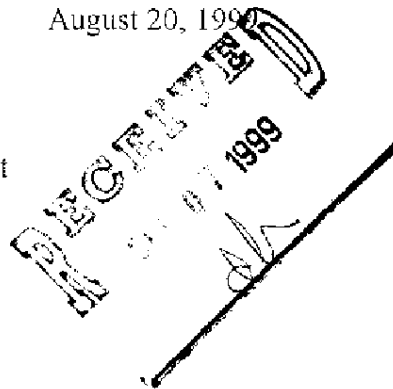


# FILLMORE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

P.O. Box 697, Fillmore, California 93016-0697

August 20, 1999

Honorable Charles Campbell  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
Ventura County Hall of Justice  
800 South Victoria Ave.  
Ventura, CA 93009



RECEIVED  
VENTURA COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

AUG 27 1999

OFFICE OF THE  
PRESIDING JUDGE

Dear Justice Campbell:

The following is a response from the Fillmore Unified School District to the 1998-99 Ventura County Grand Jury report entitled, *School Safety in Ventura County Public Schools*.

## Piru Elementary School

There is an error in the background information for Piru School. The top paragraph on page 3 indicates a teaching staff of 30. The correct number of teachers is 18.

Recommendation R-1: School rules, guides, handbooks, and parent contracts are being revised as recommended.

Recommendation R-2: The district has found that the current level of yard supervision has proven to be highly effective in protecting the safety of people and facilities at the school. The district does not have sufficient funding to increase the yard duty staff as recommended. The appropriate usage of radios will be reviewed.

Recommendation R-3: The school does not plan to institute a daily inspection of student backpacks as recommended by the Grand Jury. However, the school will continue its immediate inspection of backpacks within the scope of reasonable cause provided under the law.

Recommendation R-4: The district does not plan to alarm every classroom in the district. However, teachers are asked not to be in their classrooms during early morning or late night hours when they may be vulnerable.

Recommendation R-5: The custodial staff will be trained in bomb recognition as recommended. However, contrary to the recommendation of the Grand Jury, experts advise us that custodians should never be expected to handle suspected explosive devices under any circumstances and should, instead, be trained to contact proper authorities immediately and safeguard the area.

DISTRICT OFFICE  
527 Sespe Avenue  
(805) 524-6000

FILLMORE HIGH SCHOOL  
555 Central Avenue  
(805) 524-8100

FILLMORE MIDDLE SCHOOL  
543 "A" Street  
(805) 524-6055

FILLMORE COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL  
532 "A" Street  
(805) 524-6077

SESPE SCHOOL  
425 Orchard Street  
(805) 524-6131

SAN CAYETANO SCHOOL  
514 Mountain View Street  
(805) 524-8040

PIRU SCHOOL  
3811 East Center Street, Piru  
(805) 521-709

Recommendation R-6: The fencing of all school grounds in the district has been explored in the past on several occasions and has been found to be cost prohibitive except in the case of new schools where funding has been available. However, the district will continue to explore the feasibility of fencing.

### **Fillmore Middle School**

There is an error on page 6 in the background information for the Fillmore Middle School. The indicated number teaching staff is 30, but the correct number of teachers is 41. As a clarification, the background section indicates that "during the 1997-1998 school year the school had two weapon possession incidents which led to suspensions but no expulsions...." The students involved were special needs students, and under current federal regulations were not subject to expulsion given the conditions of the case.

Recommendation R-1: The school's Comprehensive Safe School Plan is being revised to meet the requirements of SB-187 as recommended by the Grand Jury.

Recommendation R-2: School rules, guides, handbooks, and parent contracts are being revised as recommended.

Recommendation R-3: The school has received additional funding and will increase and reorganize yard supervision for the coming school year. Additional radios, as recommended by the Grand Jury, have been ordered. In addition, the district has been awarded a School-Community Policing Partnership's grant which will increase the presence of law enforcement on the campus on a daily basis.

Recommendation R-4: The school does not plan to institute a daily inspection of student backpacks as recommended by the Grand Jury. However, the school will continue its immediate inspection of backpacks within the scope of reasonable cause provided under the law.

Recommendation R-5: The school does post signs instructing visitors to report to the school office. Visitor badges are issued to all visitors after they have signed in and stated their purpose for the visit. Staff has been instructed to escort visitors to the office for this purpose.

Recommendation R-6: The district does not plan to alarm every classroom in the district. However, teachers are asked not to be in their classrooms during early morning or late night hours when they may be vulnerable. Phones are available in each classroom complex should an emergency arise. The district is exploring the installation of surveillance cameras.

Recommendation R-7: The custodial staff will be trained in bomb recognition as recommended. However, contrary to the recommendation of the Grand Jury, experts advise us that custodians should never be expected to handle suspected explosive devices under any circumstances and should, instead, be trained to contact proper authorities immediately and safeguard the area.

### Fillmore High School

As a clarification, the background section on page 11 indicates that, "The school had two weapon possession incidents (knife and pellet gun) during the 1997-1998 school year, one of which resulted in an expulsion. The student involved in the non-expulsion case was a special needs student, and under current federal regulations was not subject to expulsion given the conditions of the case.

Recommendation R-1: The District has directed the high school principal to develop a Comprehensive Safe School Plan complying with the requirements of SB 187 and BC 35294.2 as recommended by the Grand Jury.

Recommendation R-2: School policies, rules, guides, handbooks, Athlete's Code Agreement, and student/parent contracts are being revised as recommended.

Recommendation R-3: The school has received additional funding and will increase and reorganize yard supervision for the coming school year. In addition, the district has been awarded a School-Community Policing Partnership grant which will increase the presence of law enforcement on the campus on a daily basis.

Recommendation R-4: The school does not plan to institute a daily inspection of student backpacks as recommended by the Grand Jury. However, the school will continue its immediate inspection of backpacks within the scope of reasonable cause provided under the law.

Recommendation R-5: The district has been awarded a School-Community Policing Partnership grant which will increase the presence of law enforcement on the campus on a daily basis.

Recommendation R-6: The district is considering inclusion of this recommendation in its modernization plans.

Recommendation R-7: Four surveillance cameras are being installed and will be operational for the start of the 1999-2000 school year. This has been arranged through the cooperation of the county safety coordinator and Self-Funding Authority as recommended by the Grand Jury.

Recommendation R-8: The custodial staff will be trained in bomb recognition as recommended. However, contrary to the recommendation of the Grand Jury, experts advise us that custodians should never be expected to handle suspected explosive devices under any circumstances and should, instead, be trained to contact proper authorities immediately and safeguard the area.

Recommendation R-9: A surveillance camera has been installed in the area as recommended by the Grand Jury.

Recommendation R-10: A request has been made to the City of Fillmore (Traffic Committee) to close Second Street during school hours. We have received on August 12, 1999, a notice that we can post signs to indicate street is closed during school hours. We cannot gate street (see enclosure)

Recommendation R-11: The fencing of all school grounds in the district has been explored in the past on several occasions and has been found to be cost prohibitive except in the case of new schools where funding has been available. However, the district will continue to explore the feasibility of fencing.

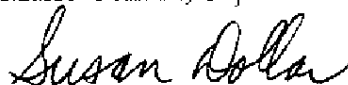
If you have any questions regarding the District's response to the Grand Jury report, please contact Susan Dollar, Director of Personnel/Risk Manager.

Sincerely,

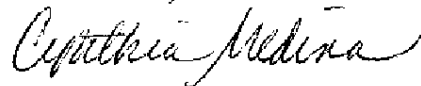
Dave Anderson, President Board of Education



Mario Contini, Superintendent



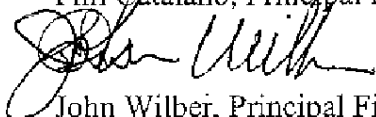
Susan Dollar, Director of Personnel/Risk Manager



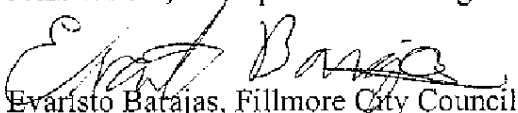
Cynthia Medina, Principal Piru School



Phil Catalano, Principal Fillmore Middle School



John Wilber, Principal Fillmore High School



Evaristo Batajas, Fillmore City Council

c: Chuck Weis, VCSS  
County Clerk - Richard Dean  
Grand Jury



# PLEASANT VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

600 Temple Avenue, Camarillo, CA 93010-4835

Voice: (805) 482-2763, Fax: (805) 987-5511

**Bedford Open**  
1099 N. Bedford  
484-5116; 388-8593 - Fax

**Camarillo Heights**  
35 Catalina Drive  
482-9838; 987-7189 - Fax

**Dos Caminos**  
3635 Appian Way  
482-9894; 482-7478 - Fax

**El Descanso**  
1099 N. Bedford  
482-1954; 388-8593 - Fax

**El Rancho Structured**  
550 Temple Avenue  
482-4608; 388-5814 - Fax

**Las Colinas**  
5750 Fieldcrest  
484-0461; 482-2443 - Fax

**Las Posas**  
75 Calle La Guerra  
482-4606; 388-5431 - Fax

**Los Altos Middle**  
700 Temple Avenue  
482-4656; 388-9059 - Fax

**Los Nogales**  
1555 Kendall Avenue  
482-1964; 987-4969 - Fax

**Los Primeros Structured**  
2222 Ventura Boulevard  
484-2811; 482-8921 - Fax

**Monte Vista Middle**  
888 N. Lantana Street  
482-8891; 987-8951 - Fax

**Santa Rosa**  
13282 Santa Rosa Road  
491-3822; 491-2702 - Fax

**Tierra Linda**  
1201 Woodcreek Road  
445-8800; 445-8804 - Fax

**Valle Lindo**  
777 Aileen Street  
482-8861; 388-2532 - Fax

*"Together  
for  
Excellence"*

July 22, 1999

**RECEIVED**  
VENTURA COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

JUL 26 1999

OFFICE OF THE  
PRESIDING JUDGE

Honorable Charles Campbell  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
Ventura County Hall of Justice  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

**RECEIVED**  
AUG 03 1999

Dear Judge Campbell:

This letter is simply to confirm that the Grand Jury report dated June 1, 1999, and received on June 4, 1999, in this office has been reviewed and discussed with corrective action taking place where warranted. You should have received, by now, a letter of compliance by both principals of the selected schools--Mr. Bob Rizzardi of Monte Vista Middle School and Mrs. Judy Harding of El Rancho Structured School.

For your information, the full report was provided to our Board of Trustees as back up to an agenda item covering safety issues and issues in the Grand Jury Report, on July 1, 1999, at a regularly scheduled board meeting.

One of the more critical issues that the report brought out was the need to provide specific training in crisis management and bomb threats beyond what we have already done. For your information, even prior to the report, we were having discussions with the Camarillo Police Department about scheduling bomb squad and SWAT team training to our staff. This important training occurred on June 28, 1999, and was attended by principals, custodians, maintenance personnel, and selected individuals who might have a role in a disaster response. The training was provided by county law enforcement personnel and provided a basis for discussion and developing plans for action in the event of a school crisis beyond "Acts of God" such as earthquakes, floods, etc.

Additionally, I was able to attend 16 hours of training in school safety on June 21 and 22, with an emphasis on student shootings and/or bombings. This excellent training was held in Corona, California and was sponsored by the National School Safety Training Institute. I returned with a great deal of current information that will form the basis for ongoing improvements to district planning.

Hmh\Safety\GrandJuryResponse

Excellence in elementary public education since 1868

Honorable Charles Campbell  
Page 2  
June 22, 1999

As a school district, we are evaluating many issues such as the viability of hand-held metal detectors for random checks at our middle schools (and elementary schools as warranted). We are also reviewing the pros and cons of random locker checks with canines. Both of these issues will be discussed with our Board of Trustees in an effort to determine direction. At the elementary school district level, it is believed that parent understanding and support is necessary for the success of such a program.

For your information, our district is undergoing a massive facilities renovation program. Part of the program is to complete the security fencing started several years ago. We now have funds through a successful general bond election to complete some long-standing issues related to facilities, which also relate to student safety.

Finally, we have been piloting teacher photo ID badges for the last two years. In April of 1999, our District Safety Committee voted to make the ID badges for all employees mandatory, as another vehicle for providing tighter security in the schools.

**Summary:** Thank you for the Grand Jury audit information. This independent effort was helpful in isolating areas of continued focus or, where warranted, correction. We have taken the information seriously and will continue in our efforts for ongoing improvements.

The attached are letters from each of the schools addressing the specific issues with statements of "concurrence", "partial concurrence" or "non-concurrence" for each item indicated. I trust this information will meet your request.

Finally, it is my intent to use the Grand Jury report as an instrument to review with the District Safety Committee over the next year to make recommendations and to search for funding, where needed, to implement and refine programs of safety and security for our students, staff, and parents.

Sincerely,



Howard M. Hamilton, Ph.D.  
Associate Superintendent

ak

encs.

cc: Andre LaCouture, Superintendent; RaeAnne Michael, Teacher

**El Rancho Structured School  
550 Temple Avenue  
Camarillo, CA 93010  
805-482-4608**

**Office of the Principal**

Honorable Charles Campbell  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
Ventura County Hall of Justice  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

Dear Honorable Judge Campbell:

This letter is a response to the findings and recommendations in the Grand Jury report, School Safety in Ventura County Public Schools. In my opinion, El Rancho Structured School has been in the past, and will continue to be in the future, a very safe school for the youngsters who attend here. It was interesting to have the opportunity to visit with the representatives of the Grand Jury and we always look forward to feedback regarding the safety of the children in our care.

**FINDINGS**

**F-1: Concurrence**

I concur with the finding that our previous plan lacked some of the specific requirements of the law. Since this report was filed, the District has assisted us in developing a complete plan that is in compliance with SB-187 and EC 3529.4. Our new plan was developed with the assistance of law enforcement. Since this was accomplished at the end of the year, after our scheduled School Site Council meetings were over, this has been placed on the agenda for the first School Site Council meeting in September. This meeting will be open to the public, to review, discuss, and modify the plan. The District did not take part in the May 5, 1998 safe school planning workshop due to the fact that they had been pro-active and had already developed the plan prior to the county workshop to explain how to develop the plan.

