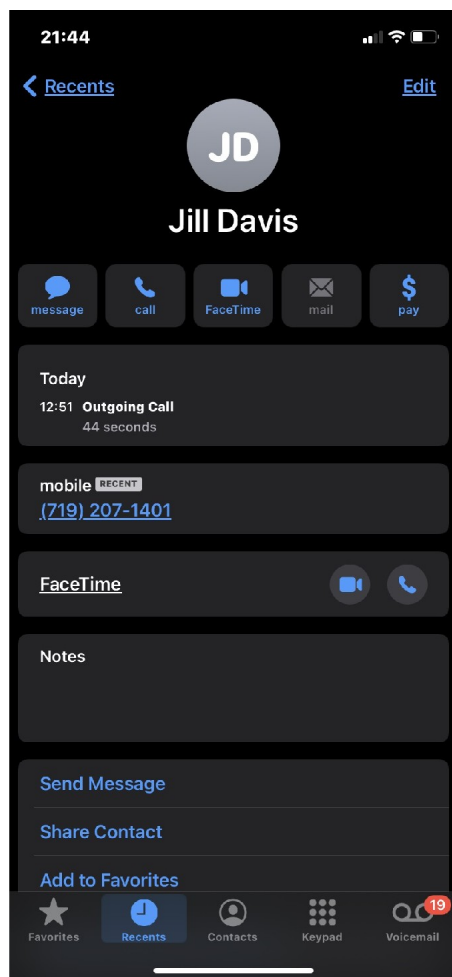
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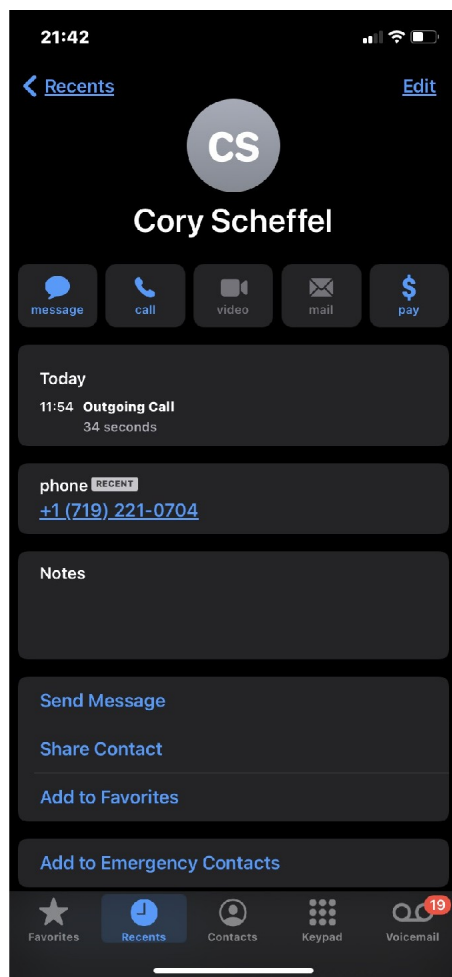
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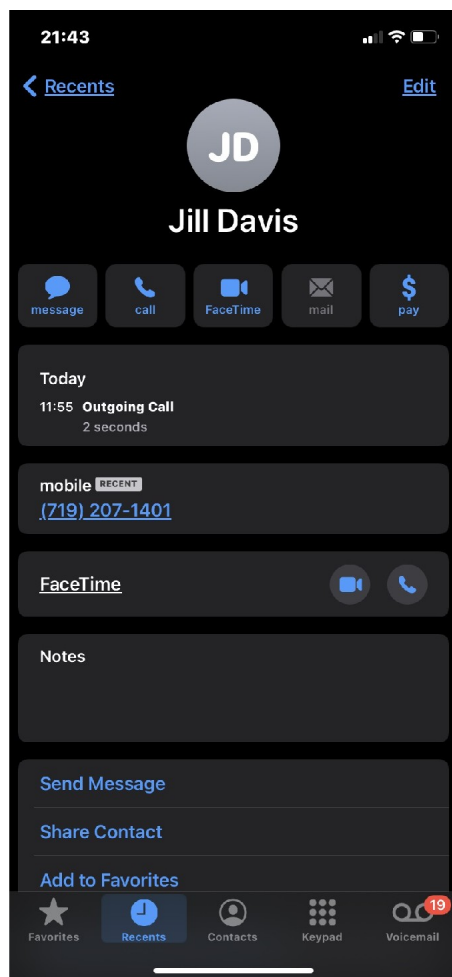
