

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 Drive, Room #275  
San Rafael, CA 94903

August 10, 2016

Dear Judge Simmons and Mr. Mann:

Attached to this letter is the response from the Mill Valley School District (MVSD) to the findings and recommendations of the Marin County Civil Grand Jury's report "Marin Public Schools Fail to Beat Bullies". The District read your through report and the issues related to the healthy well being and social emotional relationships of the students in the MVSD.

As stated in the Grand Jury's report, the Mill Valley School District is aware of and has done much to address the issues of bullying and harassment. Our District has partnered with community and parent partners to provide resources, trainings, and workshops for our students, staff, and parents. The Mill Valley School District understands that this issue is very important for all of our students so that they feel safe and comfortable in schools and beyond.

The attached responses will reflect the commitment that the district has to provide schools that are safe, compassionate, and open to all students. Though the Grand Jury Report focused on the issues at the middle and high school level, the MVSD also has programs, and trainings that begin when the students enter school at TK and goes through 8<sup>th</sup> grade when the students leave for high school. The District just received the 2015-16 California Healthy Kids Survey and 89% of our 7<sup>th</sup> graders felt very safe or safe at school. The survey also looked at reasons for Harassment and over 92% of the students answered that they were not harassed or bullied due to race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, LGBTQ, physical or mental disability. We do acknowledge that if one student does not feel safe, then the District still has work to do.

We will report back to the Marin County Civil Grand Jury on additional steps that have been implemented or planned in December 2016. Again, than you for being our partner in the supporting the safety of the students in our schools.

Sincerely,



Robin Moses  
Board President



Paul Johnson  
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: Partially disagree. Assuming the factual statements set forth in the Grand Jury's report are accurate, there may be some schools that need to update their policies in accordance with the law.

When Seth's law was authorized by the State the Mill Valley School District revised our board policies to be in compliance with the law. All of our schools prioritize student safety and are trained to respond to bullying incidents in accordance with the law and the developmental level of the student.

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

Response: Agree

## **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 recommendation has been implemented related to the Mill Valley School District operated programs and policies. Internal staff and CSBA review has verified compliance with the law.

When Seth's law was implemented, the Administrators in MVSD met to discuss the law and revise the policy to meet the needs of the students in the District. The District understands the importance of reviewing policies and making sure that everyone who works with our students understands the district policies to stay in compliance.

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 recommendation has been implemented related to the Mill Valley School District operated programs and policies. Internal staff and CSBA review has verified compliance with the law.

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: The Mill Valley School District has now publicized the District's policy and procedures with a direct link on its home page as well as on the Mill Valley Middle School's site.

This Summer the Middle School has been revising its student handbook including the bullying and harassment section and it will be available on the MS website once school is in session.

The Mill Valley School District is revising at the Uniform Complaint Procedures (AR 1312.3) which will go to the Board on September 13, 2016 for approval and then be placed on The District website.

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

Response: The recommendation has been partially implemented by the Mill Valley School District.

There is a current bullying complaint form available on each school's website but will be revised when AR 1312.3 is approved by the Mill Valley School Board. This will include the ability to file an anonymous complaint online.

The Mill Valley Middle School previously had an anonymous tip line for students, staff and parents. This was not found to be useful, but school will re-look into this process for making anonymous complaints.

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

Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented.

The Mill Valley School District has posted the bullying forms online as PDFs with the ability to be printed to fill out.

The District will develop a fillable option of the bullying forms so that they can be submitted online and this will be available during the 2016-17 school year.

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: The recommendation has been implemented by the Mill Valley School District.

The Mill Valley School District has brought the No Bully program in the past during professional development days to work with all staff. The District has publicized trainings offered countywide by the Marin County Office of Education in collaboration with community partner organization, agencies and individuals to prevent and respond to bullying and harassment.

The Mill Valley School District has partnered with our Middle School and Special Education (ITAV) PTA's to provide trainings, lectures, and workshops to parents and staff in the area of bullying and harassment.

District workshops, and trainings have included:

Restorative Justice

Beyond Difference

No Bully

A Touch of Understanding

Cyber-bullying

LGDTQ training for MS teachers

San Diego Law Enforcement Partnership

The Mill Valley School District understands that the emotional wellbeing of our students is an important aspect of their education and the time spent in the Mill Valley School District. The District also addresses other issues in the area of social-emotional regulation and has increased counseling services in all of our schools to ensure the safety of our students.