**F-2: Concurrence**

I concur that our Parent Handbook did not list the length of time that students can be expelled for weapon possession. In the Parent Handbook for 1999/2000 we will be sure to list that information in accordance with EC48915 (a) and (c) and EC 48916 (a).

**F-3: Concurrence**

I concur, as above.

**F-4: Partial Concurrence**

I concur that there is no reference to weapons or the consequences of bringing them to school made in the Student/Parent/School Compact, however this is not the purpose of our Parent Compact. We feel that the Parent/School Compact should be a positive endeavor on the part of the school to enhance the partnership between parent and school, not to delineate negative consequences to obscure behavior.

**R-3:** Same as above.

**R-4:** I believe that our current Parent/School Compact should remain the same and that the Rules and Standards of Conduct, plus the Parent Handbook are sufficient at the elementary school level.

**R-5:** I have discussed this issue with the District and it will be up to them as to their decision regarding a campus supervisor as a security force for this school. My own feeling regarding this issue is that we do not need it.

**R-6:** This recommendation needs to be considered next year. I believe that before we could ever institute a policy of weapon monitoring of students that this needs to be discussed with parents and staff. It would also have to be presented to the Board of Trustees. Again, I do not feel that this is needed at El Rancho.

**R-7:** This has been accomplished already.

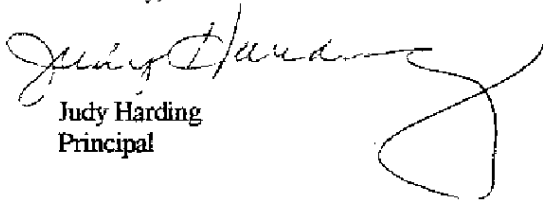
**R-8:** There will be more emphasis placed on student knowledge of consequences regarding weapons next school year.

**R-9:** This will be discussed with the District and it will be their decision.

**R-10:** Again, a discussion will ensue regarding this recommendation. I believe that this school does not need anyone because of the close proximity to the District Office complex.

**R-11:** I believe that this issue has been resolved and the District will do follow-up training in the future.

Sincerely,



Judy Harding  
Principal



Honorable Charles Campbell  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
Ventura County Hall of Justice  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

Dear Honorable Judge Campbell:

Please accept this letter as my response to the findings and recommendations contained in the Grand Jury report entitled School Safety in Ventura County Public Schools. I believe that Monte Vista is a very safe school, as evidenced by our record, and that we monitor student behavior to a high degree. At the same time I welcome the opportunity to always look for ways to improve safety at the school and to be in compliance with every aspect of the law.

## **FINDINGS**

### **F-1: Concurrence**

I concur with the finding that our previous plan lacked specific requirements of the law. Since the Grand Jury's visit, the Monte Vista's Safe School Plan has been completely rewritten to contain all the elements required. Our new plan was developed jointly by the district office and the site, with the involvement of a law enforcement officer. We subsequently held a School Site Council meeting, which was open to the public, to review, discuss, and modify the plan. It was then given to the Board of Education for their review and approval.

### **F-2: Nonconcurrency**

I do not agree with this finding. The wording on page 16 in our Agenda clearly states that the minimum punishment for a student who brings a weapon to school will be suspension and the maximum punishment will be expulsion. Because our district has not adopted a formal "zero tolerance" policy, this section is used to differentiate between a student who may bring a small pocket knife, under 2 ½ inches, and a knife or weapon that falls under Ed. Code Section 48915.

On page 19 of our Agenda, Ed. Code Section 48915 is referenced and the consequences for its violation are clearly stated. Additionally, we have informed parents

and students that the school may elect to have the student arrested in addition to recommending that the student be expelled. I have included a copy of pages 16-19 of our Agenda.

#### F-3: Partial Concurrence

I do concur that we do not search students and/or lockers without suspicion. I do not believe our school and its history justifies random searches of students. We do however monitor students very closely watching for any suspicious behavior and search students and lockers when justified.

In regards to the survey given to one class (30 students) by the Grand Jury, I believe that the questions asked were not properly worded. As a result, the percentage of students indicating that they had seen a weapon on campus (40%) does not accurately reflect what is occurring at Monte Vista. As a result, I conducted a follow-up survey with that same class and found the following:

Because we do not allow wallet chains or lighters on the campus, and define these as weapons and/or dangerous objects, a number of students indicated on my survey that these were the objects they had seen and were referencing when they completed the Grand Jury survey. My survey indicated that 23% of the students had seen a student with a knife. All of these, except one student, indicated that the knives they saw were "small pocket knives". One student did indicate that they had seen a switch blade knife on campus. Even though this is still too high a figure, I believe it more accurately reflects the true situation at Monte Vista.

#### F-4: Partial Concurrence

The survey conducted by the Grand Jury did indicate that 64% of the students were unaware that a student could be expelled for up-to-one year for bringing a weapon to school. Again, I believe that the Grand Jury's survey was flawed as it did not define "weapon" and the inclusion of "up-to-one year" was misleading. My survey found the following:

When the word "weapon" was defined to students, 100% of them responded that they knew that they could be expelled for bringing a weapon to school.

#### F-5: Nonconcurrence

When I became Principal four years ago, I became aware that the area behind the R Building was a potential trouble spot. As a result, a campus supervisor and teacher are stationed there before school and a teacher is stationed there after school. These individuals are provided with radios while on duty. Additionally, twice each period, while students are in class, campus supervisors walk the campus to ensure that the campus is secure and that there are no students out of class.

#### F-6: Concurrence

It is correct that our custodial staff has not received training in the recognition and handling of bombs/incendiary devices. Our district is currently developing policies and

D.5.10.  
Min Max

(Education Code Section 48900, Subsection [e]).

- \* Vandalism  
Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property (Education Code 48900 {f}). 6 10
- \* Theft  
Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property (Education Code 48900, Subsection {g}). 6 10
- \* Receiving Stolen Property  
Knowingly received stolen school property or private property (Education Code Section 48900, Subsection {l}). 6 10
- \* Possession of Imitation Firearms  
Possessed an imitation firearm (replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a reasonable person to conclude that the replica is a firearm) (Education Code 48900, Subsection {m}). 6 10
- \* Hate Violence  
Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause, or participated in an act of, hate violence. (Education Code Section 48900.3) 6 10
- \* Sexual Harassment  
Committed an act of sexual harassment (grades 4-12). (Education Code Section 48900.2) 4 10

Violations Against Public Decency 2 10

- \* Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity (Education Code Section 48900,{h}).

Violations Against Public Health/Safety 6 10

- \* Unlawfully possessed, used, sold, or otherwise furnished, or been under the influence of any controlled substance (as defined in Section 11053 of the Health and Safety Code), alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind (Education Code 48900, Subsection {c}).
- \* Unlawfully offered or arranged or negotiated to sell any controlled substance (as defined in Section 11053 of the Health and Safety Code), alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind, and then sold, delivered, or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid, substance, or material and represented the liquid, substance, or material as a controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant (Education Code Section 48900, Subsection {d}).

\* Possessed or used tobacco, or any products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets, and betel. However, this section does not prohibit use or possession by a pupil of his/her own prescription products. (Section 48900, Subsection {h})

\* Unlawfully possessed, unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in Section 11014.5 of the Health and Safety Code (Education Code 48900, Subsection {j}).

### Disruption of School/Defiance

2 10

\* Disrupted school activities or otherwise wilfully defied the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, administrators, school officials, or other school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties. (Education Code 48900, Subsection {k})

The following are examples of disruption of school activities/defiance. This list is not all-inclusive.

- \* Willful disobedience
- \* Defiance of authority
- \* Disruptive behavior
- \* Forgery
- \* Possession of radios or "Walkman" radios
- \* Possession of beepers
- \* Leaving campus
- \* Being in a group where tobacco, alcohol, or any other discovered illegal substance is evident
- \* Misbehavior on school bus
- \* Failure to complete consequence issued
- \* Violation of suspension (physically present on campus or at school while on suspension)
- \* Improper dress for school and related functions
- \* Footwear is required at all times.
- \* Students should wear appropriate, non-distracting school clothing. Clothing that advertises objectionable material, alcohol, drugs, violence, or illegal activity will not be allowed. Any articles of clothing that may be deemed disruptive by the administration will not be allowed on campus (i.e. headbands, bandanas, halter/short tops, etc.)

# MONTE VISTA SCHOOL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Pursuant to all State laws and Pleasant Valley School District Policies and Procedures, the following steps are taken to enforce necessary regulations. THIS LISTING OF MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM ACTIONS DOES NOT IMPLY OR REQUIRE THAT A "STEP BY STEP" PROGRESSION OF INCREASING SEVERITY BE USED BY SCHOOL STAFF IN DEALING WITH A VIOLATION. IN MOST CASES, DISCIPLINARY ACTION IS DEPENDENT UPON THE SITUATION AND THE PREVIOUS BEHAVIOR RECORD OF THE STUDENT. In accordance with state law, all school rules apply on the way to and from school.

The schedule of actions possible when an infraction of regulations occur is:

1. Teacher warning
2. Individual teacher consequences
3. Teacher/parent phone call
4. Referral to administration office (detention assigned)
5. Individual class suspension. Parent/teacher/administrator conference to establish a signed behavioral contract before return.
6. Home suspension (1-5 days)
7. Referral to SARB
8. Transfer to another school in the district
9. Transfer to another specialized program
10. Expulsion from the District.

The following represents samples of violations that may occur in the school. The number in the area of Disciplinary Action refers to the schedule of actions listed above

Violations Against Persons and Property	Recommended Disciplinary Action	
	Min	Max
* Assault/Battery Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person. (Education Code Section 48900, Subsection [a])	6	10
* Weapon Possession Possessed, sold or otherwise furnished any firearm, knife, explosive, or other dangerous object, unless, in the case of such object, the student had obtained written permission from a certificated school employee, which is concurred in by the principal or designee of the principal. (Education Code 48900, Subsection [b])	6	10
* Harassment Intentionally engaged in harassment, threats, or intimidation, directed against a pupil or group of pupils, that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to have the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting classwork, creating substantial disorder, and invading the rights of that pupil or group of pupils by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment. (Education Code 48900.4.)	4	6
* Robbery/Extortion Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion	6	10

procedures to deal with this issue. This should be in place in September and will include training of all staff.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

R-1:

This recommendation has been completed. Reference F-1 for details.

R-2:

I believe that our Agenda currently meets this requirement.

R-3:

This recommendation will be considered next year. I believe that before we institute a policy of random searches of our students, this needs to be discussed with parents, students, and staff. It probably would have to be presented to the Board of Education for discussion.

R-4:

I currently meet with students twice each year, once the first week of school and again at the start of the second semester to discuss school safety and other issues. At these meetings, I clearly inform students about the laws and rules pertaining to weapons and dangerous objects and the consequences that can result if these rules are violated, including being arrested. I have never emphasized the fact that the expulsion could be up to one year, but shall do so in the future.

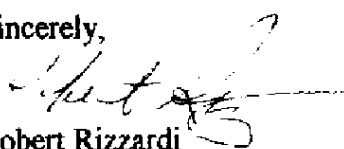
R-5:

I will discuss this item with the district office, but I believe the steps we have already taken have addressed this concern.

R-6:

We have our first workshop on this issue on June 28, 1999. I believe the concern on this issue will be resolved very early next school year.

Sincerely,

  
Robert Rizzardi  
Principal, Monte Vista

Pursuant to Education Code Section 48915, mandatory suspension and a recommendation of expulsion is required of Monte Vista for the following violations:

- Possessing, selling, or furnishing a firearm: possession must be verified by district employee. This subdivision does not apply if student had written permission to possess firearm from certificated employee.
- Brandishing a knife at another person: as defined in this section, "knife" means any dirk, dagger, or other weapon with a fixed sharpened blade fitted primarily for stabbing; a weapon with a blade longer than 2-1/2 inches; a folding knife with a blade that locks into place, or a razor with an unguarded blade.
- Sale of drugs
- Causing serious physical injury (except in self defense).
- Possession of any knife (see definition above), explosive, or other dangerous object.
- Possession of drugs (except for first offense of possession of not more than one ounce of marijuana).
- Robbery or extortion.

Parents and students must understand that when an action or behavior by a student is a violation of the Penal Code or a misdemeanor under the Education Code, the school may elect to have that student arrested by the police. If/ when this occurs, the disposition of the charge is at the discretion of the juvenile authorities.

## **SCHOOL MANAGEMENT POINTS OF EMPHASIS**

The following are extremely important campus rules, for the protection of all students.

1. Students are to follow the directions of campus supervisors at all times.
2. Students are to stay within designated, supervised areas during lunch or recess.
3. Running is not permitted on campus.
4. Physical horseplay and/or play fighting is not allowed.
5. In particular, NO GLASS CONTAINER or inappropriate behavior is allowed at lunchtime.
6. Possession or use of any electronic signaling device is not permitted. (Education Code Section 48901.5)
7. Use of any electronic listening or recording device is prohibited. (Education Code Section 51512)
8. Gum chewing is not permitted while at school
9. Students are not allowed to sell anything at any time on campus.



## Monte Vista Middle School

888 North Lantana  
Camarillo, California 93010  
Telephone: (805) 482-8891

RECEIVED  
VENTURA COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

JUN 30 1999

Honorable Charles Campbell  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
Ventura County Hall of Justice  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

RECEIVED  
JUL 22 1999

OFFICE OF THE  
PRESIDING JUDGE

Dear Honorable Judge Campbell:

Please accept this letter as my response to the findings and recommendations contained in the Grand Jury report entitled School Safety in Ventura County Public Schools. I believe that Monte Vista is a very safe school, as evidenced by our record, and that we monitor student behavior to a high degree. At the same time I welcome the opportunity to always look for ways to improve safety at the school and to be in compliance with every aspect of the law.

