



**SAN RAFAEL CITY SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE**

310 Nova Albion Way, San Rafael, CA 94903 (415) 492-3233 FAX (415) 492-3245

June 14, 2001

To: Marin County Civil Grand Jury

From: San Rafael City Schools

**RE: RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT**

Report Title: San Rafael Schools' Maintenance, Operations and Transportation Department  
Year: 2000-2001

**Overview:**

The San Rafael City Schools District appreciates the series of findings and recommendations presented to it by the Marin County Civil Grand Jury. As referenced several times in the Grand Jury's report, the District had made significant progress in restructuring and re-staffing the department within the past twelve months. Thus, several recommendations from both the original FCMAT and the Grand Jury Reports had previously been implemented, or were in the process of being implemented, when this report reached the District. This Report addresses both Findings and Recommendations of the Grand Jury, and the earlier FCMAT Report upon which much of the Grand Jury's Report was based.

**Findings; Summary of Responses to the Grand Jury (Wholly or Partially Disagree)**

District disagrees in part to two Findings:

3. Bahia Vista actually receives additional custodial time from the District, beyond the 1.0 FTE Head Custodian noted in the Report. Additional Custodial I hours are assigned in varying proportions based on number of classrooms, the number of students and other facility considerations to all K - 5 schools in the District with the exception of Laurel Dell School, which is significantly smaller than the other schools of the District.
5. District has replaced the Assistant Director position with a Maintenance Supervisor. The Director is taking a lead position relative to custodial training and support.

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## **Recommendations; Summary of Responses:**

### **PART ONE: IMPLEMENTED RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FCMAT REPORT:**

#### **“Organizational Staffing”**

##### **2. Purchase packaged software program for work-order tracking.**

District has hired a consultant who has customized supportable software to provide an on-line work system, that is fully integrateable into the District's network.

Training for Principals and designees on the system is scheduled for June 20, 2001. A similar training for Maintenance management and staff is scheduled also for June 20. It is expected that the conversion to the new system will occur July 1, 2001.

##### **3. Inventory tools and equipment.**

District has purchased bar code software and hardware to inventory and track the usage of District-owned tools and equipment. District is currently attaching the bar codes to equipment and doing the necessary data entry to support this system. Data entry is expected to be complete, and full utilization is expected by August 1, 2001.

##### **5. Evaluate practice of obtaining vehicles from CalTrans.**

District has begun a purchase program, disposing of surplus vehicles and replacing them with new vehicles. District no longer purchases vehicles from CalTrans. District is considering the purchase of newer rental returns for some vans and trucks.

The District further has begun an analysis of the purchase of more fuel-efficient vehicles, as part of its replacement program, for Maintenance as well as for the District's Technology division.

##### **6. Continue contracting for herbicide application and major tree trimming; consider contracting for play court and parking lot sweeping.**

Installation of a contracted fertilizer and herbicide application injection system is currently underway. The system will be operational for summer, 2001.

District will continue contracting for play court and parking lot sweeping, as well as continue to involve an arborist in determining the removal/repair needs. Large-scale tree removal and repair will continue to be contracted to licensed tree removal firms.

## **“Operations Recommendations”**

### **1. Develop and implement routine preventative maintenance programs.**

District, utilizing its own work force as well as contractors, has essentially removed the backlog of unfinished work orders.

The new Director, in consultation with the District's contracted construction manager and the District's Maintenance Supervisor, is conducting a site-by-site analysis and is specifying a routine preventative protocol for each site. Initial efforts will be in the areas of plumbing and electrical maintenance.

Reconstruction of sites, utilizing bond proceeds, will dictate the type of structural preventative maintenance in the near- and mid-term.

### **4. Conduct routine department meetings.**

This had been implemented by the District several months ago. Meetings are daily and provide the day's scheduled assignments, staff feedback opportunities, as well as training opportunities.

### **5. Development teamwork, training and cross training.**

Department has implemented teaming strategies for both Maintenance staff as well as for Grounds personnel. The new departmental Administrative Assistant is being cross-trained with the Facilities and Transportation Clerk on several key functions.

The entire Maintenance and Operations team has begun a series of trainings, in conjunction with the District's insurance carrier and the Marin County Office of Education. As indicated above, training in managing the new work order system for all staff, including school site staff, has been set.

