

VENTURA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Education Service Center



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THE POINSETTIA CITY BY THE SEA

Trudy Tuttle Arriaga, Ed.D.
Superintendent

August 23, 2011

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VENTURA COUNTY
GRAND JURY

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

Robert A. Peskay, Foreman
Ventura County Grand Jury
800 S. Victoria Avenue
Ventura, California 93009

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

Dear Honorable Vincent O'Neill and Mr. Peskay:

The Board of Trustees and the Administration of the Ventura Unified School District (hereinafter "District") have received and reviewed the above-referenced Grand Jury Report. Pursuant to Penal Code §933 et seq. and the Grand Jury's request for a response to its recommendation R-03 and findings FI-03 through FI-05, please find below the District's response to recommendation R-03 and findings FI-03 through FI-05.

I. RESPONSE TO FINDINGS

A. Response to Finding 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."

The Ventura Unified School District ("VUSD") disagrees with this finding. VUSD is not aware of what other school districts do or not do with regard to school bus safety statistics. VUSD does, however, maintain and submit records in accordance with established law.

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B. Response to Finding 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.”

VUSD disagrees with this finding. VUSD is not aware of what other school districts do or not do with regard to school bus safety statistics. VUSD does, however, maintain and submit records in accordance with established law to include the “Form TRANS” as well as the information submitted to the Grand Jury in response to its request for information regarding bus safety. The California Highway Patrol is also required to investigate school bus accidents and has a database capable of tracking the accidents by county. Both sets of data are available to the public and could be used for the Grand Jury’s stated purpose.

C. Response to Finding FI-05

“School bus safety statistics, for districts or for individual schools, are not readily available to the public.”

VUSD disagrees with this finding. The public has access to public records and can obtain all the school bus accident and transportation program information that VUSD and the California Highway Patrol are mandated to collect and report that are public records.

II. RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Response to Recommendation 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.”

VUSD will not implement this recommendation. It is VUSD’s understanding that the VCOE will not be implementing R-02 based on its lack of legal authority over public schools to require reporting of the type of statistical information requested in R-02. As such, the form recommended in R-02 will not exist and cannot be completed.

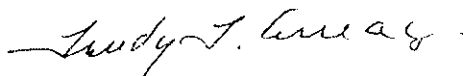
Ventura County Grand Jury
Re: Response to Ventura County 2010-2011 Grand Jury Report
August 23, 2011
Page 3 of 3

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AUG 30 2011
VENTURA COUNTY
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If you have any further questions or need clarification to any of our responses,
please do not hesitate to communicate with me.

Respectfully submitted,

VENTURA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



Trudy T. Arriaga, Ed.D.
Superintendent

cc: Ventura USD Governing Board

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VENTURA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Superintendent's Office
255 W. Stanley Ave. Suite 100
Ventura, CA 93001

EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION:

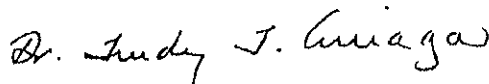
Action Agenda

Item 4: Response to Ventura County 2010-11 Grand Jury Report – "School Bus Safety."

It was moved by Mr. John Walker, seconded by Mrs. Debbie Golden and carried unanimously that the Board approve the response letter (dated August 23, 2011) to the Grand Jury regarding school bus safety.

I certify that the above excerpt is a true copy from the minutes of the meeting of the Board of Education of the Ventura Unified School District dated **August 23, 2011**.

Dated: August 24, 2011



Trudy Tuttle Arriaga, Ed.D.
Superintendent