



SOMIS UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Colleen Robertson, Ed.D. Superintendent/Principal

September 7, 2011

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

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

This letter is in reply to your letter dated June 3, 2011, requesting a response to the Grand Jury's Final Report on School Bus Safety.

The Somis Union School District has reviewed the Grand Jury report and submits its response on the attached specified form as required per your letter dated June 3, 2011.

If you have any questions regarding the information presented in this response, please contact me at crobertson@somis.k12.ca.us.

Sincerely,

Colleen Robertson
Superintendent/Principal

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

Ventura County Office of Education

FINDINGS WITH WHICH WE DISAGREE:

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 implications that school districts do not maintain records in accordance with established law. School bus safety information is available from a variety of agencies including school districts, county offices, the California Highway Patrol and the California Department of Education.

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 implications that school districts do not maintain records in accordance with established law. The California Highway Patrol is required to investigate school bus accidents and has a database which tracks the accidents by county. The public is able to access this data. These reports could be used to determine 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 CHP and VCOE 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.

The State of California requires the California Highway Patrol to investigate all school bus accidents in the state. The accidents are reported by County in the CHP Database. Reporting the accidents in another database is not mandated by law, and therefore, would not provide the public with consistent and accurate information regarding school bus safety. Based on these reasons the Somis Union School District does not plan to implement this recommendation at this time.