



# Simi Valley Schools

SIMI VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

**Dr. Hani Youssef**

Superintendent

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(805) 306-4500 Extension 4002

November 29, 2022

The Honorable Bruce A. Young, Presiding Judge,  
Superior Court of California,  
County of Ventura,  
800 S. Victoria Avenue,  
Ventura, CA 93003

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VENTURA COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

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OFFICE OF THE  
PRESIDING JUDGE

The Honorable Bruce A. Young:

Please allow this correspondence to serve as the Simi Valley Unified School District's response to the 2021-2022 Ventura County Grand Jury Report titled Mental Health Services and Wellness Centers in Ventura County Schools. We agree with the Ventura County Grand Jury on the value and continued need mental health support for our students in Ventura County. We know there are many approaches to providing appropriate mental health support for students and we are proud that the Simi Valley Unified School District (District) has been able to significantly increase resources and support for mental health support. The District will continue to seek regional partnership opportunities with additional resources and funding to continue to strengthen the District's programs.

The following is the District's response to the Grand Jury findings and recommendations.

### Findings:

We agree with the findings numbered: F-1-F-6 and F9-15. We do not disagree wholly or partially with any of the Findings.

### Recommendations:

1. R-01. The Grand Jury recommends that by June 30, 2024, Ventura County Behavioral Health (VCBH) in collaboration with the Ventura County Office of Education (VCOE), expand the Wellness Center pilot program into all Ventura County public high schools.
  - a. This recommendation has not been implemented. Although a Wellness Center will not be available at each high school, the District has taken action to support the mental, emotional and physical wellness of our students. Specifically, the District has hired two additional high school counselors, two school social workers, an assistant director of student support services, increased staffing at the virtual learning academy to allow greater opportunities for students who desire non-traditional education settings, scheduled virtual and in-person parent education workshops (topics include student anxiety, social media awareness, bullying and harassment education), partnered with Daybreak Mental Health Services to provide teletherapy

**From Here to Anywhere**

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for the most needy students, hired an additional school psychologist and identified homeless and foster youth liaisons at each school.

2. R-02. The Grand Jury recommends that by June 30, 2025, VCBH in collaboration with VCOE, develop a strategy to expand the Wellness Center pilot program into Ventura County public middle schools.
  - a. This recommendation has not been implemented. Although a Wellness Center will not be available at each middle school, the District has taken action to support the mental, emotional and physical wellness of our students. Specifically, the District has hired two school social workers, an assistant director of student support services, increased staffing at the virtual learning academy to allow great opportunities for students who desire non-traditional education settings, scheduled virtual and in-person parent education workshops, partnered with Daybreak Mental Health Services to provide teletherapy for the most needy students, hired an additional school psychologist and identified homeless and foster youth liaisons at each school.
3. R-03. The Grand Jury recommends that pursuant to Wellness Center continuity and expansion, VCOE, Conejo Valley Unified School District, Simi Valley Unified School District, and Ventura Unified School District seek and obtain sustainable funding from public and private sources.
  - a. This recommendation has not been implemented. The District will commit over \$7,500,000.00 to mental health support over the next three years. The District will continue to seek and hopes to see an ongoing investment from the State to fund these necessary supports and services.
4. R-04. The Grand Jury recommends that pursuant to Wellness Center continuity and expansion, VCOE, Conejo Valley Unified School District, Simi Valley Unified School District, and Ventura Unified School District create an infrastructure to claim Medi-Cal MH MAA funds for Wellness Centers.
  - a. This recommendation has not been implemented. The District currently bills Medi-Cal for mental health services provided as part of special education, therefore the practice is in place. The time required by staff to complete the billing documentation has historically been a barrier to maximizing Medi-Cal reimbursement.

In conclusion, the District reiterates our appreciation to the Ventura County Grand Jury for their investment in researching the depth of mental health need with our youth. The District believes we have begun taking important steps regarding this work and has a commitment to our community, and especially to our students, to keep moving forward to reach more students.

Sincerely,



Dr. Hani Youssef  
Superintendent

Simi Valley Unified School District