

Conejo Valley Unified School District

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SUPERINTENDENT
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August 17, 2011

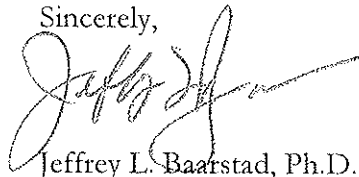
The Honorable Vincent O'Neill, Jr.
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
County of Ventura
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

RECEIVED
AUG 17 2011
VENTURA COUNTY
GRAND JURY

Dear Judge O'Neill:

Enclosed is the Conejo Valley Unified School District's response to the Grand Jury's Findings and Recommendations, dated June 3, 2011.

If you have any further questions, please contact my office.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey L. Baarstad, Ph.D.
Superintendent

Copies: Robert A. Peskay, Foreman,
Ventura County Grand Jury
CVUSD Board of Education
Linda Bekeny, Assistant Superintendent
Janet Boland, Transportation Specialist

Conejo Valley Unified School District
Response to Grand Jury Report
Statements to Findings and Recommendations
School Bus Safety
August 16, 2011

FINDINGS WITH WHICH WE AGREE:

FI-01 National studies consistently indicate that school buses are one of the safest modes of transportation.

FI-02 National studies additionally document that students are safer as school bus riders than are student occupants of private vehicles or student pedestrians.

FI-07 There is no single local agency mandated to collect, collate and report Ventura County school bus safety information on a countywide basis. However, individual school districts in Ventura County annually report school bus transportation information to the California Department of Education and the California Highway Patrol.

FI-08 It is unclear whether seat belts on school buses significantly increase school bus safety.

FINDINGS WITH WHICH WE DISAGREE:

FI-03 Not all districts maintain information on school bus safety statistics. Some do not track this information at all, while others rely on their contracted bus companies to do so.

We disagree with this statement because of its broad implications that school districts do not maintain records in accordance with established law. CVUSD is required to maintain and report specific information related to student transportation to the California Department of Education. CVUSD is also required to immediately report all school bus accidents to the California Highway Patrol, which conducts investigations into the accidents and maintains records and statistics. CVUSD complies with both requirements.

FI-04 Due to lack of comparable, consistent school bus safety statistics provided by the districts, it is not possible to determine objective measures of school bus safety, such as accident rates. Thus, it is difficult to conclude that school bus transportation in the County is safe, as previously demonstrated at the national level. It is only possible to infer that school bus transportation in the County is safe from the information provided by the districts.

We disagree with this statement because of its broad implications that school districts do not maintain records in accordance with established law. As stated above, CVUSD submits mandated student transportation information and accident reports to the

California Department of Education and the California Highway Patrol. Both sets of data are available to the public and could be used to reach conclusions on the number of accidents per mile driven or students served.

FI-05 School bus safety statistics, for District or for individual schools, are not readily available to the public.

We disagree with this statement. We believe the data and statistics on student transportation collected and maintained by the California Department of Education and the California Highway Patrol are available to the public.

FI-06 The efforts of the CHP, including certifying school bus drivers, investigating school bus accidents, and inspecting school buses, contribute significantly to ensuring school bus safety in California. However, the CHP does not collect information at the school district level.

We agree that the efforts of the California Highway Patrol contribute significantly to school bus safety, but disagree that the CHP does not collect school bus accident information at the school district level.

RECOMMENDATIONS THAT WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED

R-01 The VCOE should assume responsibility for the collection, collating and reporting of County school bus safety information.

We do not believe there is any existing school transportation safety data or evidence that indicates a need for VCOE to begin a new and unfunded data collection process, or that such a process would result in any increase in school transportation safety.

R-02 The VCOE should develop a standard form for the annual collection of school bus safety information from districts. This information should include: the total number of students who ride the bus to and from school on a daily basis; the total number of students who are transported for field trips, special events, or athletic events; total miles ridden by students; and total number of school bus-related accidents and injuries resulting from the those accidents.

We do not believe there is any existing school transportation safety data or evidence that indicates a need for VCOE to begin a new and unfunded data collection process, or that such a process would result in any increase in school transportation safety.

R-03 The Districts should use the VCOE standard from recommended in R-02, above, to collect school bus safety information, report this information to the VCOE, and post it on district websites.

Annual funding for California public school districts has been significantly reduced over the past four years. In order to continue to provide quality classroom instructional

programs, school districts have significantly reduced central office staffing. We do not believe this is an appropriate time to burden school districts with a new, time-consuming reporting process in the absence of clear data indicating a problem exists that would be addressed by the proposed reporting process.

R-04 The VCOE should use the forms provided by the districts to collate school bus safety information for the County and post it on its website.

We do not believe there is any existing school transportation safety data or evidence that indicates a need for VCOE to begin a new and unfunded data collection process, or that such a process would result in any increase in school transportation safety.

Response to Grand Jury Report Form

Report Title: School Bus Safety

Report Date: June 3, 2011

Response by: *Jeffrey L. Baarstad, Ph.D. Title: Superintendent, Conejo Valley USD

*Submitted on behalf of the Board of Education of Conejo Valley Unified School District

FINDINGS

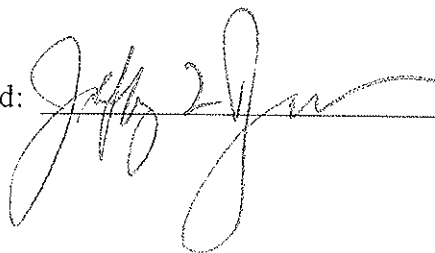
- I (we) agree with the findings numbered: FI-01, FI-02, FI-07, FI-08
- I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: FI-03, FI-04, FI-05, FI-06
(Attach a statement specifying any portions of the findings that are disputed; include an explanation of the reasons therefore.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered _____ have been implemented.
(Attach a summary describing the implemented actions.)
- Recommendations numbered _____ have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.
(Attach a timeframe for implementation.)
- Recommendations numbered _____ require further analysis.
(Attach an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.)
- Recommendations numbered R-01, R-02, R-03 and R-04 will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.
(Attach an explanation)

Date: August 16, 2011

Signed: _____



Number of pages attached: 3