



**Response to the 2015-2016 Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report
*Marin Public Schools Fail to Beat Bullies***

Kentfield School District

The Honorable Kelly V. Simmons Marin County Superior Court P.O. Box 4988 San Rafael, CA 94913-4988	John Mann, Foreperson Marin County Civil Grand Jury 3501 Civic Center Dr., Room 275 San Rafael, CA 94903
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REPORT TITLE: Marin Public Schools Fail to Beat Bullies

REPORT DATE: June 2, 2016

AGENDA DATE: August 23, 2016

RESPONSE BY: Liz Schott

TITLE: Superintendent

FINDINGS

F1: Bullying is a problem in Marin middle and high schools. Marin ranked above the State average overall in incidents for the 2011-13 school years and for two of the three grade levels surveyed in CHKS.

Response: Agree

F2: Marin County schools do not fully comply with California anti-bullying law.

Response: Disagree. We cannot speak for schools other than those in the Kentfield School District. Our schools, however, do fully comply with California anti-bullying law.

F3: Most schools do not have a direct link on their website home page to their anti-bullying policies and procedures.

Response: Disagree: We cannot speak for schools other than those in the Kentfield School District. We do, however, have a direct link on our website home page to our anti-bullying policies and procedures.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1: Each school in the district should review its policies and procedures to ensure full compliance with the requirements of Seth's law.

Response: The district has reviewed its anti-bullying policies and procedures and made corrections and additions as necessary.

R2: Each school in the district should review its policies and procedures to ensure that complainants are protected from retaliation and that their identities remain confidential as appropriate.

Response: The district has reviewed its anti-bullying policies and procedures regarding confidentiality and protection from retaliation and is satisfied that they are comprehensive and are being implemented with fidelity. Our policies and procedures are reviewed annually. Our schools use a confidential system for students and parents to report incidents of bullying. Middle school students may utilize the school counselors' confidential requests slips located in the main office to let school staff know about incidents. Counselors bring these issues to school administrators for investigation. Students and parents may also use our school's official complaint report form.

R3: Each school in the district should adequately publicize its anti-bullying policies and procedures through its website, including a direct link on the website's home page to the information (not simply linking to a lengthy student handbook, but directly to the anti-bullying policy and procedures themselves).

Response: There is a direct link on the website's home page to our anti-bullying policies and procedures. In addition, the location of this information will be highlighted annually in one of the principal's weekly newsletters early in the year. Anti-bullying policies can also be found on the district mobile app under "resources."

R4: All procedures and forms for filing a bullying complaint, including an anonymous form, should be available on the school's website.

Response: A form that can be filled out and submitted electronically from our website is available on the home page and each school's web page along with our anti-bullying policies and procedures. The district mobile app allows parents and students to report bullying incidents anonymously directly from their smartphone.

R5: Each school in the district's website should provide the option to complete and submit bullying complaints online.

Response: See Response for R4.

R6: Each school in the district should review its student and parent education programs to ensure they are relevant and current. Schools should consider using the *No Bully Solution Team* process that has been reported to be highly successful, or another equivalent program.

Response: In September 2008, Kent Middle School entered into a partnership with *NoBully.org* to run an anti-bullying initiative. Since then, our "*No Bully Committee*" made up of parents, teachers, staff, students and administration, has worked diligently to address student bullying and harassment. We realize we need to teach students the character strengths and relational skills that will replace aggressive, impulsive or unempathic behaviors that students typically employed in the past. We provide *Solution Teams* to students in need, we are partners with Common Sense Media and all teachers, counselors and administrators meet weekly with small groups of students providing lessons in Advisory classes. In the fall, all Kent students participate in "Be the Change Week" in which we explore and celebrate differences in all student groups; all sixth graders take a six week Life Skills class, and this year, almost all seventh grade students will participate in a service learning initiative. This is just a sampling of all that we do to create a culture of caring and outreach at Kent Middle School.

Bacich School embraces the *Six Pillars of Character* program, which focuses on ethical values. This program supports a positive learning environment and a culture of kindness and a safe environment for the Kindergarten through Fourth Grade students to learn and grow.

Responsive Classroom meetings, monthly assemblies and book clubs focused on character, Bacich Character Cards, community services projects and the *Kimochis* program support and promote tolerance, patience and empathy within the school. Additionally, the school counselor and school administration are available to all students, as they learn and navigate their early social and emotional years of elementary school.

Sincerely,



Juli Kauffman
President, Board of Trustees



Liz Schott
Superintendent