



Chino Valley Unified School District staff members duck for cover as an “armed” intruder enters the classroom. Watching the scenario unfold is Chino Police Officer John Cervantes. The intruder is portrayed by Chino Police Officer Reggie Barber.

Chino Police Officers: Action is better than just ducking for cover in active shooter situations

Seconds after hearing gunshots on campus, Ayala High Principal Diana Yarboi crouched behind a student desk, pulled off a sneaker and prepared to hurl it toward the classroom door.

She and dozens of other Chino Valley Unified School District (CVUSD) administrators and secretaries were learning to fight back against an armed intruder. They were participating in the ALICE (active shooter) training offered by Chino Police officers on July 29 at Rhodes Elementary

School in Chino. The event was coordinated by Officer Robert Troncoso, a school resource officer at Buena Vista High in Chino.

ALICE is an acronym for four actions to take in an active shooter/attacker incident: Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate. The program is nationally endorsed by several law enforcement and safety agencies, according to Chino Police Officer Dustin Kato, a school resource officer at Don Lugo High.

Chino Police Department's school resource officers – local law enforcement personnel stationed at school campuses – took a 40-hour course from the ALICE Training Institute in Ohio to become certified ALICE trainers.

“If you see something, say something,” Officer Kato said regarding the alert part of ALICE. Officer Kato said that among the lessons learned since the Columbine mass school shooting in 1999, is that 81% of the shooters had revealed their intentions to others before they took action.

Schools should go on lockdown when a reliable threat is discovered, the officers said. School officials should not just say lockdown over their public address system, but should also give details of where the shooter is on campus, where he is going, what he looks like, and other details to help people decide what action to take. This is the inform part of ALICE.

The counter part of the program trains people to distract, swarm, and fight back against an intruder, allowing people to escape or possibly detain the shooter.

Officer Kato said the best thing to do in a campus shooting situation is evacuate, if possible. He said most of the students killed in the Columbine High massacre hid under desks in the school library where they were “sitting ducks” for the killers.

The administrators and secretaries attending the training were divided into four groups and sent to unlocked classrooms at Rhodes. They experienced three scenarios: duck and cover only, distract and swarm the intruder, and barricade the door and prepare to fight.

In the first scenario, CVUSD staff members ducked under lightweight student desks as the “intruder,” Chino Police Officer Reggie Barber, burst in with a toy gun. Officer John Cervantes, who was among the trainers, said most of the group would have been killed using that strategy. He said people could have run out a back door of the classroom and possibly escape completely.

In the second scenario, the staff was asked to attack the intruder with perforated, light-weight plastic balls, simulating throwing heavier items to distract the intruder from shooting. Officer Barber retreated from the room when pelted from all sides by the balls. “It was intense, they were coming from everywhere,” he said.

Officer Cervantes told the staff members that most bad guys aren't good shots, so distracting them, moving in different directions, or attacking the suspect helps delay shooting. "When we're actively reacting to a threat, now we are a threat to them," Officer Cervantes said.

In the third scenario, staff members were tasked with barricading the door with anything they could find in the classroom, including chairs, desks, and a looped belt held tight around the metal closer at the top of the door. The officers said a barricade can "buy time" for people to escape or get help from law enforcement.

The administrators and secretaries in one room built a ceiling-high wall of chairs and bookcases against the door, while one of them looped a belt around the door closer and held it tight to prevent the shooter from entering. The pretend bad guy was unable to get inside.

The ALICE program recommends keeping classroom and school office doors locked at all times. Officer Cervantes acknowledged that constantly having to unlock a door to let someone in or out can be inconvenient.

"But I'd rather be inconvenienced and save my life than save time," he said.

Officer Cervantes said even locked doors can be defeated, so the ALICE training recommends the other tactics: people barricading doors and looking for objects to throw, such as books, staplers, paperweights, and even shoes.

"Always go over what you did and what you can do better," Officer Cervantes said. "As a group, we have to prepare for (an armed intruder) and train." He suggested that school officials and students take 15 minutes each month to drill for an armed intruder.

"What good are we if we just go into panic mode?" Officer Cervantes asked.

Chino Police Officer John Monroe said people usually go through three steps when they hear gunshots where they shouldn't be: Denial, Deliberation, and Decisive Moment. In the denial step, a person might think the gunshots are firecrackers or some other harmless noise. In deliberation, they try to determine what is happening, and in decisive moment, they take some type of action, including running, hiding, or fighting.

"The faster you get to that decisive moment, the more people you save," Officer Monroe said.



Ayala High Principal Diana Yarboi (front) arms herself with a shoe for throwing as the “intruder” approaches the classroom.



