



EDUCATING TOMORROW'S LEADERS

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Anthony W. Knight, Ed.D., Superintendent

BOARD OF EDUCATION

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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 Ave.  
Ventura, CA 93009

RECEIVED  
AUG 25 2011  
VENTURA COUNTY  
GRAND JURY

RE: Grand Jury Report Dated June 3, 2011 Concerning School Bus Safety

On September 29, 2010, the Ventura County Grand Jury requested information from the Ventura County Office of Education and each Local Educational Agency (LEA) in Ventura County, including Oak Park Unified School District, regarding the transportation program offered. That request asked for State, city and school district policies regarding our transportation programs, the number of students served, data related to school bus accidents and injuries for the past five years, and data relating to student bus rider behavioral incidents for the past five years. Oak Park Unified School District responded to that request on October 29, 2010.

On January 26, 2011, the Grand Jury requested additional information concerning the total enrollment of our student programs for school years 2009-2010 and 2010-2011, additional data regarding students transported in school year 2009-2010, the number of instructional days provided in our student programs in school years 2009-2010 and 2010-2011, and the total student passenger miles for school year 2009-2010. Oak Park Unified School District responded to that request on February 25, 2011.

On June 1, 2011, the Grand Jury provided Oak Park Unified School District with a copy of their report entitled, "School Bus Safety," dated June 3, 2011. This report found that "the information provided to the Grand Jury by the districts appears to indicate that school bus travel in the County is safe," but that the information provided by the various districts in response to the Grand Jury inquiries was not comparable or consistent. The Grand Jury is requesting responses to the report's findings from all LEAs in Ventura County within 90 days of the date of the report.

Oak Park Unified School District  
Grand Jury Report Concerning School Bus Safety  
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The Oak Park Unified School District has reviewed the Grand Jury report and submits its response on the attached specified form as required by your letter dated June 3, 2011. In summary, Oak Park Unified School District agrees with the Grand Jury's finding that school bus travel in Ventura County is safe. Based upon the national statistics presented in the report, school bus travel is the safest method of transportation when compared to trains, commercial aviation, and private passenger vehicles. The report also noted that the California Highway Patrol (CHP) is the governmental agency responsible for the supervision of the school pupil transportation industry, including investigating school bus accidents. The report states that data concerning all school bus accidents occurring within Ventura County is available from the CHP Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System. However, that system does not specifically identify the individual LEA or jurisdiction operating the bus.

Even though the Grand Jury report states that school bus travel is one of the safest methods of public transportation and that a database already exists to collect information about school bus accidents, it recommends that another data collection and reporting system be established for reporting school bus transportation statistics. The Oak Park Unified School District respectfully disagrees with the Grand Jury's recommendation and concurs with VCOE's suggestion that the existing data collection system operated by the California Highway Patrol be modified to collect and report the LEA/jurisdiction operating a bus involved in an accident. That simple change to an existing data collection system would provide the public with specific information relating to a single LEA/jurisdiction without creating a redundant, unfunded task for VCOE and the school districts in Ventura County.

If you have any questions regarding the information presented in this response, please contact Mr. Martin Klauss, Assistant Superintendent, at (818) 735-3254 or [mklauss@oakparkusd.org](mailto:mklauss@oakparkusd.org).

Sincerely,



Anthony W. Knight, Ed.D.  
Superintendent, Oak Park Unified School District

cc: Robert A. Peskay, Foreman, Ventura County Grand Jury  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

Oak Park Unified School District Board of Education

Response to Grand Jury Report Form

Report Title: School Bus Safety

Report Date: June 3, 2011

Response by Anthony W. Knight, Ed.D. Title: Superintendent, Oak Park Unified School District

FINDINGS

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

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 the 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-03 will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.  
(Attach an explanation.)

Date: August 17, 2011

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of pages attached: 2



**Response to Grand Jury Report  
Statements to Findings and Recommendations  
School Bus Safety  
August 17, 2011**

**Oak Park Unified School District**

**FINDINGS WITH WHICH WE DO NOT AGREE:**

**FI-03 Not all districts maintain information on school bus safety statistics. Some districts 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. Under current California law, Oak Park Unified School District is not required to maintain and report specific statistics related to school bus accidents. That requirement resides with the California Highway Patrol.

**FI-04 Due to the 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. Under California law, Oak Park Unified School District is not required to maintain and report specific statistics related to school bus accidents. The California Highway Patrol is required to investigate school bus accidents and has a database capable of tracking the accidents by county. This data is available to the public and could be used to make an educated conclusion of the number of accidents per mile driven or per student served.

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

We disagree with this statement. We believe that the public has access to and can obtain all the school bus accident and transportation program information that the California Highway Patrol and Oak Park Unified School District are mandated to collect and report.

**RECOMMENDATIONS THAT WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED.**

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

In its response to the Grand Jury's report, the Ventura County Office of Education (VCOE) stated that it does not plan to implement Grand Jury recommendation R-02. Specifically, VCOE stated that it "does not have the authority over the public school districts and private schools in the County of Ventura to require these agencies to report this type of statistical information. In addition, during this time of severe budget cut backs to our schools, without specific legal mandates, it is not reasonable to place additional data collection requirements on VCOE. As a result, VCOE does not plan to implement this recommendation at this time." Accordingly, Oak Park Unified School District does not plan to implement Grand Jury recommendation R-03.