### FINDINGS

#### F-1: Concurrence

I concur with the finding that our previous plan lacked specific requirements of the law. Since the Grand Jury's visit, the Monte Vista's Safe School Plan has been completely rewritten to contain all the elements required. Our new plan was developed jointly by the district office and the site, with the involvement of a law enforcement officer. We subsequently held a School Site Council meeting, which was open to the public, to review, discuss, and modify the plan. It was then given to the Board of Education for their review and approval.

#### F-2: Nonconcurrency

I do not agree with this finding. The wording on page 16 in our Agenda clearly states that the minimum punishment for a student who brings a weapon to school will be suspension and the maximum punishment will be expulsion. Because our district has not adopted a formal "zero tolerance" policy, this section is used to differentiate between a student who may bring a small pocket knife, under 2 ½ inches, and a knife or weapon that falls under Ed. Code Section 48915.

On page 19 of our Agenda, Ed. Code Section 48915 is referenced and the consequences for its violation are clearly stated. Additionally, we have informed parents



and students that the school may elect to have the student arrested in addition to recommending that the student be expelled. I have included a copy of pages 16-19 of our Agenda.

#### F-3: Partial Concurrence

I do concur that we do not search students and/or lockers without suspicion. I do not believe our school and its history justifies random searches of students. We do however monitor students very closely watching for any suspicious behavior and search students and lockers when justified.

In regards to the survey given to one class (30 students) by the Grand Jury, I believe that the questions asked were not properly worded. As a result, the percentage of students indicating that they had seen a weapon on campus (40%) does not accurately reflect what is occurring at Monte Vista. As a result, I conducted a follow-up survey with that same class and found the following:

Because we do not allow wallet chains or lighters on the campus, and define these as weapons and/or dangerous objects, a number of students indicated on my survey that these were the objects they had seen and were referencing when they completed the Grand Jury survey. My survey indicated that 23% of the students had seen a student with a knife. All of these, except one student, indicated that the knives they saw were "small pocket knives". One student did indicate that they had seen a switch blade knife on campus. Even though this is still too high a figure, I believe it more accurately reflects the true situation at Monte Vista.

#### F-4: Partial Concurrence

The survey conducted by the Grand Jury did indicate that 64% of the students were unaware that a student could be expelled for up-to-one year for bringing a weapon to school. Again, I believe that the Grand Jury's survey was flawed as it did not define "weapon" and the inclusion of "up-to-one year" was misleading. My survey found the following:

When the word "weapon" was defined to students, 100% of them responded that they knew that they could be expelled for bringing a weapon to school.

#### F-5: Nonconcurrence

When I became Principal four years ago, I became aware that the area behind the R Building was a potential trouble spot. As a result, a campus supervisor and teacher are stationed there before school and a teacher is stationed there after school. These individuals are provided with radios while on duty. Additionally, twice each period, while students are in class, campus supervisors walk the campus to ensure that the campus is secure and that there are no students out of class.

#### F-6: Concurrence

It is correct that our custodial staff has not received training in the recognition and handling of bombs/incendiary devices. Our district is currently developing policies and

procedures to deal with this issue. This should be in place in September and will include training of all staff.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

R-1:

This recommendation has been completed. Reference F-1 for details.

R-2:

I believe that our Agenda currently meets this requirement.

R-3:

This recommendation will be considered next year. I believe that before we institute a policy of random searches of our students, this needs to be discussed with parents, students, and staff. It probably would have to be presented to the Board of Education for discussion.

R-4:

I currently meet with students twice each year, once the first week of school and again at the start of the second semester to discuss school safety and other issues. At these meetings, I clearly inform students about the laws and rules pertaining to weapons and dangerous objects and the consequences that can result if these rules are violated, including being arrested. I have never emphasized the fact that the expulsion could be up to one year, but shall do so in the future.

R-5:

I will discuss this item with the district office, but I believe the steps we have already taken have addressed this concern.

R-6:

We have our first workshop on this issue on June 28, 1999. I believe the concern on this issue will be resolved very early next school year.

Sincerely,



Robert Rizzardi  
Principal, Monte Vista

# MONTE VISTA SCHOOL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Pursuant to all State laws and Pleasant Valley School District Policies and Procedures, the following steps are taken to enforce necessary regulations. THIS LISTING OF MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM ACTIONS DOES NOT IMPLY OR REQUIRE THAT A "STEP BY STEP" PROGRESSION OF INCREASING SEVERITY BE USED BY SCHOOL STAFF IN DEALING WITH A VIOLATION. IN MOST CASES, DISCIPLINARY ACTION IS DEPENDENT UPON THE SITUATION AND THE PREVIOUS BEHAVIOR RECORD OF THE STUDENT. In accordance with state law, all school rules apply on the way to and from school.

The schedule of actions possible when an infraction of regulations occur is:

1. Teacher warning
2. Individual teacher consequences
3. Teacher/parent phone call
4. Referral to administration office (detention assigned)
5. Individual class suspension. Parent/teacher/administrator conference to establish a signed behavioral contract before return.
6. Home Suspension (1-5 days)
7. Referral to SARB
8. Transfer to another school in the district
9. Transfer to another specialized program
10. Expulsion from the District.

The following represents samples of violations that may occur in the school. The number in the area of Disciplinary Action refers to the schedule of actions listed above.

<u>Violations Against Persons and Property</u>	<u>Recommended Disciplinary Action</u>	
	Min	Max
* Assault/Battery Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person. (Education Code Section 48900, Subsection [a])	6	10
* Weapon Possession Possessed, sold or otherwise furnished any firearm, knife, explosive, or other dangerous object, unless, in the case of such object, the student had obtained written permission from a certificated school employee, which is concurred in by the principal or designee of the principal. (Education Code 48900, Subsection [b])	6	10
* Harassment Intentionally engaged in harassment, threats, or intimidation, directed against a pupil or group of pupils, that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to have the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting classwork, creating substantial disorder, and invading the rights of that pupil or group of pupils by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment. (Education Code 48900.4.)	4	6
* Robbery/Extortion Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion	6	10

	Min	Max
(Education Code Section 48900, Subsection [e]).		
* Vandalism Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property (Education Code 48900 [f]).	6	10
* Theft Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property (Education Code 48900, Subsection [g]).	6	10
* Receiving Stolen Property Knowingly received stolen school property or private property (Education Code Section 48900, Subsection [l]).	6	10
* Possession of Imitation Firearms Possessed an imitation firearm (replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a reasonable person to conclude that the replica is a firearm) (Education Code 48900, Subsection [m]).	6	10
* Hate Violence Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause, or participated in an act of, hate violence. (Education Code Section 48900.3)	6	10
* Sexual Harassment Committed an act of sexual harassment (grades 4-12). (Education Code Section 48900.2)	4	10
<u>Violations Against Public Decency</u>	2	10
* Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity (Education Code Section 48900,[i]).		
<u>Violations Against Public Health/Safety</u>	6	10
* Unlawfully possessed, used, sold, or otherwise furnished, or been under the influence of any controlled substance (as defined in Section 11053 of the Health and Safety Code), alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind (Education Code 48900, Subsection [c]).		
* Unlawfully offered or arranged or negotiated to sell any controlled substance (as defined in Section 11053 of the Health and Safety Code), alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind, and then sold, delivered, or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid, substance, or material and represented the liquid, substance, or material as a controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant (Education Code Section 48900, Subsection [d]).		

\* Possessed or used tobacco, or any products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets, and betel. However, this section does not prohibit use or possession by a pupil of his/her own prescription products. (Section 48900, Subsection [h])

\* Unlawfully possessed, unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in Section 11014.5 of the Health and Safety Code (Education Code 48900, Subsection [j]).

### Disruption of School/Defiance

2 10

\* Disrupted school activities or otherwise wilfully defied the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, administrators, school officials, or other school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties. (Education Code 48900, Subsection [k])

The following are examples of disruption of school activities/defiance. This list is not all-inclusive.

- \* Willful disobedience
- \* Defiance of authority
- \* Disruptive behavior
- \* Forgery
- \* Possession of radios or "Walkman" radios
- \* Possession of beepers
- \* Leaving campus
- \* Being in a group where tobacco, alcohol, or any other discovered illegal substance is evident
- \* Misbehavior on school bus
- \* Failure to complete consequence issued
- \* Violation of suspension (physically present on campus or at school while on suspension)
- \* Improper dress for school and related functions
- \* Footwear is required at all times.
- \* Students should wear appropriate, non-distracting school clothing. Clothing that advertises objectionable material, alcohol, drugs, violence, or illegal activity will not be allowed. Any articles of clothing that may be deemed disruptive by the administration will not be allowed on campus (i.e. headbands, bandanas, halter/short tops, etc.)

Pursuant to Education Code Section 48915, mandatory suspension and a recommendation of expulsion is required of Monte Vista for the following violations:

- \* Possessing, selling, or furnishing a firearm: possession must be verified by district employee. This subdivision does not apply if student had written permission to possess firearm from certificated employee.
- \* Brandishing a knife at another person: as defined in this section, "knife" means any dirk, dagger, or other weapon with a fixed sharpened blade fitted primarily for stabbing; a weapon with a blade longer than 2-1/2 inches; a folding knife with a blade that locks into place, or a razor with an unguarded blade.
- \* Sale of drugs
- \* Causing serious physical injury (except in self defense).
- \* Possession of any knife (see definition above), explosive, or other dangerous object.
- \* Possession of drugs (except for first offense of possession of not more than one ounce of marijuana).
- Robbery or extortion.

Parents and students must understand that when an action or behavior by a student is a violation of the Penal Code or a misdemeanor under the Education Code, the school may elect to have that student arrested by the police. If/when this occurs, the disposition of the charge is at the discretion of the juvenile authorities.

## **SCHOOL MANAGEMENT POINTS OF EMPHASIS**

The following are extremely important campus rules, for the protection of all students.

1. Students are to follow the directions of campus supervisors at all times.
2. Students are to stay within designated, supervised areas during lunch or recess.
3. Running is not permitted on campus.
4. Physical horseplay and/or play fighting is not allowed.
5. In particular, NO GLASS CONTAINER or inappropriate behavior is allowed at lunchtime.
6. Possession or use of any electronic signaling device is not permitted. (Education Code Section 48901.5)
7. Use of any electronic listening or recording device is prohibited. (Education Code Section 51512)
8. Gum chewing is not permitted while at school.
9. Students are not allowed to sell anything at any time on campus.

**SCHOOL SAFETY IN VENTURA COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
GRAND JURY REPORT**

**RESPONSES TO RECOMMENDATIONS  
OXNARD HIGH SCHOOL  
JUNE 14, 1999  
UPDATED AUGUST 5, 1999**

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**R-1** School guides and handbooks require revision at next printing as follows:

- **Student Planner** – Under “weapon discussion on page 4, reword this reference to include “firearms” and add the EC 48915(a) and (c) and EC 48916(a) expulsion requirement (in excess of one-year for firearms) to the expulsion discussion. These additions require emphasis, perhaps the use of bold print.
- **Staff Guide** – Safe School Plan – Under “Discipline” add the expulsion requirements as outlined above in the discussion of weapon possession expulsion.
- **Student Information Packet** – Reposition discussion of weapons to top of list, and emphasize zero tolerance, as is presently done for “fighting” (including page 13, Rules).
- **School Rules** – Include “firearm” in the weapon discussion. Additionally, the weapons reference should be positioned closer to the top of the list, and emphasized by using either **bold** print, underlining, or placement inside a box.

**R-2:** Currently, each member of the security force is responsible for guarding 375 students, a considerable assignment. It is therefore recommended that the District increase the security staff of Oxnard High School by the addition of a minimum of two additional guards to better protect the school’s students, staff and property. It is further recommended when budget allows, that surveillance cameras be installed at the various blind spots located throughout the campus, and the school’s staff provided with additional training in anger management.

**R-3:** Considering the increased danger of explosives on school property, it is recommended that the District provide the school’s custodial staff (the employees most likely to encounter such devices) with bomb recognition and handling training

**RECEIVED**  
AUG 17 1999

*[Handwritten signature]*

## RESPONSE

Over the last two months Oxnard Union High School District has appointed a new Principal to Oxnard High School. Consequently, the recommendations from the Grand Jury Report and the original responses completed in June have been reviewed and additional improvements are underway. In addition to expansion of staff and the refinement of program offerings/master scheduling the new Principal, Mr. Neilsen is in the process of making improvements as indicated below. These improvements either directly or indirectly address all recommendations made by the Grand Jury.

### CAMPUS CLIMATE

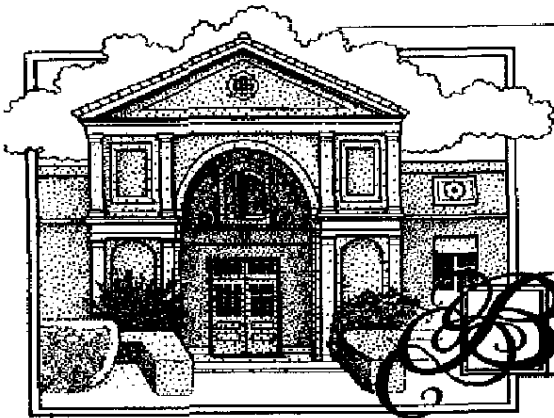
- Discipline Policy – the student handbook, classroom posters, summer mailer and the PTA newsletter have been revised to include recommendations made in the report. Weapon discussion, discipline/expulsion, fighting have been properly emphasized by using **bold** print or underlining, as suggested. **(R-1)**
- Students out of class – emphasis will be placed on the school-wide tardy policy and period by period tardy sweeps will be conducted to ensure all students are in class. The Student Planner will be the universal hall pass for students and must be signed by the teacher. There will be no 2,3,or 4, period dismissals for students. **(R-2)**
- Supervision Assignments - Administrators will be assigned to specific areas on campus before school, during passing period, nutrition, lunch and after school. They will actively supervise their assigned area. The school resource officer will be highly visible on campus before and after school, during passing periods, and at nutrition and lunch. Campus supervisors will be assigned specific areas of responsibility. They will be directed to be proactive and highly visible. Additional support staff will be assigned supervision the first two weeks of the semester, and other times there is tension on campus. **(R-2)**
- Nine closed circuit surveillance cameras will be installed in the following areas:
  - Two in locker bay #1,
  - Two in locker bay #2,
  - One above emergency exit in Building “C”,
  - One above emergency exit in Building “E”,
  - One above “D” building, focused on center of campus,
  - One on west side of “A” building, focused on gate between “A” and “L” building, and
  - One above “A” building, focused on front of school. **(R-2)**
- Closed campus policy – in order to enclose and secure all classrooms within a closed fenced area, the following changes will be made:
  1. Move gates and fencing to enclose five portable classrooms presently outside of fenced area.