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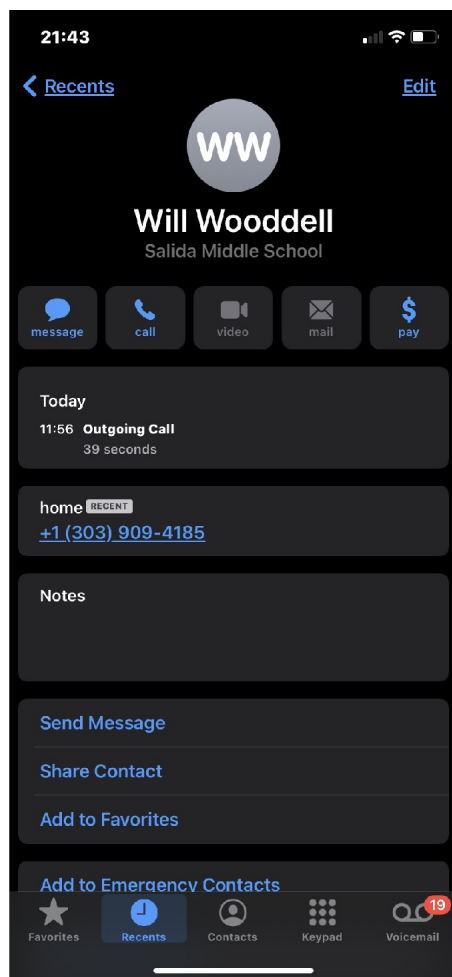
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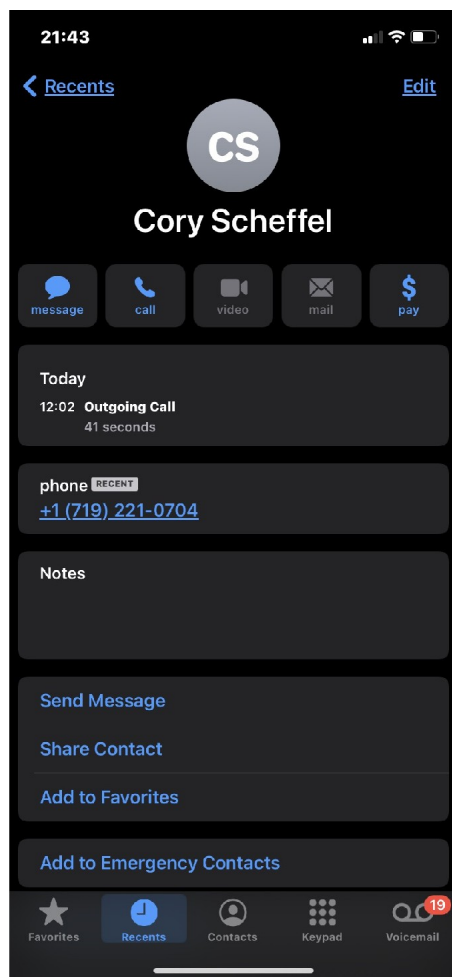
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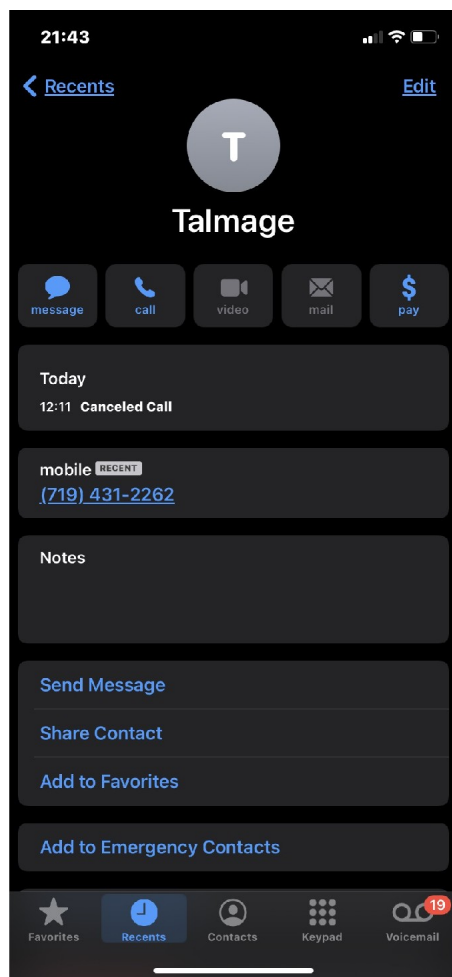
