



**Oxnard Union
High School District**

Students First: every day, every school, every classroom

309 South 'K' Street
Oxnard, CA 93030
Telephone: (805) 385-2500
Facsimile: (805) 483-3069
www.ouhsd.k12.ca.us

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December 1, 2011

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

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

Re: Response to Ventura County 2010-2011 Grand Jury
Report entitled "School Bus Safety"

Dear Honorable Vincent O'Neill and Mr. Peskay:

Oxnard Union High School District (OUHSD) appreciates the thoroughness of the Ventura County Grand Jury in researching and compiling their report, "School Bus Safety." The report discloses the data regarding school bus safety is maintained by the California Highway Patrol on a statewide basis rather than the County level.

OUHSD agrees with the majority of other school districts in Ventura County in their opinion that school buses in Ventura County are safe and the current system to track accidents and provide for safe school bus transportation in Ventura County would not be improved by creating another local administrative system to collect and report the same data for only Ventura County.

Oxnard Union High School District
Responses to Ventura County Grand Jury Findings and Recommendation
School Bus Safety

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. (FA-03, FA-10 through FA-13).

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Response to FI-04: Public school districts are under the control of the State of California. The California Highway Patrol (CHP) investigates all school bus accidents and records data from each accident report into the Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS). After entering the data into SWITRS each accident report is forwarded to the Department of Motor Vehicles for updating of driver records. CHP personnel oversee school bus operations and regularly conduct terminal inspections and provide ongoing training for school bus drivers. The CHP tests bus drivers for license renewals. The Department of Motor Vehicles issues school bus driver licenses and maintains driver records.

We believe the State of California, through the California Highway Patrol, has an excellent system for ensuring school bus safety which should assure the public that school bus transportation in Ventura County is safe.

FI-05. School bus safety statistics, for Districts or for individual schools, are not readily available to the public. (FA-09, FA-15 and FA-16).

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. (FA-17 through FA-19).

FI-07. The Grand Jury was unable to identify any single local agency responsible for collecting, collating, and reporting County school bus safety information on a countywide basis. (FA-14, FA-18, and FA-19) FI-08. It is unclear whether seat belts on school buses significantly increase school bus safety. (FA-21, FI-25 through FA-28).

Response to FI-05, FI-06 and FI-07: These findings are true, school bus accident statistics are compiled by the CHP on a statewide basis.

Recommendations

R-01. The VCOE should assume responsibility for the collection, collating, and reporting of County school bus safety information. (FI-07)

R-02. The VCOE should develop a standard form for the annual collection of school bus safety information from the 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 those accidents. (FI-04).

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. (FI-03 through FI-05)

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. (FI-05 and FI-07)

Response to R-01, R-02, R-03 and R-04: The system in place by the State of California for ensuring school bus safety works well. We do not believe the cost of collecting, collating and reporting County school bus safety information would be worth the benefit?

If you have any questions regarding the information presented in this response, please contact Randy Winton, Assistant Superintendent, Business Services, at (805)385-2529 or randy.winton@ouhsd.k12.ca.us

Sincerely,



Randy Winton

c: OUHSD Board of Trustees