2. Move gates and fencing between the gym and "F" building so exit door from "F" building is inside of secured area.
3. Re-alarm emergency exit doors in "C" and "E" buildings and establish a school-wide policy to ensure these doors are used as emergency exits only. In addition, closed circuit security cameras will be installed above each exit area to monitor activity. Signs will be posted stating that doors are for emergency exit only and are being videotaped.
4. Monitor the entry and exit of visitors and students at the main entrance to the administration building. Counters will be extended, and a security door will be installed.
5. Campus supervisors will be assigned to supervise the gate between the "A" and "L" buildings from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
6. The District's Director of Staff Development will be contacted to schedule in-service training for campus supervisors, custodial staff and others. Training topics will include the recognition and handling of explosives on campus.  
(R-1, R-2, R-3)

#### **RECONFIGURATION OF ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

The office will be reconfigured to allow counselors and assistant principals to work in teams to meet the needs of students within their caseload. Two assistant principals and three counselors will be assigned offices on each side of the U-shaped administration building. They will work as case managers and case workers to monitor and provide interventions for students within their caseload who are below standards in relation to the four Multiple Measures. (R-1, R-2)



# Briggs School District

14438 Telegraph Road, Santa Paula, CA 93060 (805) 525-7151 FAX (805) 933-3565

July 9, 1999

To: Honorable Charles Campbell  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
Ventura County Hall of Justice  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

Fr: Carol L. Vines

Re: Response to the 1998-99 Grand Jury Report

I am in receipt of the 1998-99 Ventura County Grand Jury report entitled School Safety in Ventura County Public Schools. I have reviewed the report and analyzed the findings as they apply to Briggs Elementary School District.

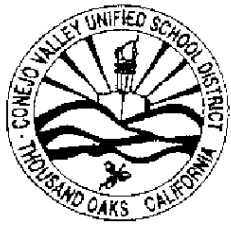
Safety plans and procedures will be revised to assure a continued safe learning and work environment for students and staff.

1. Student and staff handbooks will be revised for the 1999-2000 school year.
2. Students will continue to be reminded of the consequences for possession of weapons.
3. Staff will continue to receive safety training for detection of weapons and explosives and steps in handling emergencies.
4. Playground supervision training will continue.
5. Phones will be placed in each classroom, as funds become available.

Cc: 1998-99 Grand Jury  
Ventura County Clerk and Recorder  
Briggs Board of Trustees

Carol Vines Superintendent

Trustees: Howard Geer, Bette Ikeda, Charles E. Alvarez, Mindee Stekkinger, Ronald S. Merson



# Conejo Valley Unified School District

1400 East Janss Road, Thousand Oaks, California 91362

Telephone (805) 497-9511 • Fax (805) 371-9170

## BOARD OF EDUCATION

Dorothy L. Beaubien, President

Doiores Didio, Vice President

Pat Phelps, Clerk

Mary Jo Del Campo

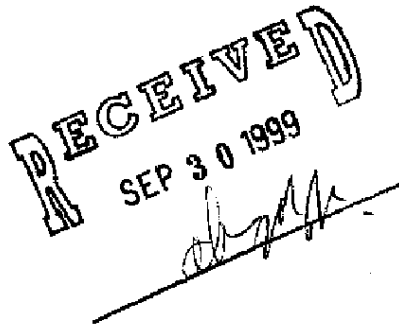
Timothy G. Stephens, Ed.D.

## SUPERINTENDENT

Jerry C. Gross, Ph.D.

July 1, 1999

Honorable Charles Campbell  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
Ventura County Hall of Justice  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009



RECEIVED  
VENTURA COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

JUL - 6 1999

OFFICE OF THE  
PRESIDING JUDGE

Dear Judge Campbell:

I am writing in response to a letter received from Marvin J. Reeber, Foreman of the 1998/99 Grand Jury, requesting responses to several recommendations. The Conejo Valley Unified School District's responses are as follows:

R-1: *Assess the Safe School Plans for all of their schools to determine that each meets the requirements of SB 187. If school plans are found to be inadequate, material which was provided by the County Superintendent of Schools' training seminars, or a rescheduling of the planning seminar, should be requested of that office.*

The Conejo Valley Unified School District has had school safety plans in place for several years prior to the passage of SB 187. When SB 187 was enacted, school safety plans were reviewed and revised to assure that all of the required elements were included. These plans were developed and reviewed by School Site Councils, District Office staff, and representatives from the East Valley Sheriff's Department. They were subsequently approved by the Board of Education and are reviewed and updated annually.

R-2: *Every effort should be made to increase each school's support services. The availability and presence of psychologists and counselors at each school site should be increased in order to identify and treat students exhibiting early warning symptoms that may lead to school violence. Currently many schools have available only a rotating psychologist who serves all of the district's many schools. Additionally, many counselors, who are responsible for their school's entire student population, are required to spend the majority of their time administering special education testing. They cannot, therefore, reasonably be expected to adequately identify and assist alienated and disaffected students.*

The Conejo Valley Unified School District does not concur with the recommendation made by the Grand Jury. The Grand Jury's recommendation presumes that public schools have a primary responsibility for the mental health of students. This has never been the mission of public schools, and public schools are not tasked by law or funded by the State for such purposes.

The Grand Jury recommendation also presumes that credentialed school psychologists and/or counselors have the training and expertise to “treat” students. A review of the credentialing requirements will quickly demonstrate that the training of these personnel is not equivalent to that of an MFCC, clinical psychologist, or psychiatrist.

It is worth noting that nationally the ratio of students to counselors is 500:1. The ratio for California is 1000:1. The ratio for the Conejo Valley Unified School District is 600:1. The Grand Jury’s rationale for proposing these recommendations is the presumption that more counselors would have prevented the tragic violence that has occurred in Arkansas, Colorado, and Oregon. The Grand Jury should take into consideration that the violence referenced over the past few years has occurred in states and communities with favorable student-to-counselor ratios. While counselors clearly provide many important levels of support and assistance to students, there is no research to support the Grand Jury’s conclusion that access to additional counselors would have prevented any of the tragedies that have occurred across the nation.

- R-3: *Utilize the services of the county’s Safety Coordinator (800-383-1912) to evaluate the current effectiveness and adequacy of each school’s daytime and night-time security systems.*

The Conejo Valley Unified School District partially concurs with this recommendation. The District utilizes the services of the County Safety Coordinator on a regular basis. The District also works very closely with staff from the East Valley Sheriff’s Department in assessing the effectiveness and adequacy of school security systems. The District and the Sheriff’s Department are currently working together on the review of School Safety Plans, lock-down signals, aerial photography, and perimeter management.

- R-4: *Administer at each of their schools a student survey similar to Figure 3 to gain insight into the presence of weapons, the level of student willingness to report weapons, the level of student understanding of weapon expulsion consequences, the degree of student perception of weapon safety, and to solicit student suggestions for improving school safety at all school sites.*

The Conejo Valley Unified School District partially concurs with this recommendation. For many years the District has administered several student surveys including a high school exit survey that specifically asks students about school safety. Students report very high satisfaction with school safety efforts. Students are also participants on the middle school and high school School Site Councils. These councils are responsible for developing, implementing, and reviewing the school safety plan for each school.

For several years the District has had a “zero tolerance” policy regarding the possession of weapons on campus. Weapon possession results in the immediate recommendation for expulsion, and the Board of Education has upheld every weapons-related recommendation for expulsion for the past two decades. Information about the District’s policy is communicated to all parents and students through an annual mailing of the District’s Discipline Policy and Procedures booklet that begins with a cover letter cosigned by the Superintendent and the Commander of the Thousand Oaks Police Department. The letter makes it very clear that weapons possession on campus will result in an arrest and expulsion from the District. In addition, administrators visit every classroom at the beginning of the school year and mid-year to reinforce the information provided in the Discipline Policy and Procedures booklet. The rules are also printed in the “time trackers” given to students at each secondary school.

Honorable Charles Campbell

July 1, 1999

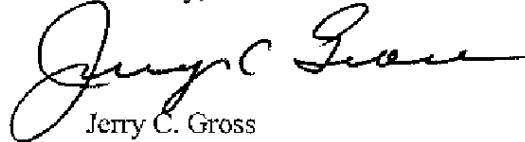
Page 3

For many years the District has participated in the National We Tip program, with signs posted in various locations at every campus. We Tip allows students to provide information to law enforcement and school officials anonymously.

The District does not concur with the recommendation that students in lower elementary grades be surveyed or included in the school safety discussions held by the School Site Councils.

The Board of Education joins me in thanking the Grand Jury for their efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jerry C. Gross".

Jerry C. Gross  
Superintendent

JCG:mg

c: Ventura County Grand Jury

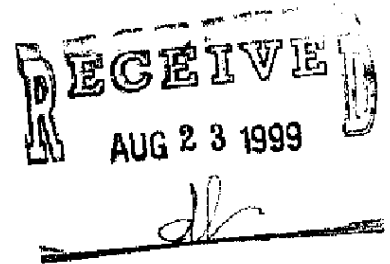
# HUENEME SCHOOL DISTRICT

205 North Ventura Road

(805) 488-3588

Port Hueneme, California 93041-3065

August 12, 1999



Honorable Charles Campbell  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
Ventura County Hall of Justice  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

Dear Judge Campbell,

I am responding, for the Hueneme School District, to the Summary Recommendations reported by the Grand Jury in their investigation of School Safety in Ventura County Public Schools.

In reply to Recommendation 1: The Hueneme School District has met the requirements of SB 187 by requiring each of our eleven schools to develop a Safe School Plan which covers all of the initial policies of which the schools are required to fulfill. Our District Office and District Governing Board have initiated policies that cover the other necessary policies that are required by the law such as: Disaster Plans, Student Discipline, Sexual Harassment, Notification of Teachers and Dress Code.

In reply to Recommendation 2: The Hueneme School District is in agreement with the findings that psychologists and counselors at each school site should be increased. An action like this would be worthwhile for all students in their educational, emotional and social growth. However, in order for this to become a reality, funding for these resources would have to be made available to school districts.

In reply to Recommendation 3: The Hueneme School District is not opposed to utilizing the services of the county's Safety Coordinator as we have in the past, and will continue in the future. We will continue to work within our district policies and use the community resources and agencies that are available to us.

In reply to Recommendation 4: The Hueneme School District gives the California Healthy Survey to our seventh grade students each year. An educational agency, entitled WestEd, collects and tabulates the data from the surveys. This data allows us to evaluate our program and make improvements where needed. It also gives us the opportunity to make comparisons with other school districts.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard G. Froyen".

Richard G. Froyen  
Director of Educational Services

# Mesa Union School District

A United States Blue Ribbon School  
A California Distinguished Elementary School  
A California Distinguished Secondary School



**Board of Trustees:**  
Carl Grether  
Paula Hoffman  
Mark Nelson  
Dr. Timothy Osslund  
Katherine Wilkinson

Dennis J. Convery, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

September 27, 1999

RECEIVED  
VENTURA COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

SEP 28 1999

OFFICE OF THE  
PRESIDING JUDGE

Judge Charles W. Campbell  
Hall of Justice  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, California 93009

RECEIVED  
SEP 30 1999  
*ab*

Your Honor:

The following is the Mesa Union School District responses to the Grand Jury findings in the 1998-99 Final Report of the Ventura County Grand Jury.

*R-1 Assess the Safe School Plans for all of their schools to determine that each meets the requirements of SB 187 (Figure 1). If school plans are found to be inadequate, material which was provided by the County Superintendent of Schools' training seminars, or a rescheduling of the planning seminar, should be requested of that office.*

Mesa Union School District has reviewed its Safe School Plan and has determined that it meets the requirements of SB 187. In addition, the Principal has attended and will continue to attend safety training workshops presented by the County Superintendent of Schools' Office during the 1999-2000 school year. Information obtained at these workshops is shared with all staff members in a timely manner.

*R2 Every effort should be made to increase each school's support services. The availability and presence of psychologist and counselors at each school site should be increased in order to identify and treat students exhibiting early warning symptoms that may lead to school violence. Currently many schools have available only a rotating psychologist who serves all of the districts' many schools. Additionally, many counselors, who are responsible for their school's entire student population, are required to spend the majority of their time administering special education testing. They cannot, therefore, reasonably be expected to adequately identify and assist alienated and disaffected students.*

Mesa Union School District has the services of a rotating psychologist. These services are provided via a contract between the Mesa Union School District and the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Office. In addition the

the Superintendent and a number of certificated staff members are credentialed counselors and/or have advanced degrees in counseling. A majority of the teaching staff has been through Quest training and Conflict Resolution training.