### **6. Ensure evaluation of employee's performance.**

The new Director currently is being trained in the District's evaluation process. Goal-setting sessions with staff will occur for 2001-02 school year during the month of July, 2001. The District's classified staff is represented by the California School Employees Association (CSEA). Their leadership has been made aware of the District's serious intent to fully utilize the evaluation process under the new Director. CSEA has indicated it will support an equitable and properly-implemented evaluation system.

**PART TWO: NOT IMPLEMENTED, BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE  
(FROM ORIGINAL FCMAT REPORT):**

**“Operations Recommendations”**

2. Develop and request proposals for new and updated alarm system program.

Fire and emergency alarm systems will be completely upgraded during bond-measure and state-funded renovations at all sites. It is expected that all schools will be upgraded from current systems to newest technology systems within five years.

District has installed, and is currently testing, a state-of-the-art surveillance system. This system, designed to protect student safety and District property, is being tested at San Rafael High School. If tests are successful, the system will be placed at Terra Linda High School and potentially Davidson Middle School within the next twelve months.

3. Review with (MOT) the process and procedure concerning after-school and weekend facility use by the community:

- guarantee proper and adequate notice of facility use;

District has rewritten facility use protocols and implementation language.

3. Review with (MOT) the process and procedure concerning after-school and weekend facility use by the community:

- guarantee appropriate custodial supervision;

The difficulty of retaining high-quality custodial substitutes, coupled with the difficulty of retaining Facilities Attendants, has left facilities unattended in the past. The District has moved to remedy this by hiring contract services custodians where necessary, and/or offered overtime opportunities to its staff.

District has implemented a procedure for the community-based renter organizations to comment in writing as to the quality of services tendered by the District representative.

3. Review with (MOT) the process and procedure concerning after-school and weekend facility use by the community:

- guarantee fees are consistent with costs;

Although such costs were analyzed during the 1999-2000 school year, and adjustments made at that time, the District intends to re-consider its fee structure analysis once the new Assistant Superintendent for Administration joins with the new Director of Maintenance for a thorough

market and cost analysis. District expects to have those analyses to the Superintendent and Board by mid-October, 2001.

3. Review with (MOT) the process and procedure concerning after-school and weekend facility use by the community:

- guarantee tracking and reporting of "usage" and "fee" payments;

District has implemented new, additional accounting and depositing safeguards relative to facility use payments. District will carefully consider a revamping of the position which currently tracks facilities and payments, in discussions with its bargaining unit, and after consultation with new management. The expected date of implementation is October 15, 2001.

3. Review with (MOT) the process and procedure concerning after-school and weekend facility use by the community:

- guarantee annual review and assessment of facilities use and effects of facilities;

District will implement an annual review, starting July 1, 2001. The results of the year-long study will be presented to the Superintendent and Board of Trustees annually at an August Board meeting.

PART THREE: NOT IMPLEMENTED; REQUIRE FURTHER ANALYSIS (FROM ORIGINAL FCMAT REPORT):

**"Organization and Staffing"**

1. Restructure MOT to reflect:

- designation of three lead positions (Maintenance, Operations, Grounds);

District currently maintains a Grounds Lead position; the Maintenance Lead position has recently been redesignated as "Maintenance Supervisor." As the Assistant Superintendent/Administration position has recently become vacant, and since the Director of Maintenance and Operations position has just recently been filled, the District has temporarily reserved a final decision on creation of an Operations Supervisor position. This would be part of a large departmental reorganization which would impact the current Facilities and Transportation position. This also has negotiations implications.

The projected timeframe to complete this reorganization is September 1, 2001.

1. Restructure MOT to reflect:

- designation of journeymen-level trade positions within the maintenance staff;

This has been negotiated and funded.

1. Restructure MOT to reflect:

- addition of three Grounds positions:

This is a significant fiscal matter for the District. Employee costs coupled with additional equipment, vehicles and supplies, will far exceed \$100,000 annually. Contrary to the Grand Jury's recommendation, school bond funds are not legal sources of funding for these positions. As the District prepares its 2002 Fiscal Year budget, consideration is being given to incrementally increase staffing in Grounds. The final adopted budget will not be available until after October 1, 2001.

1. Restructure MOT to reflect:

- assignment of two custodians (one day time, one evening) to each elementary school;

District respectfully needs further analysis in these areas prior to being able to finalize its position on this recommendation:

- (a) ability to pay;
- (b) implications of staffing levels needed when comparing building load factors and square footages with the California School Business Officials (CASBO) matrix of recommended custodial staffing levels;
- (c) analysis of administration's draft of alternate staff utilization models, including the creation of cleaning teams, created from the current staffing levels;
- (d) impacts of any changes in staffing or utilization on the bargained labor agreement with the recognized bargaining unit (CSEA).

The new Director of Maintenance and Operations, assisted by the District's Construction Manager and Human Resources Director, will be doing an analysis of the most cost-effective manner of implementing custodial coverage changes and make recommendations by September 1, 2001.

1. Restructure MOT to reflect:

- reallocation of assistant director (MOT) and mechanic positions:

The Assistant Director position has been redesignated as "Maintenance Supervisor." It is a management level position. The use of the term "Mechanic position" referenced in the report is confusing. Most of the employees in the department are "Maintenance Mechanics." The District

has diligently advertised for Journey level positions. Filling these positions will have an impact on the number of Maintenance Mechanics required in the future.

4. Outsource vehicle maintenance and repair to city or county vendors.

Addition of new vehicles under warranty and disposal of several older vehicles have greatly reduced the need for vehicle maintenance. Useful older vehicles are now on preventative maintenance schedules with services secured from private vendors. Gasoline continues to be purchased under a cooperative purchasing agreement with the County of Marin.

The new Director will investigate a cooperative agreement with the County and City prior to September 15, 2001 regarding vehicle maintenance.

**PART FOUR: GRAND JURY IMPLEMENTED RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. The District has created an additional 1.0 FTE custodial position (K – 5) within the current Fiscal Year. As indicated in the District's responses to the FCMAT report, it will seek to best utilize a combination of reallocation of staffing (Team Cleaning) and an incremental increase in custodial FTE's to address the issues raised in both the FCMAT and the Grand Jury Reports within the 2002 fiscal year.
3. District has filled the second management position within the Maintenance Department, although as noted above, it has been designated as Maintenance Supervisor.

**PART FIVE: GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS NOT YET IMPLEMENTED:**

2. District intends to incrementally add to Grounds positions beginning with Fiscal Year 2002, dependent on funding. District strongly disagrees that it may legally use Bond proceeds as a funding source.

**SUMMARY:**

The District believes, as noted in the Grand Jury's findings (SUMMARY), that it has successfully met or exceeded implementation of the bulk of the FCMAT findings. Where findings and recommendations have not been implemented in full, processes have been put in place which should render a deliberate and considered set of alternatives.

Regarding the additional custodial staffing called for in the Grand Jury report, District is proactively considering alternative methods of deploying custodians as part of trained, well-

equipped and supported cleaning teams. Funding for additional staffing is being pursued as part of the current budget development process. One likely outcome is the District's adoption of elements of both approaches—alternative deployment and the incremental addition of staff based upon the CASBO (or variant) staffing formula.

Funding for Grounds personnel for the Elementary District is likewise under consideration as part of the budget development process for Fiscal Year 2002. Again, the District will attempt to increase staffing incrementally as it can financially afford to do so. As stated earlier, no funding for these additional positions may come from the recent voter-approved facilities bonds. Trainings for site administrators, Maintenance, Grounds and custodial staff have begun anew. All MOT staff, including custodians, attended a safety training on April 17, 2001. Site administrators and designated responsible staff will attend a work-order tracking system training on June 20, 2001. MOT staff will attend as well. All administrators will attend an in-service on proper evaluation procedures and techniques on or about August 16, 2001. Additional field support to custodians and site administrators will be forthcoming from the new management within the Maintenance department during the 2001-2002 school year. The District appreciates the interest shown by the Grand Jury in its efforts to restore quality work by, and public confidence in, its Maintenance, Operations and Transportation functions. No findings of the Grand Jury were found to be "not warranted" or "not reasonable."

HOME/COUNTY/GRJRYRESPONSEMETS



SAN RAFAEL CITY SCHOOLS -- **Human Resources Department**  
**Dr. Jeff Blackwell, Executive Director**

September 4, 2001

TO: Marin Civil Grand Jury  
FROM: San Rafael City Schools  
RE: Updated Revisions to June 14, 2001 District Response

**Overview:**

Two years ago, the District sought the assistance of the Fiscal Crisis Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) to review and make recommendations regarding staffing and practices of its Maintenance and Operations Department (M & O). Additionally, the Marin Civil Grand Jury reviewed for itself several of the findings and recommendations of FCMAT, as well as looked into especially the staffing structure in the department. A Draft of a response to the Civil Grand Jury's recommendations was prepared by staff, dated June 14, 2001. Today, it was made known to the District that during the transition of the retiring Superintendent to the new Superintendent, the Draft response was not formalized and submitted to the Grand Jury. At the direction of the new Superintendent, Dr. Laura Alvarenga, the Grand Jury has been sent today a copy of the Draft in its original form. Staff was then directed to inform the Grand Jury of changes that have occurred since the June 14, 2001 Draft was written.

This is the District's follow-up to the June 14 report.

**Changes and Updates Since the June 14, 2001 Draft District Response:**

The District reasserts its position that the Elementary Schools (including Bahia Vista) receive additional custodial time weekly beyond that provided by the Head Custodian at each site.

The District has now hired these Management positions: Director of Maintenance and Assistant Director. As of August 31, 2001, the position of Maintenance Supervisor has been also reinstated. (The previous Maintenance Supervisor was promoted to the reopened Assistant position; the new Supervisor will be relocating to Marin from a similar position in North Carolina, and will start October 1, 2001.)

Regarding the on-line work-order tracking, appropriate trainings of Maintenance and school site personnel have been completed and the system is currently being utilized.

The District has begun implementation of the bar code system to inventory its tools and hardware.

As stated in the June 14, 2002 Draft, District no longer purchases vehicles from CalTrans. It is in the process of purchasing new vehicles from vendors as well as nearly-new vehicles from another government entity (in discussion at this time). An announcement of a cooperative agreement regarding the purchase of nearly-new vehicles is anticipated by October 1, 2001. District has declared, and continues to declare, older CalTrans vehicles as surplus, and is going forward with an aggressive program to replace them as funds are identified to do so.

The District has implemented an Integrated Pest Management system which meets or exceeds all recent changes in the law regarding the application of pesticides at school sites. All parents in the District, as well as school site neighbors, have been sent copies of the new policies and practices. Parents, staff or neighbors wishing to be alerted in advance of any application have a phone number to call to be placed on the advance notice mailing list.

With the start of the school year, and with the major renovation construction that occurred over the summer, work order requests have increased in volume. The requests are being handled on a priority basis recently implemented by the new Director, and the District is currently well ahead of the past several years in terms of responsiveness to the requests.

The Director is in the process of firmly establishing an aggressive preventative maintenance program. Assisting with this project is the Assistant Director, who will in turn be helped in the implementation of the program by the new Supervisor, and the two new Journey Level positions hired by the District (Carpenter, Plumber).

District trainings, and cross trainings, have begun and will continue, as described in the previous Draft.

The new Director and his Assistant will be implementing, with the Human Resources Office, a thorough and careful goal-setting and performance program for M & O staff throughout the 2001 - 2002 school year. The Union (California School Employees Association) continues to support a thorough and comprehensive evaluative process.

Fire and emergency alarm systems are being updated as a part of the renovation process. Where warranted, the District is upgrading systems in advance of the reconstruction schedule, wherever safety appears to be an issue.

The District has not only rewritten facility use and protocols, it is currently in negotiations with its Union (CSEA) to revamp the Position Description and duties of the Facilities Supervisor. It is being proposed to increase this to a full time position, requiring accounting as part of the job qualifications.

The District continues to add both permanent and on-call custodial staff members. Part of the rationale for doing so relates to an increased custodial presence at non-school events which occur on District property. The District is in the process of adding up to twenty substitute Custodians through contracted cleaning services.

A new fee structure was in development prior to the departure of the former Assistant Superintendent. The District is in the process of recruiting a replacement, who will assume the responsibility of finalizing that research. The original timeline of October 1, 2001 in all probability will have to be delayed thirty days.

Regarding the Recommendation to designate three lead positions within the Department, the District has now reinstated a Lead-level position for Maintenance (Maintenance Supervisor), and has continued its Lead Grounds position. The Assistant Director currently supervises several of the duties associated with the Operations functions, and the District does not see the creation of another Lead position as fiscally possible at this time.

Regarding the Grounds Maintainer function, the District has increased staffing to four full-time positions. This is the largest staff in this department in over a decade.

The District will continue to evaluate the assignment of two Custodians to each Elementary site from a fiscal standpoint. It will also evaluate the efficacy of utilizing existing staff members in Team Cleaning, which may not necessitate the addition of significant staff positions. Because of the hiring, then loss of a Director in late spring, and the subsequent hiring of a new Director in July, the original timeline for making these recommendations to the Superintendent will have to be pushed beyond the original target of September 1, 2001.

To reiterate from page one, above, staffing in the Department within the past six months has seen the District hire a new Director, promote the previous Supervisor to Assistant Director, and re-hire a Maintenance Lead position (to relocate to San Rafael October 1, 2001). The District has now hired two Journey positions, has staffed four Grounds positions, and has added a new Maintenance Mechanic. Another Mechanic will be added pending suitable replacement for his current position. (This is a promotional opportunity for a current Head Custodian.) This is the highest level of staffing in this Department in over a decade.

Vehicle maintenance, reduced due to the upgraded fleet, has been out-sourced to both private and public vendors.

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**CONCLUSION:**

As noted in the June 14, 2001 Draft Report, the District feels it has seriously addressed the findings and recommendations of its own internal study regarding Maintenance and Operations, as well as addressing the recommendations of the FCMAT Team and the Civil Grand Jury. The District appreciates the assistance and thoughtful findings and recommendations of the Civil Grand Jury, and stands ready to address any additional questions that may arise during this Grand jury session.



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September 4, 2001

Marin County Civil Grand Jury  
3501 Civic Center Drive, Suite 303  
San Rafael, CA 94903

RE: Response from San Rafael City Schools to Grand Jury Report

To Whom It May Concern:

I am forwarding to you the attached document which was prepared in May or June of this year as a response to the Report entitled "San Rafael Schools' Maintenance, Operations and Transportation Department, Year 2000-2001.

Due to recent administrative changes at our District Office, this response inadvertently was not mailed.

It has been brought to my attention that since this response was written, a number of changes have occurred. Please note that I am reviewing this document with staff and will furnish you with an update by this Friday, September 7<sup>th</sup>, which will reflect any changes since the end of last school year.

Sincerely,

Laura D. Alvarenga, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

Encl.: SRCS Response to Grand Jury Report, June 14, 2001

COUNTY/GRJURY/METSRSP0904

**A PRESTIGIOUS SCHOOL DISTRICT**



**SAN RAFAEL CITY SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE**

310 Nova Albion Way, San Rafael, CA 94903

(415) 492-3233 FAX (415) 492-3245

October 23, 2001

The Honorable Lowell Smith, Foreperson  
Marin County Civil Grand Jury  
3501 Civic Center Drive, Room 303  
San Rafael, CA 94903

Dear Foreperson Smith:

I am in receipt of your letter of September 24, 2001 regarding the June 14, 2001 and September 4, 2001 responses from our District. In the matter of our Maintenance and Operations Department, it is the intent of the District both to fully inform the Grand Jury of our actions relevant to its Findings and Recommendations, and to be in full compliance with all legal provisions regarding proper responses and notices.

To that end, as President of the San Rafael City Schools Board of Trustees, I assure the Grand Jury that we are aware of the responses filed on our behalf by District administration. Further, this is to certify that Trustees both agree with the content of these responses, and that we will actively monitor the continued implementation of our District's responses.

Please contact me again should there be any further way in which I, or the Trustees as a whole, can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Colleen Ferguson, President  
Board of Education  
San Rafael City Schools

cc: Dr. Laura D. Alvarenga, Superintendent  
Members, SRCS Board of Education

COUNTY/GRJURY/METSRSPCF1023

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