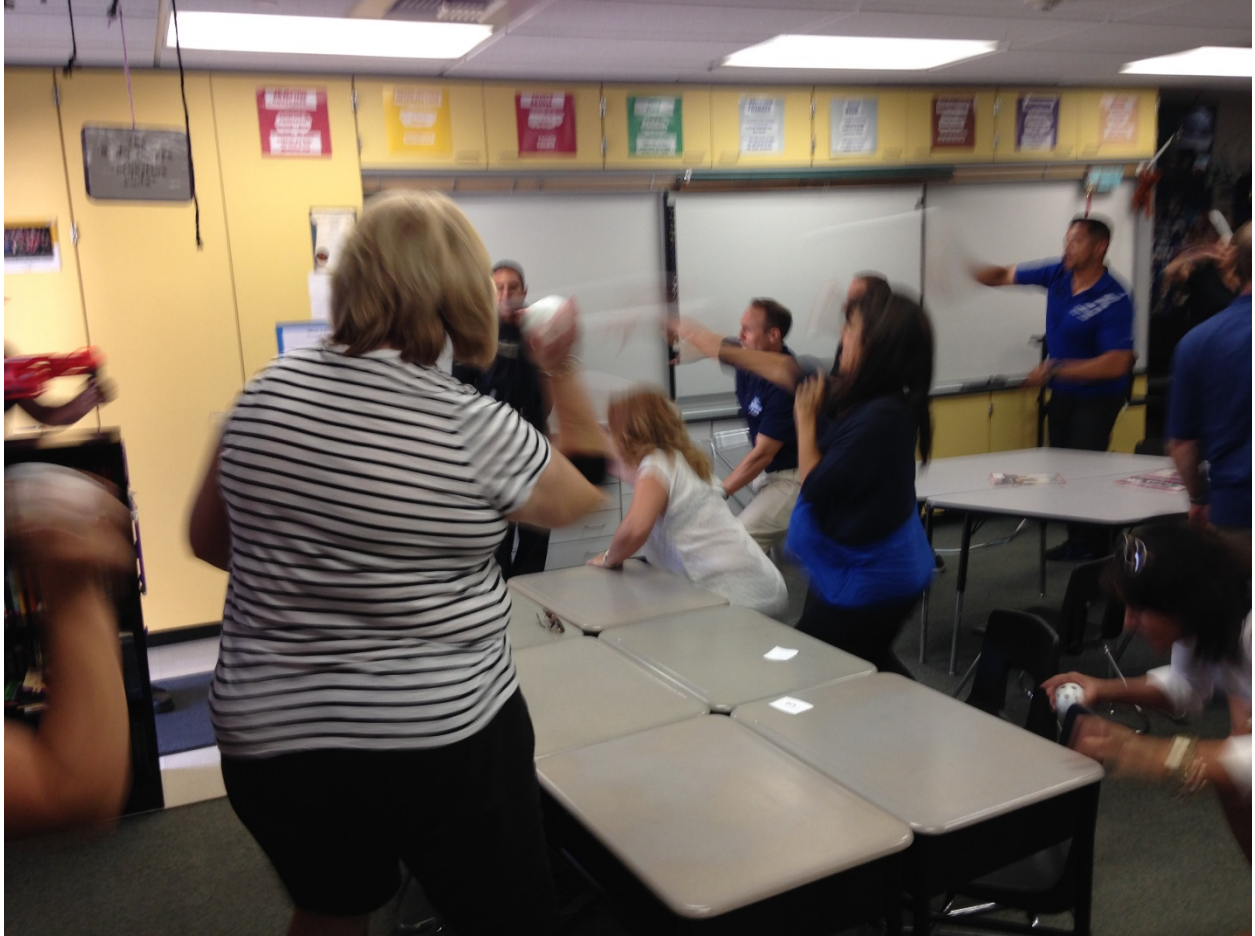
CVUSD staff members barricade the classroom door with a table as one employee holds a belt tight around the door closer to prevent the “intruder” from entering the room.



A backpack rack is added to the growing barricade of tables and chairs against the classroom door.



Chino Police Officer Nick Bird lifts a caution tape so CVUSD staff members can enter the scenario training area on the campus of Rhodes Elementary School in Chino.



School staff members throw perforated, lightweight, plastic balls at the “armed intruder” as he enters the classroom.



Chino Police Officer John Cervantes goes over the scenarios with some of the CVUSD staff members in a classroom at Rhodes Elementary School in Chino.



Chino Valley Unified School District administrators and secretaries gather in the Rhodes Elementary School multi-purpose room for the ALICE (active shooter) training.



Chino Police Officer Dustin Kato (left) explains the ALICE (active shooter) training to CVUSD administrators and secretaries.