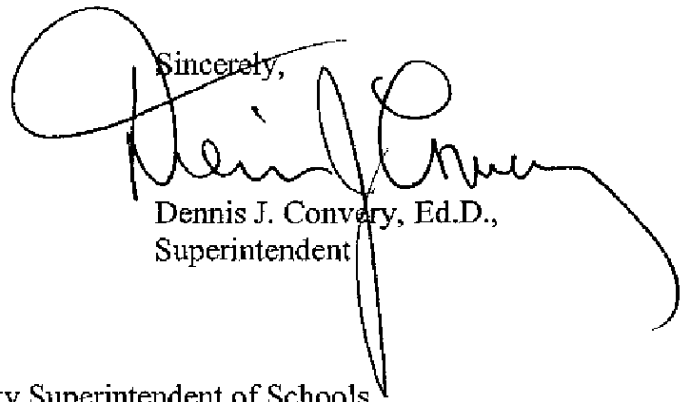
- R-3 *Utilize the services of the County's VCSSFA Safety Coordinator (800/383-1970) to evaluate the current effectiveness and adequacy of each school's daytime and night-time security systems.*

Mesa Union School District is part of the County's VCSSFA and has utilized the safety coordinator on safety projects. Our plans were reviewed this last year and found to be in compliance with laws and codes. Mesa Union will continue to avail itself of the services of the VCSSFA.

- R-4 *Administer at each of their schools a student survey similar to Figure 3 to gain insight into the presence of weapons, the level of student willingness to report weapons, the level of student understanding of weapon expulsion consequences, the degree of student perception of weapon safety, and to solicit student suggestions for improving school safety at all school sites.*

Starting with the 1999-2000 school year, Mesa Union School District will comply with Ventura County's Grand Jury recommendation to administer a survey similar to the one included in their 1998-99 report. These results will be incorporated with their data to assess the site safety and to be used as an evaluation of our safety plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis J. Convery". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a long tail extending to the right.

Dennis J. Convery, Ed.D.,  
Superintendent

DJC:da

Cc: Dr. Charles Weis, Ventura County Superintendent of Schools  
Richard Dean, County Clerk  
Grand Jury  
Aldo Calcagno, Principal, Mesa Union School





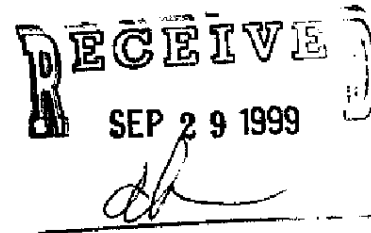
**MOORPARK**  
**UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

30 Flory Avenue, Moorpark, California 93021

(805) 378-6300

September 9, 1999

The Honorable Charles Campbell  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
Ventura County Hall of Justice  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, California 93009



Dear Judge Campbell:

I am responding to the areas of concern in the 1998-99 Ventura County Grand Jury Report has brought to your attention. More specifically I am addressing the summary recommendations found on page 31 of that report. I am very pleased to share with you what the Moorpark Unified School District has done to ensure student safety. We feel that we are in the forefront of California schools in our efforts to secure a safe environment for our students.

R-1: In September 1994 we contracted with the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Office to assist the District in developing Safety Plans for each of our school sites. We had an outside evaluator, Dr. Rich Morrison, assist us in development of these plans. Since that time, each of our schools has updated their plan on a yearly basis.

R-2: Our efforts in providing support personnel have been exemplary. In 1991 we entered a joint venture with the City of Moorpark and El Concilio to provide an at-risk youth counselor. In September, 1993 the City of Moorpark and El Concilio reduced funding and, since that time, the District has fully funded this position. In September, 1993, the District hired an additional high school counselor to deal specifically with at-risk youth. Once again in September, 1999, the District has added another high school counselor who will deal only with conflict resolution and small group counseling on a daily basis. This provides a total of six counselors at Moorpark High School to assist us in working with our students. We have also added one additional conflict resolution counselor to be shared by our two middle schools.

We are only a few weeks away from hiring a full-time sworn School Safety Resource Officer. Captain Mike Lewis of the Ventura County Sheriffs Department and the Moorpark Police Chief initiated this concept. This Officer will be jointly funded by the District and the City of Moorpark. The officer will be stationed at Moorpark High School and will assist the District in addressing a variety of student safety needs. This officer is not intended to be a guard but rather to be a resource, serving as a teacher, counselor and faculty member.

R-3: We work closely with Mr. Bret Breton, the Safety Coordinator of the Ventura County Schools Self-funding Authority, of which the District is a member. I serve as Chairperson of the Authority. This past summer we installed surveillance cameras at Moorpark High School. The District used safety credits accrued through the Ventura County Schools Self-funding Authority to accomplish this task. These safety credits are earned by the District through reduced liability costs, again attesting to our strong record of safety.

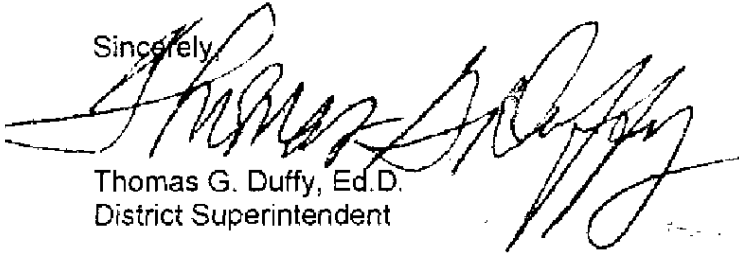
**BOARD OF EDUCATION:**    **DAVID POLLOCK**, President;    **GREG BARKER**, Vice President;    **TOM BALDWIN**, Clerk;  
   **GARY CABRIALES**, Member;    **THOMAS G. DUFFY**, Ed.D., District Superintendent

September 9, 1999  
Page 2

R-4: We will work with our new School Safety Resource Officer at Moorpark High School to develop a student survey for the winter of 1999. Our previous surveys have indicated that the vast majority of students in the Moorpark Unified School District feel they are in a safe environment and feel that they can go to an adult for help.

Additionally, I would like note that we have leased office space to the City of Moorpark for use by the Moorpark Police Department. Currently, they have a substation located in the School District Office building. Needless to say, we have an ideal communication link with the Superintendent's office being situated immediately adjacent to the Police Chief's office. On more than one occasion this direct link has assisted us in situations requiring police intervention. Captain Mike Lewis and I see each other almost daily. We are very proud of our cooperative efforts in Moorpark and I would invite you to visit our schools. Please contact me at the above number if you have any further questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thomas G. Duffy'.

Thomas G. Duffy, Ed.D.  
District Superintendent

cc: Dr. Charles Weis, Ventura County Superintendent of Schools  
Mr. Richard Dean, Ventura County Clerk  
Grand Jury, Ventura County  
Board of Education, Moorpark Unified School District

# Mupu School District

**TRUSTEES:**

Lisa Darling-Daniel  
Chuck Teague  
Leslie Reed

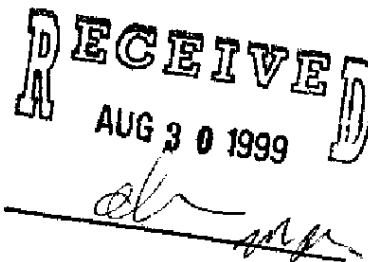
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**Linda Kean**  
Business Manager  
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lkean@mupu.k12.ca.us

August 16, 1999

Honorable Charles Campbell  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
Ventura County Hall of Justice  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009



**RE: VENTURA COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT  
SCHOOL SAFETY IN VENTURA COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Dear Judge Campbell:

In response to the Ventura County Grand Jury Report entitled *School Safety in Ventura County Public Schools*, the Governing Board of Trustees of the Mupu Elementary School District has directed me to communicate its response to each of the enumerated items contained in the report.

Attached please find the responses of the Governing Board of Trustees of Mupu Elementary School District to the Grand Jury's report on *School Safety in Ventura County Public Schools*. The responses were approved at the regular Board of Trustees meeting held on July 20, 1999.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Jeanine Gore".

Jeanine Gore  
Superintendent/Principal

Attachment

Cc: Dr. Charles Weis, Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Office  
Richard Dean, County Clerk, Ventura County  
Grand Jury, Ventura County Jury Services

## MUPU ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT

### RESPONSE TO THE VENTURA COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT

#### *SCHOOL SAFETY IN VENTURA COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS*

*Approved July 20, 1999*

*R-1: Assess the Safe School Plans for all of their schools to determine that each meets the requirements of SB 187. If school plans are found to be inadequate, material which was provided by the County Superintendent of Schools' training seminars, or a rescheduling of the planning seminar, should be requested of that office.*

#### **Response to R-1:**

**The Comprehensive School Safety Plan for Mupu Elementary School was developed using guidelines set forth by SB 187, *Safe Schools: A Planning Guide for Action*, and the training seminars provided by the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Office. It was developed in school year 1997-98 by a School Safety Committee comprised of members of the Mupu Elementary School Site Council and Captain Christopher Godfrey of the Santa Clara Area Station of the Ventura County Sheriff's Department. It was evaluated and revised in July 1999 by the same committee. In addition, the *Comprehensive School Safety Plan for Mupu Elementary School* passed scrutiny by the California Department of Education, which awarded the school a safety grant to help implement the safety plan. It has also been favorably reviewed by a safety coordinator from the Ventura County Schools Self-Funding Authority.**

*R-2: Every effort should be made to increase each school's support services. The availability and presence of psychologists and counselors at each school site should be increased in order to identify and treat students exhibiting early warning symptoms that may lead to school violence. Currently many schools have available only a rotating psychologist who serves all of the districts' many schools. Additionally, many counselors, who are responsible for their school's entire student population, are required to spend the majority of their time administering special education testing. They cannot, therefore, reasonably be expected to adequately identify and assist alienated and disaffected students.*

#### **Response to R-2:**

**The Governing Board of the Mupu Elementary School District believes that the classroom teachers should be trained in identifying and working with students who exhibit "at risk" behaviors. A teacher who is trained in the *Student Assistance Program* (or similar program whose focus is to help**

students with “at risk” behavior) will be more likely to identify and understand troubled children and will incorporate the training into the daily life of the regular classroom. Though the intervention won’t be “formal,” the troubled student will benefit from the teacher’s training and attention within the safe and nurturing environment of the classroom. Mupu Elementary School is in the process of training teachers in the *Student Assistance Program*. Two teachers have been trained so far.

In addition, every teacher participates in the Student Study Team, whose focus is to ensure that the school meets each student’s needs (educationally, emotionally, and socially). Students who demonstrate troubling behaviors (depression, anti-social, disruptive, poor academic achievement, etc.) may be referred for further assessment. When appropriate, the school makes referrals to Ventura County Mental Health and collaborates with mental health professionals during a child’s treatment.

In a small setting such as Mupu Elementary School (K-8, approximately 115 students), all of the staff know all of the students and their families. There is strong communication between home and school, and student behavior is regularly monitored via the Student Study Team process. A record of interventions and progress is kept for every student who has been referred to the Student Study Team for “at-risk” behaviors.

Even though the school psychologist works with other schools in addition to ours, she has always been available to assist in our efforts to help students who demonstrate “at-risk” behavior. She follows up on all referrals and monitors the progress of each referral and makes suggestions to improve the delivery of services. She acts as a liaison with mental health professionals. At times, she counsels such students herself.

The Mupu Elementary School District would welcome the extra funding for a full-time, on-site psychologist or counselor. It is not realistic to assume that such funding is forthcoming. We have chosen to be proactive, using the combined talents of the teaching staff, support service providers, and administrator who are committed to using the available training (through the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Office) and programs to address the needs of all of our students. Mupu is a small and nurturing environment where students who exhibit “at-risk” behavior receive a lot of positive and effective attention.

*R-3: Utilize the services of the Safety Coordinator to evaluate the current effectiveness and adequacy of each school's daytime and night-time security systems.*

**Response to R-3:**

**Mupu Elementary School utilizes the services of the Safety Coordinator to evaluate security systems as well as other safety-related issues. The coordinator submits his findings and the district takes positive action on the recommendations.**

*R-4: Administer a student survey to gain insight into the presence of weapons, the level of student willingness to report weapons, the level of students understanding of weapon expulsion consequences, the degree of student perception of weapon safety, and to solicit student suggestions for improving school safety.*

**Response to R-4:**

**Mupu Elementary School surveyed students and parents (spring 1999) regarding safety issues at the school. Ninety-two percent of the parents felt their children were safe and eight percent were not sure. Ninety-eight percent of the students indicated they felt safe at school. When the next survey is conducted (spring 2000), questions regarding weapons and the consequences of bringing weapons to school will be included.**

**The *Student/Parent Handbook* and the beginning-of-school packet detail the zero-tolerance policy (resulting in expulsion) regarding weapons (or replicas). Teachers review the policy with their students, and parents sign a signature sheet indicating they have reviewed the material in the packet. The administrator will reiterate the policy throughout the year.**

**Mupu Elementary School has had zero incidences of weapon possession or assault.**

If you have further questions or would like to review policies, procedures, or records, please call Superintendent/Principal Jeanine Gore at (805) 525-0422.

SUPERINTENDENT  
Marilyn Lippiatt



BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Cynthia Vinson  
Jan Iceland  
Bob Kahn  
James Kalember  
Linda Heizer Seaman

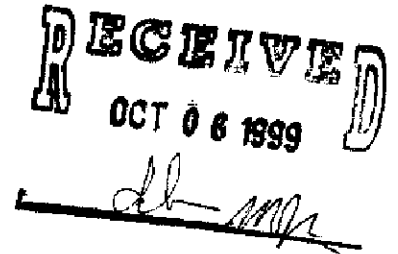
# OAK PARK UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

5801 E. Conifer St. • Oak Park, CA 91377-1002  
(818) 735-3200 • Fax (818) 879-0372

To: Honorable Charles Campbell  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
Ventura Hall of Justice  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

From: Marilyn Lippiatt, Superintendent *M Lippiatt*

Subject: Response to the Ventura County Grand Jury Report  
"School Safety in Ventura County"



## BACKGROUND

The Oak Park Unified School District is located in the Southwest corner of Ventura County in a completely suburban area. The school district is 20 years old being unified in 1979 and breaking away from Simi Valley. There are six campuses: three elementary (K-5) with enrollment between 500-590, one middle school (6-8) with enrollment of 825, one comprehensive high school, enrollment 860, and one continuation high school, enrollment 45. Each school is administered by a principal and supported by a teaching staff with an approximate ratio of one teacher for every 28 students.