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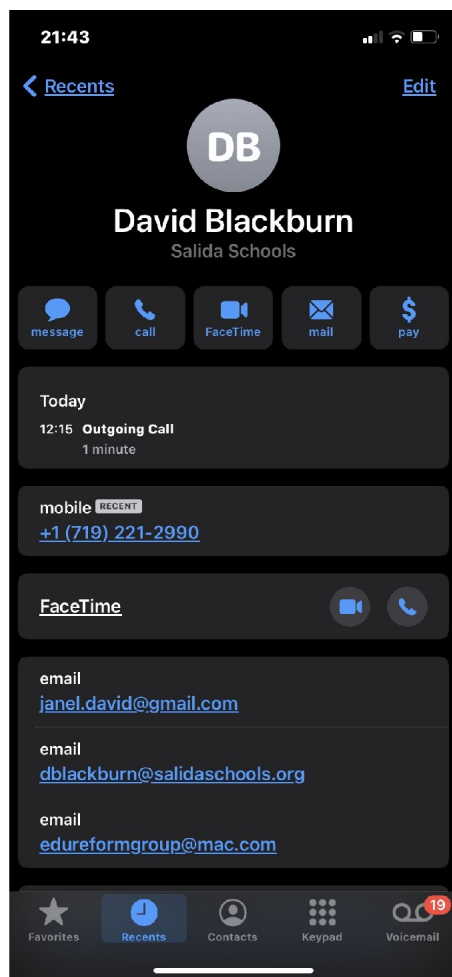
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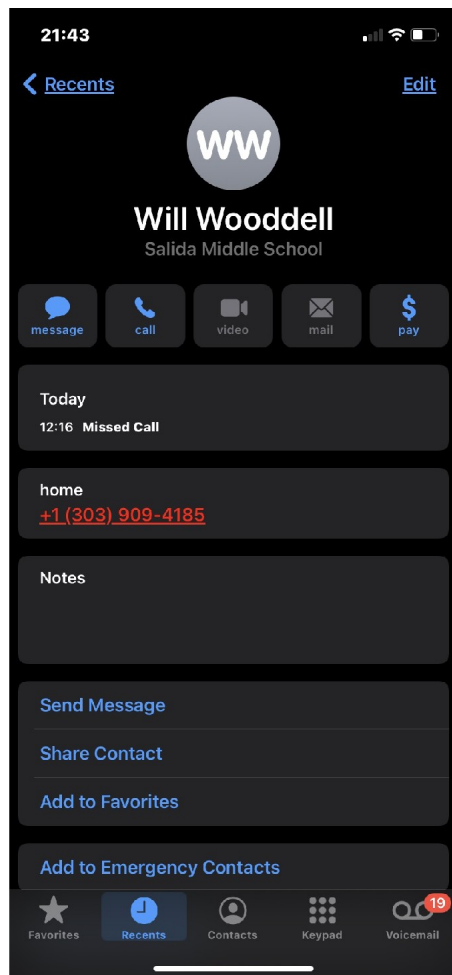
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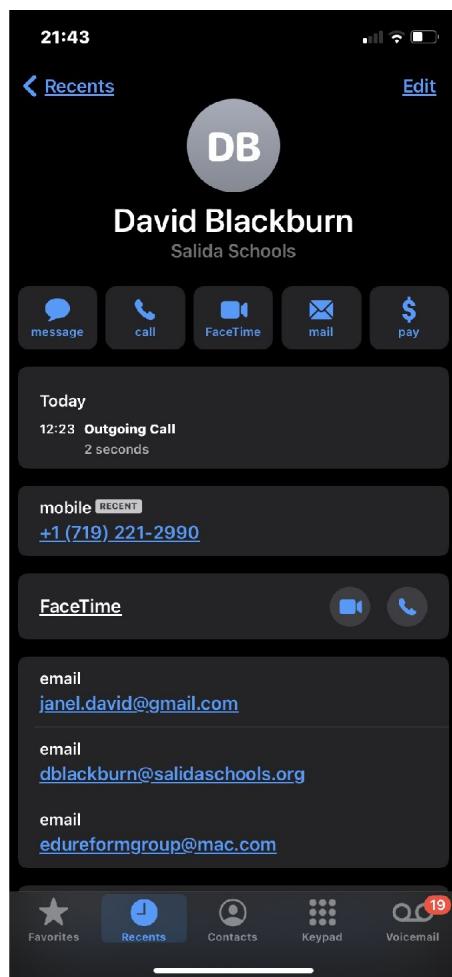
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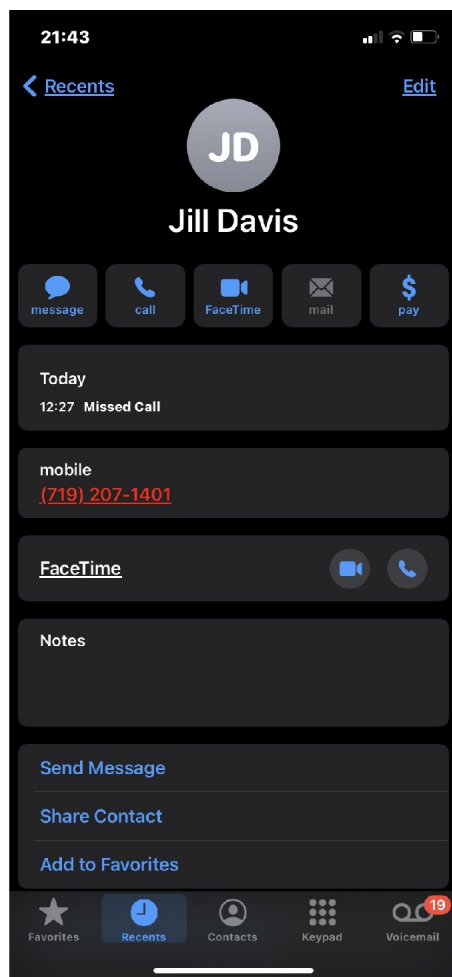
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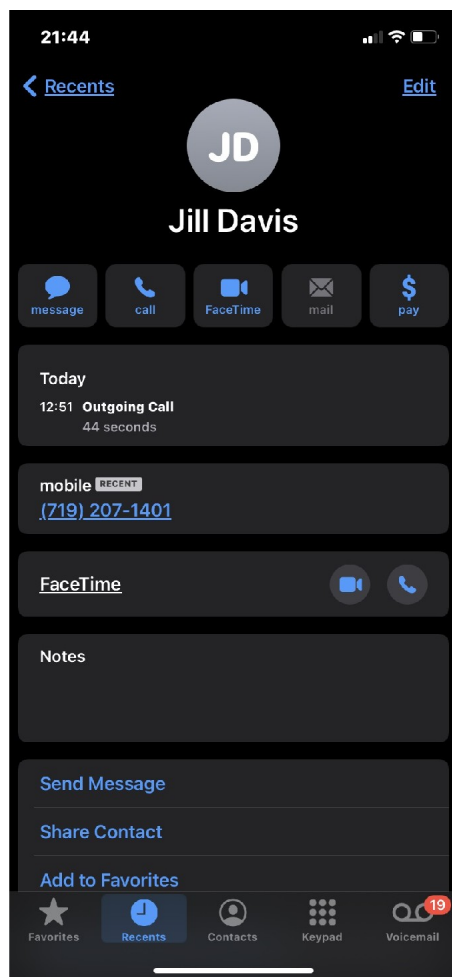
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