

# SHORELINE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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April 11, 2016

The Honorable Kelly V. Simmons  
Presiding Judge  
Marin County Superior Court  
P.O. Box 4988  
San Rafael, CA 94913-4900

John Mann, Foreperson  
Marin County Civil Grand Jury  
3501 Civic Center Drive, Room #275  
San Rafael, CA 94903

Dear Judge Simmons and Mr. Mann,

Attached to this letter are the requested responses from the Shoreline Unified District School District to the Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report regarding: **Head Injuries and Concussions: Are our High Schools Keeping Our Children Safe?**

Thank you for investigating this important issue to our families. Keeping students safe is always our first concern.

We look forward to working together with other high schools throughout Marin County and the Marin County Office of Education in a coordinated effort to address this challenging issue.

Sincerely,

Jill Manning-Sartori,  
SUSD Board President

  
Nancy Neu, Superintendent

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT

Report Title: *Head Injuries and Concussions: Are Our Schools Keeping Our Kids Safe?*

Report Date: February 19, 2016

Agenda Date: April 21, 2016

Response by: Nancy Neu Title: Superintendent

FINDINGS

- I (we) agree with the findings numbered: F1 - F4, F7
- I (we) disagree *partially* with the findings numbered: F5 - F6
- I (we) disagree *wholly* with the findings numbered: \_\_\_\_\_

(Attach a statement specifying any portions of the findings that are disputed; include an explanation of the reasons therefor.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered R1 - R7 have been implemented.  
(Attach a summary describing the implemented actions.)
- Recommendations numbered R8 - R9 have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.  
(Attach a timeframe for the implementation.)
- Recommendations numbered \_\_\_\_\_ require further analysis.  
(Attach an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.)
- Recommendations numbered \_\_\_\_\_ will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.  
(Attach an explanation.)

Date: 4-21-16 Signed: Nancy Neu

Number of pages attached 4

## Responses to the 2015-2016 Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report

- F1. Neurocognitive baseline testing provides a record of cognitive functioning in student-athletes prior to their participation in sports. Re-testing the student after a suspected head injury is a valuable tool in helping medical professionals evaluate if a student has recovered.

Response: Agree

- F2. Marin County high schools are using baseline testing to varying degrees and are often not retesting.

Response: Agree

At Tomales High School, in the Shoreline Unified School District, we are using baseline testing of all our athletes and cheerleaders and retesting if there is an injury.

- F3. The costs of neurocognitive testing for high school athletes is currently funded in various ways, including booster clubs and other outside sources.

Response: Agree

In the Shoreline Unified School District, neurocognitive testing is funded currently through donations received from the Marin Athletic Foundation.

- F4. Certified Athletic Trainers, as medically-trained individuals, provide a necessary resource for protecting the health and safety of student athletes.

Response: Agree

At Shoreline Unified District, we recognize the importance of having medically trained support for our student athletics to promote their health and safety, and to prevent injury and reduce its effects. We employ a Certified Athletic Trainer for ten hours a week; in addition, our Athletic Director and coaches are trained to adhere to practices established by the CIF Return to Play Protocol (law in January 2015).

- F5. Many schools do not have a Return-to-Learn Protocol in place for head injuries. Various systems for reporting head injuries to relevant high school staff are presently used in Marin high schools.

Response: Partially Disagree

Shoreline has implemented a Return-to-Learn Protocol for head injuries; we are in the process of refining that implementation.

- F6. Student-athletes and their parents do not receive adequate education in recognizing concussion and the importance of prompt reporting of symptoms.

Response: Partially Disagree

Our athletic registration process, available in both English and Spanish, includes a concussion information policy which parents must review and sign. In addition, our Athletic Director reviews this information with athletes and their parents at the beginning of each sport season. This policy includes a link to the CDC which offers additional information on injuries and concussions. Furthermore, when an athlete is injured and then retested, the CAT or AD reviews the results of the retest with the athlete and their parents.

- F7. Data regarding head injuries sustained by high school student-athletes in Marin County high schools is not currently being maintained in a central database.

Response: Agree

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. Each district should require mandatory annual neurocognitive testing of all high school athletes and mandatory re-testing post-injury.

Response: Agree

At Tomales High School, in the Shoreline Unified School District, all student athletes and cheerleaders are given mandatory neurocognitive testing and mandatory re-testing if there has been an injury.

- R2. A certified athletic trainer should administer and interpret all tests.

Response: Agree

At Tomales High School, the athletic trainer administers all mandatory neurocognitive testing and necessary re-testing. This is completed during the ten hours the trainer has each week; however, we would like to increase funding for the Athletic Trainer to further support athletes. We are exploring options with community partners and booster groups to support this position.

R3. A certified athletic trainer should attend high-risk high school sporting events.

Response: Agree

At Tomales High School, in the Shoreline Unified School District, the funding is not available to support a certified athletic trainer at all high-risk sporting events. An EMT does attend all local football games to ensure student safety. Our coaches and Athletic Director are trained to adhere to the guidelines outlined in the CIF Return-to-Play protocols. There are times when two or more sporting events take place at the same time.

R4. Each district should add the cost of neurocognitive testing to its annual budget.

Response: Agree

Currently we are funding this testing through local donations. Our district values and recognizes the importance of such testing and is committed to exploring alternative means of funding should the present funding source change. We will continue to develop our community health partnerships for alternative ways to provide this resource.

R5. Each district should hire a certified athletic trainer for each of its high schools.

Response: Agree

Shoreline Unified School District employs a certified athletic trainer at Tomales High School for ten hours a week. We are currently looking for partnerships to increase funding to expand this position for the 2016-17 school year.

R6. Each district should adopt a protocol for reporting a head injury so that all relevant persons are informed of a student's head injury and can work together as a team to ensure full recovery in the classroom and on the field.

Response: Agree

Our district's protocol for reporting head injury is a process. The certified athletic trainer (CAT) communicates with medical doctor and parents in order for the athlete to return to play. The CAT would then relay the information to the Athletic Director if the athlete could "return to learn." The Athletic Director communicates with the coaches and teachers.

- R7. Each school should adopt Return-to-Play and Return-to-Learn Protocols for all athletes.

Response: Agree

Tomales High School is in the process of training staff and students in the Return to Learn protocols. We have implemented the Return to Play protocols as outlined in the CIF guidelines.

- R8. Mandatory concussion education for student-athletes such as the Barrow Brainbook, the HEADS UP concussion training or some other equivalent education should be adopted by each school district. No student-athlete should begin participation before completing this education.

Response: Agree

Shoreline is currently researching the most appropriate educational program to meet the needs of our student athletes. Such education is necessary, but we have not yet adopted a curriculum that best supports our students. We hope to pilot materials next year for adoption in the 2017-18 school year.

- R9. The Marin County Office of Education should collect head injury data and compile the data in a centralized database. Data should include date of injury, sport, type of injury, diagnosis, recovery information and other critical details. The data should be reported to MCAL and CIF for analysis and summary and the results published for the public annually while keeping all names of students confidential.

Response: Agree

Shoreline Unified School District does collect data on student injuries. There would be benefit to have countywide statistics on such injuries. However to be of benefit, the data would have to be consistent from one site to another.