Each campus has green grass, flowers and shrubs, covered or shaded lunch area, carpeted classrooms, a library, a computer lab, and a gym or multi-purpose room.

- Campus supervisors supplied by the district handle school security. There is no specific number: each campus has different needs based on the number of students and the specific configuration of the campus.
- Each elementary has a designated lead teacher, the middle school has one assistant principal and one counselor, the high school has two assistant principals and two counselors, the continuation high school has one principal and a part-time counselor.
- Every classroom is connected to the office by a phone intercom. Each classroom has a phone with an available outside line. Most buildings on each campus are connected to an alarm system that is set after staff leaves in the evening and is turned off during school hours.

- To support a secure campus, the district re-keyed all rooms at the high school during the summer. The process installed unique locks on each door with keys that require a special instrument in order to duplicate.
- None of the schools has a policy that requires students to wear uniforms.
- The middle school added an additional teacher/counselor who deals with students who are at-risk. This person functions as an additional counselor, mediator, and academic advisor.
- A new position was created to serve all three elementaries that is similar to the middle school. The teacher/counselor for at-risk students has been hired and will act as an elementary counselor and deal with conflict resolution, peer mediation, student and parent advisement and academic coaching. This person will be responsible for developing and monitoring intervention programs aimed at assisting students not meeting academic standards.
- Each school has a Student Study Team that meets on a weekly schedule. Along with the psychologist assigned to that site, the team meets to identify and develop plans to assist students with both behavioral as well as academic problems. As needed, other specialists at the school may be involved.
- The high school, middle school and one elementary have already participated in a conflict resolution program. The other two elementaries plan to provide training for students and staff later this fall. In addition, the high school has had a peer-counseling program in place for the past ten years with over forty students participating as counselors each year. These students also do presentations at the middle school.
- The district as a whole has an extremely low incidence of crime of any nature. This past year the district had five expulsions. Two were for possession of a knife and the others were for possession of a controlled substance. The district has a zero tolerance policy, which is published annually in every school's student handbook.
- High school and middle school students participated in the complete Healthy Kids Survey this past year. Information was collected on use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs as well as feelings of safety in school.
- The district has a close relationship with the Ventura County Sheriff's Department. The DARE Program is currently implemented in all fifth grade classes and to all eight grade students throughout the year. The district has participated in this program for the past four years.
- In May 1999, the district held a community forum on school safety attended by over 200 parents and community members. As a result of that meeting, the high school revised its permission policy for freshmen and sophomores to leave campus at lunch with parent permission. This privilege is reserved for only juniors and seniors with written parent permission. Additional fencing around the parking lot was suggested and installed prior to the start of the school year.



## RESPONSE TO THE FOUR AREAS

R-1 Both the district and each site Safe School Plan has been examined and reviewed and meets the requirements of SB 187. A team of administrators attended the Safe Schools Planning Day provided by the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools and another team plans to attend this year.

R-2 Support services has been increased this year. The district added additional psychologist time. There are three full time psychologists assigned to school sites. The district increased the time for a credentialed nurse from part-time to full time. Two new positions were created one at the middle school and one at the elementary level in the form of an at-risk teacher/counselor. These individuals will address student needs and develop and monitor programs designed to meet identified needs.

R-3 Although the district did not use the services of the county's Safety Coordinator to evaluate the current effectiveness and adequacy of each school's daytime and night-time security system, we did use both the Sheriff's Department liaison officer and Mr. Ron Stephens from the National Safety Center to assist us in developing our program and evaluating each campus for safety and security.

R-4 The district administered the Healthy Kids Survey to both middle and high school students during the 98-99 school year. Questions about use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and weapons were included. Students indicated that they knew and understood the consequences of possession of any of these items on school grounds. They indicated that they understood the district's Zero Tolerance Policy.

The Oak Park Unified School District has a plan to review each site's safety procedures as well as those relating to campus safety. A districtwide disaster drill is scheduled for October 1, 1999 in order to assess readiness and have time to remedy any issues. The district will schedule another community forum in the spring to hear from parents and community members regarding safety on school sites.

It is the desire and obligation of the district and the Board of Education to insure a safe and secure school environment for all students. Constant awareness and review of policies and procedures is one method. We are always open to suggestions that might improve the situation for students on our six campuses.

CC

Clerk of the public agency – Dr. Charles Weis

County Clerk – Richard Dean

Grand Jury

OAK PARK UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

August 30, 1999

TO: BOARD OF EDUCATION  
FROM: MARILYN LIPPIATT  
RE: SCHOOL SAFETY POLICY REVIEW

Dear Board:

There was a request at the last Board meeting for a review of our policies related to school safety.

In light of the request, I have pulled the current policies that relate to safety. In addition, I have reviewed the newest recommended CSBA policies and have found OPUSD to be right in line.

I also reviewed the copy of the newest publication of the National Educational Services titled *Safe Schools: A Handbook for Violence Prevention* by Ronald D. Stephens, Executive Director of the National School Safety Center. This publication describes a safe school as:

*"A safe school is a place where students can learn and teachers can teach in a warm and welcoming environment free of intimidation and fear. It is a setting where the educational climate fosters a spirit of acceptance and care for every child – where behavior expectations are clearly communicated, consistently enforced, and fairly applied.*

*A safe school campus is orderly and well maintained. Teachers and staff who care about the success of every child are at the heart of a safe school. Staff members are carefully selected and appropriately placed. Adequate adult supervision and parent and student involvement are key components of the school management process. A safe school campus is designed in a way that promotes natural supervision. Vibrant extracurricular programs and community activities are part of the overall sense of community and purpose.*

*Safe schools model high moral standards, send positive messages to the students, and demonstrate that the school community expects the best effort and performance from everyone. Learning and productivity are valued, and success is expected of everyone. Clear, positive academic expectations decrease the anxiety caused by vague academic standards and allow students to focus on the task of learning."*

It is recognized that our schools are and have been safe for students and staff. We have had no incidents in the history of the district to indicate otherwise. It is also a fact that none of our campuses is secure. All have multiple entrances and exits and recognize that this contributes to the open feeling of our campuses. Supervision is provided to all campuses on an as needed basis to ensure safety of students. This is primarily focused on the time students are out of the classroom and not under the direct supervision of a

credentialed teachers. Access to the school site is controlled through the school office and visitors are required to sign in or at elementary sites and wear ID badges

Each school site continually assesses the need, resources and risks required to ensure student safety. Each uses, to varying degrees, campus supervisors, volunteers, paid staff and student patrols to fulfill needs. Each site communicates the expectation for student behavior and conduct and the avenue for students to communicate problems or fears. This safe school process is in place, is ongoing and is in constant revision.

In light of student safety, the issue of students leaving a classroom alone to travel to another location on campus has been brought up and described as unsafe. We have no data that indicates that this is or has been an unsafe situation. Students frequently accompany each other on such travels and as frequently, travel alone. It is not always in the best interest of a second child to be pulled away from their learning environment to accompany another child. It is not always necessary to assign a second child for this purpose. Teachers need to be able to assess the situation as to purpose, benefit and risk and use their judgement to determine the circumstance appropriate for the child. Each situation and child may be different.

We have many processes in place to keep students safe. I'm not sure if there is a universal policy decision can be designed that will increase the outstanding record that we have. We need to be cognizant of the liability in relation to any policy we create.

Attached is the quick list of haves and don't haves from a brochure: "99 Tips for Safe Schools."

Also current policies on school safety are available for review. We have:

- Security systems
- Classroom phones
- ID badges for visitors
- Sign-in procedures
- Passes for leaving class
- Key control
- Adequate lighting
- Graffiti response
- Vandalism reporting
- Safe parking
- Office entrance and sign-in
- School lockers
- Pager restrictions
- Two-way radios
- Security at special events
- Adequate recess and lunch supervision
- Maintained discipline files
- Absence calling system

- Good relations w/Ventura County Sheriff
- Well maintained school sites
- Caring, concerned parents and staff
- We-Tip hotline, voice mail, e-mail

We do not have:

- Closed circuit video TV
- Photo ID for staff
- ID badges for staff
- Metal detectors
- Security personnel
- Lights out program
- Drug detection system

ADMINISTRATION

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Associate Superintendent  
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FRANCINE TORRIGIANI  
Director, Fiscal Services  
E-Mail: [ftorrigi@ovsd.k12.ca.us](mailto:ftorrigi@ovsd.k12.ca.us)



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BOARD OF TRUSTEES

PAUL H. CHATMAN  
MARY R. DAVIS  
ELLEN M. FITTS  
ELIZABETH A. ORICK  
DENNIS SCHLOTFELT

July 16, 1999

The Honorable Charles Campbell  
Ventura County Superior Court  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

**RECEIVED**  
JUL 24 1999

*AJOSK*

**Re: Responses to 1998-99 Grand Jury Report**

Dear Judge Campbell:

In June, the Ocean View School District Attendance Review Board (SARB) reviewed the 1998-99 Grand Jury Report and recommendations. SARB, as the steering committee for the Ocean View School District, Title IV Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Program, as well as a partner in the Comprehensive School Safety Plan, offered its input on the areas of required response listed on Pages 31 and 32 of the Grand Jury Report:

R-1: SARB agrees with the finding. Because Ocean View is a small district (under 2501 ADA), however, the requirements are technically different than those listed in R-1. We have complied with the requirements under SB 187 to have a district Comprehensive School Safety Plan. Our middle school site has a Safe School Plan; three of our elementary schools do not. In regard to public input on the Comprehensive School Safety Plan, SARB has welcomed public and agency input during the business portion of its monthly meetings, and the district plan was again approved by the Board in the Spring of 1999.

SARB proposes that each school develop a site Safe Schools Plan, following the guidelines of the state publication, *Safe Schools – A Planning Guide for Action*. (It should be noted that program funding under all of the safe schools grants is unavailable at this time for the elementary sites because they have no Safe Schools Plans. With cutbacks in Title IV funding, it is increasingly more important that school sites adopt a plan.)

SARB is willing to facilitate the development of site Safe Schools Plans. This would require: 1) an overall safety audit of each site and the district [see R-3]; 2) a student survey [see R-4]; 3) the mandated Title IV research at grade seven; and, 4) a plan written by each School Site Council, in cooperation and collaboration with Oxnard Police Department, Ventura County Sheriff, and Ventura County Probation Agency.

- R-2: SARB agrees with the finding. Ocean View School District currently employs 2.2 counselors and 2.0 psychologists. The guidance program is comprehensive, including prevention, intervention and direct service. However, the current counselor-to-student ratio of 1:1,250 drastically exceeds professional recommendations of 1:300 maximum. Ocean View SARB support legislation that increases funding for pupil personnel services. With current caseloads, it is impossible to completely identify and assist alienated and disaffected students.
- R-3: SARB agrees with the finding. The assistance of the county's Safety Coordinator to evaluate the current effectiveness and adequacy of each school's daytime and night time security systems is both timely and appropriate. This information would be necessary for the completion of school site School Safety Plans (See R-1).
- R-4 SARB agrees with the finding. Following the assessment portion of *Safe Schools – A Planning Guide for Action*, the proposed student survey would be valuable. Specific items related to: 1) student willingness to report weapons; 2) the level of understanding about weapon expulsion consequences; 3) the student perception of weapon risk; and, 4) other student suggestions related to ensuring a safe, secure and peaceful campus would be insightful for students, staff and the community.

The above-referenced findings were adopted by the Board of Education of Ocean View School District at a regular board meeting on July 13, 1999.

Sincerely,



Nancy J. Carroll, Ph.D.  
Superintendent

NJC:jb

.....

# Ojai Unified School District

August 26, 1999

Honorable Charles Campbell  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
Ventura County Hall of Justice  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, California 93009



Dear Judge Campbell,

I am writing in response to a request from Marvin J. Reeber, Foreman of the 1998/99 Grand Jury, to respond to four recommendations outlined in the Grand Jury report entitled "School Safety in Ventura County Public Schools."

Recommendation 1:

All schools within the Ojai Unified School District have Board approved SB 187 compliant Safe School Plans. Plans are reviewed and updated on an annual basis and are on file at each school site. All plans were reviewed by the Ventura County Sheriffs Department, Ojai branch.

Recommendation 2:

Ojai Unified School District concurs with this recommendation. We will continue to watch for funding sources that will allow us to increase these services.

Recommendation 3:

The Ojai Unified School District concurs with this recommendation. The District and the Ventura County Sheriffs Department are working on review of the School Safety Plans, planning lock down procedures, aerial photography, and perimeter management.

Recommendation 4:

The Ojai Unified School District administers the California Healthy Kids Survey and in 1998, the California Student Survey of Substance Abuse and Other Behaviors. Both surveys ask many of the same questions as the figure 3 questionnaire. We will review the survey to match questions and add questions to

the 2000 Healthy Kids Survey to obtain the necessary information to analyze and determine needs. It would seem reasonable that since all districts are required to administer a survey for federal Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities monies, questions should be added to retrieve the information asked in the Figure 3 survey and not repeat the effort that provides basically the same information.

The Ojai Unified School District has been active in a relationship with the City of Ojai, Ventura County Sheriffs Department, and the Ventura County Board of Supervisors to support the foundation of the Ojai Valley Youth Foundation. This organization empowers youth to make positive changes within our community. The Ojai Valley Youth Foundation actively involves youth to look at all the data, including the California Safe Schools Assessment, expulsion and suspension data, and the Healthy Kids Survey results to determine what they can do to make their schools safer places. We feel this is a very positive step to make our schools safe.

The Board of Education joins in thanking the Grand Jury for their efforts.

