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Superintendent: Dr. Rick Bagley Board of Trustees: Annelise Bauer - Anne Capron - Mark Reagan - Wesley Pratt - Amy Stock

August 10, 2016

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

Dear Judge Simmons and Mr. Mann:

Attached to this letter is the response from the Ross Valley School District to the findings and recommendations of the Marin County Civil Grand Jury's report ***Marin Public Schools Fail to Beat Bullies***. Similar to the work of the Grand Jury on head injuries, this report also raises an issue related to the health and safety of ALL students in our schools. As with prior reports of Grand Juries over the years, these investigations have resulted in improvements in policies and procedures in many of our school districts.

Consistent with the Grand Jury's report, our district is aware of and has done much to address the issue of bullying. This issue is one that impacts the entire community and, as such, any action should involve community partners. The Ross Valley School District stands ready to respond in such a manner to ensure that all students feel safe and comfortable in schools and beyond.

The attached responses will reflect that our highest priority is for ALL students to feel safe at school. The good news is that a vast majority of students, according to the **2013-2014 California Health Kids Survey: Marin County Secondary Main Report** reported feeling "safe or very safe" at school. It is our hope that the 2015-2016 report that is forthcoming will show an even higher level. We also acknowledge that if one student does not feel safe, that is one too many.

At the Grand Jury's written request, we will be happy to report back on additional steps implemented or planned in December, 2016. Again, thank you for being our partner in supporting the safety of the students in our schools.

Sincerely,

Anne Capron
President, Board of Trustees

Rick E. Bagley, Ed.D.
District 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.

However, we can confirm that the schools within the Ross Valley School District are in compliance. All of our schools prioritize student safety and are trained to respond to bullying incidents in accordance with the law.

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 is currently under investigation by the District and each of our schools to determine the extent to which each school is in compliance. We anticipate this work will be complete, along with any necessary remedies needed, by December 31, 2016.

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 Ross Valley School District operated programs and policies. Internal staff and legal 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 recommendation requires further analysis and pending the Civil Grand Jury's written request, we will respond with our findings by December 31, 2016. In the meantime, the Ross Valley School District's policies and procedures can be found at <http://www.gamutonline.net/district/rossvalley/>.

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 requires further analysis and pending the Civil Grand Jury's written request, we will respond with our findings by December 31, 2016.

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

Response:

The recommendation requires further analysis and pending the Civil Grand Jury's written request, we will respond with our findings by December 31, 2016.

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 respondents. The Ross Valley School District publicized trainings offered countywide by the Marin County Office of Education in collaboration with community partner organizations, agencies and individuals including No Bully® to prevent and respond to bullying and harassment.

Partner agencies include:

- The Marin School/Law Enforcement Partnership
- Beyond Differences
- Center for Domestic Peace
- Youth Leadership Institute
- