

News release



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\$800,000 enhances existing safety with latest technology

District earns grant which will leverage countywide law enforcement resources and streamline response to school emergencies

When the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) announced last week that Everett Public Schools was one of 80 recipients of safety grants – and a district to earn one of the largest grants, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, Dr. Molly Ringo, said, “This means our different emergency responders and schools will have immediate and consistent connections when emergency situations arise. As was learned during the Oso landslide, a unified and coordinated response to emergencies can save lives.”

An innovative feature of the system is a button – an emergency button on a mobile phone or computer that instantly connects law enforcement, school officials, designated school staff and emergency responders. Responders and law enforcement have instant access to school maps, live communication with school personnel and live video from areas involved in the emergency. Global Positioning System (GPS) is programmed into the button, so that responders immediately know the location of the button summons.

“One of the best outcomes of this grant application,” said Ringo, “is how it brought together ALL of the law enforcement and emergency responders to work on one goal. We spent months learning each other’s systems and protocols to agree on a method for quick and appropriate responses to school emergencies.

“Did you know,” she asks, “that there are three law enforcement agencies in our district? Everett Police Department, Snohomish County Sheriff’s Office and the Mill Creek Police Department. 9-1-1 calls are routed to one of two different locations. This grant makes it possible for all law enforcement and both 9-1-1 centers to get the same real-time information and data in the same, integrated format.”

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The state's \$800,000 builds upon funding local voters approved in the district's 2010 Technology Levy for security cameras in school areas. The grant now enables the district to retire old existing security cameras in schools and to replace them with ones compatible with the new system. Ken Toyn, the district's director of information systems and technology, reports the timeline for the installation: "Bids go out this fall; installation takes place during the 2014-15 school year and is complete by June 30, 2015."

"Next year's camera installation expends the last of the technology levy dollars voters approved in 2010," noted Ringo. The cameras will be at exterior doors, in corridors, common spaces (excluding bathrooms, locker rooms and classrooms), parking lots, bus turn-around areas, sports fields and student gathering locations outside schools.

The grant pays for video security project components including telecommunications cabling and conduit pathways, telecommunication and networking equipment, testing and training, servers and programming and the emergency button app from Rave Mobile Safety.

Rave Mobile Safety is used in more than 1,000 colleges and universities in the country and by Snohomish County's SNOPAC 911 center. Leveraging the capabilities of the existing Rave Mobile Safety system, new security cameras and school response procedures will shorten response time and unify appropriate actions, Ringo notes. "At the same time that 9-1-1 call takers receive an emergency button activation, they get not only a direct voice connection with the caller but also information about that school and a way to have real-time conversations among all responders, school administrators and staff. Simultaneously, authorized school administrators and others on site get notifications. No time or data is lost by relaying information second-hand to others."

In 2013 [Senate Bill 5197](#) encouraged school districts to develop new emergency response systems using "evolving technology." Districts had until March 2014 to apply.

OSPI awarded nearly \$7 million to the 80 districts that qualified during the grant process. Everett's \$801,059 award was the second highest amount in the state; Seattle School District earned \$845,310 for their safety grant proposal. Other district award amounts ranged from just over \$5,000 for small districts to more than \$400,000 to larger districts.

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