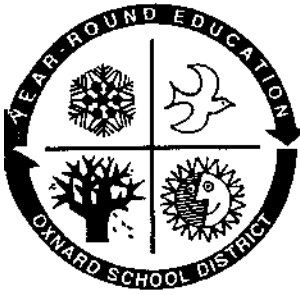
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Gwen Gross", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Gwen Gross  
Superintendent

GG/dj





RECEIVED  
SEP 13 1999

# OXNARD SCHOOL DISTRICT

1051 SOUTH "A" STREET • OXNARD, CALIFORNIA 93030 • 805 / 487-3918

RECEIVED  
SEP 15 1999

RECEIVED  
VENTURA COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

September 1, 1999

SEP - 2 1999

OFFICE OF THE  
PRESIDING JUDGE

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

FRANCISCO J. DOMINGUEZ  
President

SUSAN E. ALVAREZ  
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RAY W. GONZALES  
ARTIUR JOE LOPEZ  
DOROTHIE J. STERLING

## ADMINISTRATION

RICHARD DUARTE  
District Superintendent

DAVID A. GOMEZ, Ph.D.  
Assistant Superintendent  
Human Resources and  
Support Services

SANDRA J. HERRERA  
Assistant Superintendent  
Business and Fiscal Services

CONSTANCE SHARP, Ed.D.  
Assistant Superintendent  
Educational Services

Honorable Charles Campbell  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
VENTURA COUNTY HALL OF JUSTICE  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, California 93009

Dear Judge Campbell:

On behalf of the Oxnard School District, I am responding to the Summary Recommendations of the 1998-99 Ventura County Grand Jury reported in their investigation of School Safety in Ventura County public Schools. After a careful review of the recommendations by the Management Team of the Oxnard School District, we would like to offer the following responses:

R-1: All of the schools in the Oxnard School District have met the requirements of SB 187 and have developed Safe School Plans. These plans have been reviewed and have been approved by the Board of Trustees and have been found to adequately address all of the requirements of the law. The plans are available for review in the District Office of the Oxnard School District.

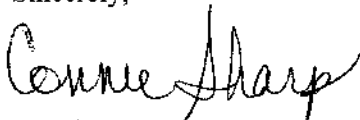
R-2: The Oxnard School District is in agreement with the findings that the availability and presence of psychologists and counselors at each school site should be increased. This is an important step if we are to be able to meet the emotional and social needs of our students. However, funds are currently not available to provide sufficient services in order to meet growing student needs. One additional psychologist has been added to the staff at this time. Additionally, the Oxnard School District, through the use of our Healthy Start Grants and other grant funding opportunities, has looked to outside agencies, such as Project Impact, Interface, Boys and Girls Clubs and interns provided through local universities to help meet the needs of our students. We will continue to look for different funding options in order to be able to provide additional services to our students.

R-3: The Oxnard School District routinely utilizes services available through the VCSSFA in areas related to daytime and nighttime security systems.

R-4: The Oxnard School District administers the California Healthy Survey to our students each year. WestEd collects and tabulates the data from our surveys. The use of this study affords us the ability to compare our students and programs with that of other school districts and to adjust our student safety programs as needed.

We thank you for the opportunity to review our programs and make the necessary adjustments in order to be in line with the recommendations of the Grand Jury.

Sincerely,



Connie Sharp, Ed.D.  
Assistant Superintendent  
Educational Services

/jr

cc: Mr. Richard Duarte, Superintendent  
Oxnard School District

2 pps

(#azj-grandjury)

# RIO SCHOOL DISTRICT

100 CORTEZ ST., OXNARD, CALIF. 93030  
PHONE 805-485-3111  
805-983-0221

Board of Education

Robert Almanza  
President

George Perez  
Vice President

Leon Ayala  
John Mosqueda  
Anthony M. Ramos

Superintendent  
Yolanda M. Benítez

August 23, 1999

Honorable Charles Campbell  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
Ventura County Hall of Justice  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

RECEIVED  
AUG 25 1999

*[Handwritten signatures]*

## Re: Responses to 1998-99 Grand Jury Report

Dear Judge Campbell:

This is the Rio School District's official response to the 1998-99 Grand Jury Report on school safety.

Recommendation 1: The Rio School District has met the requirements of SB 187. Each of the five schools has developed a Safe School Plan which were approved by the Governing Board.

Recommendation 2: The Governing Board is in full agreement that the availability and presence of psychologists and counselors at each school site should be increased. It is the district's hope that future federal and/or state be made available to all school districts to meet this need.

Recommendation 3: The Rio School District is in full support of this recommendation in utilizing the services of the County's Safety Coordinator. The district makes a concerted effort to use all federal, state and county services and resources.

Recommendation 4: The Rio School District does a district wide safety survey to faculty, parents and 5, 6, 7 and 8 grade students. The 1999-2000 survey will be updated to reflect areas outlined in this recommendation.

Sincerely,

*[Handwritten signature of Yolanda M. Benitez]*

YOLANDA M. BENITEZ  
Superintendent

YMB/lh

# SANTA CLARA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT

20030 East Telegraph Road  
Santa Paula, California 93060  
(805) 525-4573



September 13, 1999

**RECEIVED**  
SEP 30 1999

To: Honorable Charles Campbell  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
Ventura County Hall of Justice  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, Ca 93009

*[Handwritten signature]*

**RECEIVED**  
VENTURA COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

SEP 23 1999

OFFICE OF THE  
PRESIDING JUDGE

FR: Deborah E. Cuevas

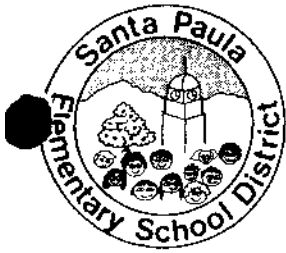
RE: Response to the 1998-99 Grand Jury Report

I am responding to the 1998-99 Ventura County Grand Jury report entitled School Safety in Ventura County Public Schools. I have reviewed the report and analyzed the findings as they apply to Santa Clara School District.

Safety plans and procedures will be revised to assure a continued safe learning and work environment for students and staff.

1. Two-way radios will be purchased for all playground aides.
2. Student and staff handbooks will be revised for the 1999-2000 school year.
3. Playground supervision safety training will continue.
4. Phones will be placed in each classroom, as funds become available.
5. Staff will continue to receive safety training for detection of weapons and explosives and steps in handling emergencies.

Cc: 1998-99 Grand Jury  
Ventura County Clerk and Recorder  
Santa Clara Board of Trustees



# Santa Paula Elementary School District

• 201 S. Steckel Dr. • P.O. Box 710 • Santa Paula CA 93061-0710 • FAX (805) 933-3023 •

September 27, 1999

RECEIVED  
VENTURA COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

SEP 29 1999

OFFICE OF THE  
PRESIDING JUDGE

Presiding Judge  
Honorable Charles Campbell and  
Members of the Grand Jury  
Hall of Justice  
800 S. Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

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OCT  
SEP 01 1999

In response to the Ventura Grand Jury that the 'Summary Recommendations' be addressed, the Santa Paula Elementary School District will agree to:

- ❖ Assess the Safe School Plan at each school site for compliance with SB187 and E.C. 35294.2; any inadequacies in training or material acquisition will be remedied through Ventura County Superintendent of Schools resources. Currently our policies, procedures and regulations are inserted or included with each site plan.
- ❖ Every effort will be made to increase each school's support services. Currently we have three (3) counselors at Isbell Middle School (student population 1085); the K-5 elementary sites (6 of them) and our K-8 Community Day School do not have counselors. However, we do have a full-time SB65 Outreach Consultant at each elementary site and at the middle school; their primary responsibility is working with at-risk students and as a liaison between the school and home of each such student.

We currently have four full-time psychologists for the district, one of whom has other administrative duties and does not serve the sites. Of the three others, one serves two schools; one serves three schools; the last one serves two schools and our special education pre-school.

We have also hired a licensed clinical social worker who will do her nine-month psychology internship with us; she will work two days a week the first semester and three days a week for the second semester with the students in various classes of our Community Day School -- which includes a class for grades 6-8 expelled students, another for our grades 6-8 opportunity class, and one each for our K-3 and 4-5 expelled and suspended students.

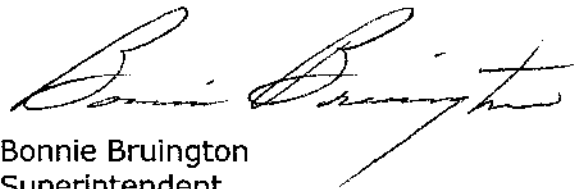
BEDELL SCHOOL 933-5355	BLANCHARD SCHOOL 933-5381	GLEN CITY SCHOOL 933-5376	ISELL MIDDLE SCHOOL 933-5329	McKEVETT SCHOOL 933-5332
THILLE SCHOOL 933-5372	WEBSTER SCHOOL 933-5315	CHILD CARE SERVICES 933-5375	SPECIAL EDUCATION 933-5336	
SUPERINTENDENT 933-5342	EDUCATIONAL SERVICES 933-5341	BUSINESS SERVICES 933-5371	SPECIAL PROJECTS 933-5304	

Page 2

- ❖ Bret Breton has been contacted and will be doing a full evaluation of the current effectiveness and adequacy of each school's daytime and night-time security systems. Currently Mr. Breton has made arrangements for security cameras on Isbell campus. In addition, we have added security fencing to some campus areas. Since we have a long-standing agreement with the city for their use of our sport fields after hours, any changes will need to be carefully considered.
- ❖ A student survey for our grades 5-8 will be completed by the first week in October and available for use in our planning on violence prevention and safe schools.

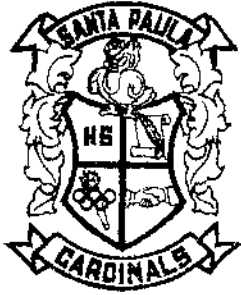
If there are further items to which we should respond, we are at your service.

Sincerely,



Bonnie Bruington  
Superintendent

BB:mh



# SANTA PAULA HIGH SCHOOL

404 North Sixth Street  
Santa Paula, CA 93060  
(805) 525-4406  
Fax (805) 525-1690

J. Antonio Gaitan  
Principal

Judge Charles W. Campbell  
Hall of Justice  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

**RECEIVED**  
SEP 22 1998  
*J. Antonio Gaitan*

**R-1** Assess the Safe School Plans for all of their schools to determine that each meets the requirements of SB 187 (Figure 1). If school plans are found to be inadequate, material which was provided by the County Superintendent of school's training seminars, or a rescheduling of the planning seminar, should be requested of that office.

## **Response to R-1**

Our Comprehensive School Safety Plan (CSSP) was developed at the site level during the 1997-98 school year. The Safe School Committee, consisting of an assistant principal, coordinator of campus security, a teacher, attendance coordinator and parent developed the CSSP. Commander Gonzalez of the Santa Paula Police Department reviewed the CSSP before the public meeting. A public meeting for input was held on July 29, 1998 in the Career Center at Santa Paula High School. Joe Jauregui, Alternative Education Principal, Tony Atilano, Coordinator of Campus Security and Paul A. Tonello, Assistant Principal attended the Safe School Planning Workshop hosted by the VCSS in May 1997. The Safe School Committee yearly reviews and updates the CSSP.

**R-2** Every effort should be made to increase each school's support services. The availability and presence of psychologists and counselors at each school site should be increased in order to identify and treat students exhibiting early warning symptoms that may lead to school violence. Currently many schools have available only a rotating psychologist who serves all of the districts' many schools. Additionally, many counselors, who are responsible for their school's entire student population, are required to spend the majority of their time administering special education testing. They cannot, therefore, reasonably be expected to adequately identify and assist alienated and disaffected students.

## **Response to R-2**

Four full time counselors are on staff at Santa Paula High School. Counselors stagger their work hours to provide services between the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The freshmen and sophomore classes are under one counselor, the junior and senior classes are under one counselor, special program students are under one counselor and all Special Education students are under one counselor. A full time Outreach Coordinator is on staff and routinely makes home visits to at risk students. In addition, safety funds are used to implement

additional counseling services to meet the needs of all our students. At present, we employ a three day a week psychologist and are investigating methods to increase the services provided by a school psychologist.

**R-3** Utilize the services of the County's VCSSFA Safety Coordinator (800/383-1970) to evaluate the current effectiveness and adequacy of each school's daytime and night-time security systems.

### **Response to R-3**

There are four (4) full time six (6) hour a day campus security under the supervision of a full time eight (8) hour a day coordinator of campus security at Santa Paula High School. In addition, there are three (3) to six (6) part time three (3) hours a day noon supervisors. All security personnel are trained in search protocols, non-confrontational approach techniques, radio communications and report writing. Security personnel are issued polo style uniform shirts and two-way radios. Security is assigned to monitor sectors of the campus with a rover as backup. Between 8:00 a.m. and 9:45 a.m., there are four (4) security on duty. Between 9:45 a.m. and 1:45 p.m., there are seven (7) to eight (8) security, plus three (3) administrators for the break and lunch times. At break and lunch, there are ten (10) to eleven (11) security and administrators on duty.

During night activities, there will be two (2) to ten (10) security and up to three (3) administrators on duty. Deployment is dependent upon the type of night activity. We receive active support from the Santa Paula Police Department and Probation Officers of the Corrections Services Agency, County of Ventura during night athletic activities. In addition, monthly meetings are scheduled with the Santa Paula Elementary School District, the Santa Paula Police Department and the County of Ventura Probation Officers with the intent to discuss safety concerns in regards to our students. During non-activity nights, there are three (3) to five (5) custodians on duty. After 10:00 p.m., there are no school personnel on duty.

