

**RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
DISTRICT SAFETY & SECURITY SUB-COMMITTEE (DSSC)
MEETING MINUTES
Monday, August 25, 2025**

ATTENDEES:	ATTENDEES:	ABSENT:
DiMemmo, Kristie	Susanne Ma	Taube, Rhonda
Collins, Michael	Blackmore, Chris	Arguelles, Rudy
Askar, Majd		Kazsuk, Tracy
Esqueda, Monica		Covarrubias, Araceli
Tu, Beiwei		MVC Student Body President
Moore, Frankie		NC Student Body President
Hicks, Marie		RCC Student Body President
Heim, Stefanie		Caringella, Graciela
Brandi Avila		Bolanos, Victor
Ferrer, Greg		Gonzalez, Evelyn
Rojas, Octavio		Wurtz, Kevin

The meeting was called to order by Beiwei Tu at 2:00 pm. This special session was scheduled to provide additional discussion time ahead of the next regularly scheduled DSSC meeting on September 5, 2025. The focus of the meeting was the evaluation of emergency blue phones across district campuses and the consideration of potential alternatives.

Beiwei Tu began by presenting an overview of the current status of blue phones in the district. She explained that blue phones became a standard security feature on college and corporate campuses beginning in the 1990s, when cell phones were uncommon. At present, the district has 137 blue phones located across various campuses and sites. An inspection conducted in early August 2025 revealed significant functionality problems. Many units had issues such as non-functioning blue lights or strobe lights, broken audio systems that prevented dispatchers from hearing callers, or connectivity problems. Tu reported that 74% of the units are no longer supported by manufacturers, making it impossible to obtain replacement parts. The cost of replacing individual units is high, approximately \$30,000 each, as demonstrated by two recent replacements at RCC. She noted that while blue phones once symbolized campus safety, today they represent outdated technology, are rarely used, and require high ongoing maintenance.

The committee then turned to a discussion of alternatives. Tu emphasized that 98% of Americans now carry cell phones, and that personal phones provide quicker and more practical access to emergency services through direct 911 calls. She proposed a district-wide safety communication campaign emphasizing “Call 911 for Emergency” as the primary emergency response. Additionally, she introduced the RAVE Guardian app as a modern alternative. Monica Esqueda demonstrated the app, explaining its features: direct communication with campus police and risk management without third-party delays; a panic button that functions as an electronic alert; the ability to request safety escorts from officers or assign personal contacts; GPS-enabled location tracking; and options for reporting non-emergency safety and security concerns such as

suspicious behavior, vandalism, or facility hazards. She also highlighted that the app provides immediate notifications to all on-duty campus police officers and risk management staff.

Committee members raised multiple considerations. Marie Hicks expressed concern that not all students own or can afford cell phones, particularly those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. She suggested exploring whether inexpensive prepaid phones could be made available to students or checked out for those in need. Frankie Moore supported this concern, noting that some students already face barriers with other mobile-based services, such as the district bus pass program, which requires a smartphone to access. Greg Ferrer, representing Disability Services, addressed accessibility issues, concluding that most students with communication or accessibility needs already have adaptive tools built into personal devices and would not be disproportionately affected. He emphasized, however, the greater risk of leaving non-functioning blue phones in place, which may create a false sense of security.

Cell coverage challenges also received significant attention. Brandi Avila explained that certain areas of Moreno Valley College experience poor or inconsistent service, regardless of carrier, and that some students rely on Wi-Fi rather than cellular plans. Susanne Ma confirmed that while solutions such as distributed antenna systems could improve coverage, they are costly to implement districtwide. Both Avila and Hicks advocated for retaining a limited number of blue phones in high-traffic areas until coverage gaps are resolved.

Risk management and liability concerns were also discussed. Michael Collins emphasized that maintaining broken or unreliable phones can create legal exposure if someone attempts to use a phone in an emergency and finds it non-functional. He recommended that any blue phones that cannot be repaired should be decommissioned and removed immediately, to prevent reliance on non-working equipment. Rojas added that the district should develop clear messaging distinguishing between communication protocols inside buildings, where landlines or panic buttons may be available, and outside areas, where cell phones or apps are more practical. DiMemmo emphasized the importance of strong and consistent communication, noting that past reliance on panic buttons had sometimes led to delayed police responses. She urged that campaigns emphasize calling 911 and using RAVE Guardian as primary tools.

The group discussed possible next steps to ensure consistent messaging across all campuses. Several members emphasized the importance of presenting a unified communication plan that could be shared across Academic Senates, College Councils, faculty associations, and student leadership bodies. Tu clarified that the DSSC's role is to review the matter and provide a recommendation to the District Strategic Planning Council (DSPC). Before making such a recommendation, committee members should consult their respective constituencies and gather feedback. This would allow the DSSC to vote on an action item at the September 5, 2025 meeting. If consensus is reached, the recommendation could be advanced to the DSPC meeting scheduled for September 19, 2025.

The committee also addressed the removal of non-functioning blue phones and reached a consensus to eliminate all broken phones while considering strategic locations for a limited number of operational ones. Tu and Chief Rojas will work together to identify these strategic

locations. At the same time, DiMemmo will consult with the facilities team regarding in-house removal options and will coordinate with other college directors.

In closing, Tu reiterated that the committee must decide whether to recommend decommissioning the blue phones and adopt alternative safety measures. She asked committee members to bring the issue to their stakeholder groups for discussion and return with feedback. The meeting adjourned with agreement that further consultation and data gathering are essential before final recommendations are made.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:46 pm.

The next meeting will be held on September 5, 2025.