The campus is under 24 hour a day, seven (7) days a week CCTV surveillance. The cameras are equipped with passive infrared capabilities. One (1) tape is used to record the day's activities each day Monday through Thursday. One tape is used to record Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Each tape is numbered 1 - 31 and is recycled the next month. Only administration, the coordinator of campus security and the Director of M & O have access to the CCTV tape system. Each hallway is lit, and flood lights are directed on to Cardinal Way (school owned) between 5<sup>th</sup> Street and 6<sup>th</sup> Street, and the parking lot below the Girl's Gym. Fifth Street, which bisects the campus, has been deeded over to the district and we restrict usage during school hours. One (1) resident has his garage driveway on 5<sup>th</sup> Street which prevents the district from totaling restricting access to the campus. The entire campus is fenced in by chain link fence. Each classroom is equipped with a telephone with access to inside and outside lines. Two (2) administrators have school owned cellular telephones for emergencies. By the end of the first



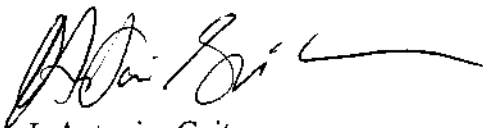
term, January 2000, the County VCSSFA Safety Coordinator will be contacted to evaluate the day and night safety protocols of our site.

**R-4** Administer at each of their schools a student survey similar to Figure 3 to gain insight into the presence of weapons, the level of student willingness to report weapons, the level of student understanding of weapon expulsion consequences, the degree of student perception of weapon safety, and to solicit students suggestions for improving school safety at all school sites.

#### **Response to R-4**

A parent and student survey was conducted during our WASC Accreditation in January of 1999. Over 88% of our parents and students responded in agreement that Santa Paula High School is safe place to attend. A more specific school safety survey will be conducted by the end of the first term, January 2000. The survey will focus on weapons at school, student willingness to report weapons, their understanding of the consequences for weapons possession and their perception and suggestions to improve overall school safety. An additional safety survey is being planned and will be administered to staff and parents. This survey will be designed to elicit an overall response to school safety in general.

Sincerely,



J. Antonio, Gaitan  
Santa Paula High School Principal

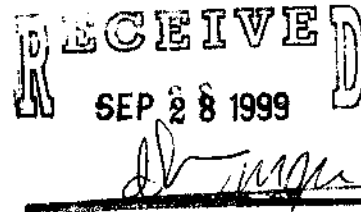
cc: Dr. Charles Weis, Ventura County Superintendent of Schools  
Richard Dean, County Clerk and Recorder  
Grand Jury of Ventura County  
Board of Trustees, SPUHSD  
Dr. William J. Brand, SPUHSD Superintendent  
J. Antonio Gaitan, SPHS Principal  
Joe Jauregui, RHS Principal  
Bob Gonzalez, Chief of Police SPPD  
Doug Hauge, SPHS AFT President  
Rachel Bustillos, SPHS CSEA President



# Simi Valley Unified School District

September 23, 1999

The Honorable Charles Campbell  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
Ventura County Hall of Justice  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009



Dear Sir:

Re: 1998-1999 Ventura County Grand Jury Report: School Safety in Ventura County Public Schools

As requested in the Grand Jury Report regarding Safe Schools, dated June 1, 1999, the following is the Simi Valley Unified School District's response to the summary recommendations, R-1 through R-4.

R-1: The Simi Valley Unified School District is reviewing and revising its safe school plans for all schools as required by SB187. We are using materials provided by Ventura County.

R-2: School psychologists are assigned to all schools. Counselors are assigned to all secondary schools. All of the secondary schools have school counselors who work with students in areas of interpersonal relationships and assist with students identified as needing intervention. The district recognizes the need for additional mental health services and has recently added a psychologist to the district staff. The district also has a network of referral sources for students needing intensive counseling.

On a limited basis, psychologists and/or social workers are assigned to elementary sites to work with groups of students experiencing difficulties.

All schools have student study teams. These teams review students who may need additional school support or outside referral.

R-3: All campuses require community persons or parents to check in at the office.

The district has used the services of Korman Ellis, Attorney and School Safety Specialist, trained by the National School Safety Center. The district has reviewed its security system at the district office and implemented a monitoring system via cameras. In addition, the district has, through its principals, reviewed the safety concerns for each

campus. Over the past year the district has developed a crisis intervention manual. This manual includes detailed sections on how to respond in crisis situations and addresses individual tragedies as well as violent incidents that affect the entire campus. The crisis intervention plan also covers bomb threats and weapon assaults.

Daytime and nighttime security on campuses has been supported through the purchase of walkie talkies and the implementation of a buddy system. Day and night security measures include:

- Alarm systems in selected classrooms and offices.
- All maintenance personnel have walkie talkies or phones.
- Two high school campuses are fenced; others are under consideration in the future.
- As a daily routine, custodians and/or plant managers walk the campus looking for suspicious objects.
- All campuses have yard duty supervisors. The supervisors are assigned based on need and the size of the campus.
- The district has contacted the County Safety Coordinator as a follow-up to the review by Korman Ellis, Safety Specialist.
- The district has two police officers assigned to the school district to work with at-risk students at the secondary schools.
- D.A.R.E. officers are on call to work with elementary students.

R-4: The district has encouraged students to report the presence of weapons on campus. The district has joined with both the "We Tip" and "Crime Stoppers" programs and has planned to discuss these programs with students. The importance of students reporting weapons to adults and the consequences for the possession of weapons has been disseminated to students through student handbooks, student orientations, and school assemblies. A significant percentage of incidents in which students have been found with weapons are a result of other students notifying administration and teachers. The administration does not believe that conducting student surveys will provide accurate and useful information leading to the removal of weapons from our campuses.

Sincerely,



Joyce C. Mahdesian, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

JCM:cb

cc: Dr. Charles Weis, Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Office  
Richard Dean, County Government Center  
Grand Jury, Ventura County Jury Services

# SOMIS UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

5268 NORTH STREET • POST OFFICE BOX 900 • SOMIS, CA 93066  
805/386-5711 • 805/386-4596 (FAX)

RECEIVED  
VENTURA COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

AUG 31 1999

OFFICE OF THE  
PRESIDING JUDGE

**Board of Education**

Jim Bushong  
Bob Fulkerson  
Sue Klausner  
Mark J. Smith  
Drew Sutherland

Richard J. Malfatti  
*Superintendent*

August 25, 1999

RECEIVED  
SEP 13 1999

*db-mm*

Honorable Charles Campbell  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
Ventura County Hall of Justice  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

Dear Judge Campbell,

I am responding as a Superintendent of the Somis Union School District to the Summary Recommendations reported by the Grand Jury in the investigation of School Safety in Ventura County Public Schools.

**Recommendation 1:** Mr. Martin, Vice Principal, has developed a Safe School Plan which covers all of the initial policies which schools are required to fulfill. The Safe School Plan was approved by the Board of Trustees during the 1998-99 school year. The Somis Board of Trustees have also approved a district-wide Disaster Plan, Sexual Harassment policies and procedures, Student Discipline Program and a Dress Code to prohibit students from wearing gang-related clothes to school.

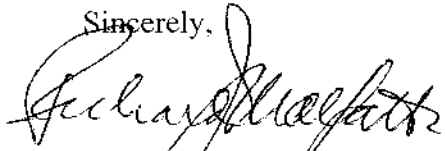
**Recommendation 2:** As a small school district, Somis Union School District has no counseling services other than whatever time a teacher, an aide or administrator might spend with a student. Somis received services from a psychologist that is a Ventura County Superintendent of Schools employee. Somis can only afford to pay the county for one day a week of service from the county psychologist. Unless additional funding from the state becomes available to school districts for this purpose, these services will only be a "pipe dream".

**Recommendation 3:** The assistance of the County's Safety Coordinator to evaluate day and night time security system is very appropriate. The Somis Union School District attends all local meetings that deal with safety issues. We currently work with county sheriff's and fire departments in our overall planning for school safety. We spend release time on Tuesdays to review policies and procedures with the teaching staff.

**Recommendation 4:** The Somis Union School District has not given the California Healthy Survey as of yet. The survey on page 163 definitely would be something we would want to give our students. We do want to encourage student to report weapons on campus. We want them to realize that expulsion is a consequence of bringing a weapon to school.

Hopefully this feedback gives you some information that you may want to share with the Grand Jury.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Richard J. Malfatti".

Richard J. Malfatti  
Superintendent

VENTURA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



120 East Santa Clara Street  
Ventura, California 93001  
Phone (805) 652-7285

THE Poinsettia City by the Sea

CERTIFICATED PERSONNEL

RECEIVED  
VENTURA COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

June 16, 1999

JUN 18 1999

OFFICE OF THE  
PRESIDING JUDGE

Honorable Charles Campbell  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
Ventura County Hall of Justice  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, California 93009

Re: Ventura Unified School District Response regarding the Grand Jury report entitled  
School Safety in Ventura County Public Schools.

Dear Judge Campbell:

Recommendation 1

All of the Ventura Unified School District's schools have complied with SB187 Safe School Plans. The plans are on file at each school and at our Child Welfare and Attendance Office.

Recommendation 2

We are ever vigilant to school safety concerns and have asked our staff to keep their ears and eyes open to both potential problems as well as possible solutions to school safety issues. This spring our staff has written a grant to help fund more counselors for this issue. In addition we have heard that the new state budget will have some funds for school safety to be used for counselors or psychological services.

Recommendation 3

Both the district's Risk Manager and Director of Child Welfare and Attendance work with the County Schools Safety Coordinator on an ongoing basis.

Recommendation 4

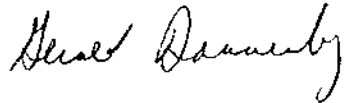
The Student Survey to gain insight about weapons and school safety issues was written by Dr. Rich Morrison, our Director of Child Welfare and Attendance, and Dr. Mike Furlong from UCSB. Ventura was the first district to use this survey for all students. We use it periodically with schools as needed. In fact we use an updated version of this survey written by Dr. Morrison and Dr. Furlong.

Conclusion

We agree with the Grand Jury that it is imperative that all public school districts accept the responsibility and challenge of school security. This is a never-ending journey and one with which we must be consistently vigilant. We are fortunate to have one of the State's top experts regarding school safety on our staff. He is always looking for ways to make our schools safer.

Attached is a copy of the memo from Dr. Morrison to Dr. Spirito regarding school safety and weapons possession. The memo demonstrates our commitment to school security.

Sincerely,



Gerald L. Dannenberg, Ed. D.  
Assistant Superintendent,  
Human Resources

GLD/amr

cc: Dr. Joseph Spirito  
Board of Education  
Dr. Patricia Chandler  
Dr. Rich Morrison  
Mr. Joe Richards

# Memo

**To:** Joseph P. Spirito, Ed.D., Superintendent  
Ventura Unified School District

**From:** Richard L. Morrison, Ed.D., Director *RLM*  
Alternative Programs & CWA Services

**Date:** June 11, 1999

**Re:** School Safety & Weapons Possession

V.U.S.D.  
JUN 14 1999  
SUPERINTENDENT'S  
OFFICE

---

Thanks for the opportunity to comment on media inquiries regarding the VUSD weapons possession reported through the California Safe School Assessment Program for 1997-98 school year. It seems to me to be reasonable that people in the community would want to know the meaningfulness, comparability and related status of school safety.

First, is the VUSD weapons possession number too high and, therefore, an indication of danger? This is a "comparability" question and it assumes common conditions and reporting practices across school districts and communities. Clearly, no one can assume these numbers are comparable, so we really can not reliably comment about comparability of VUSD to other school districts. However, we should look at our number and make comparisons annually between schools, grade levels, geographical areas within VUSD, etc. Over several years, we can analyze trends in the data and relate the weapons incidence to other disciplinary items. We also analyze a wide variety of other school data trends, including suspensions, attendance and many other quality/school performance indicators.

Secondly, is the VUSD number a "positive" or "negative" indicator in relation to safety? I believe it is a positive indicator for the following reasons:

1. **Students who bring weapons to school get caught and are disciplined.** In each case, there is a recommendation for expulsion and a complete review of the student's placement. Parents are involved, services are provided/suggested, and student conduct agreements are established. It has been my experience that most weapons possession cases are "caught" on the very first day the weapon is brought to school. Often, the possession was accidental/forgot, or was to show off to friends. None of the weapons possession cases in 1997-98 was aggravated (i.e. brandished or used to assault, etc.).
2. **VUSD has created a district-wide culture of caring and responsibility.** This begins with the Superintendent, who is unusually visible and accessible to students. The Character Traits Education initiative, which began in 1982, has had an accumulating and



strong impact on children. We have many, many examples of children stepping forward to report a wide variety of safety concerns, including reporting weapons possession to teachers or administrators.

3. **VUSD has excellent staffing for school security.** Every campus has visible administrators, supervision plans, campus aides/supervisors and school resource officers/VPD liaison support. Our approach to school security is based on genuine care and concern for the welfare and safety of children. The Superintendent has promised parents—repeatedly—that VUSD will do everything possible to maintain safety and minimize the possibility of harm to children and staff. Repeatedly, for the past several years, VUSD has pro-actively taken steps to augment school safety and security. VUSD was the first district in California to administer the California School Climate and Safety Survey (1991). This student survey continues to be used in the district to selectively monitor how students are experiencing their school.
4. **VUSD also has safety partnerships with the Ventura Police Department and the University of California/Santa Barbara that have been in existence for several years.** These partnerships enable us to look at safety from **outside in** and **inside out**. "Denial" can be a risk factor for a school district if it does not have external evaluators of safety. Our partnerships help us build a reliable and credible school safety perspective. We also routinely invite opinions and suggestions about safety from parents and other community representatives. Following the Littleton tragedy, the Superintendent/VUSD immediately conducted a safety survey of parent representatives (Superintendent's Parent Advisory Committee) and school principals to make sure we are at the appropriate awareness and readiness level for school emergencies exists. These data are being analyzed and reported to the VUSD Safety Committee and Robert Dalto (Risk Manager).

In conclusion, I hope this helps you and others have a more complete and informed understanding of the weapons possession incidence report. Like so many issues we deal with, there is usually a complexity not initially apparent! In any case, we do consider all indicators of safety, including the California Safe School Assessment data (i.e. weapons possession), but in this instance, I think this is a positive indicator of safety.

Cc: Jerry Dannenberg, Ed.D.

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## RESPONSIBILITY

Character Trait of the Month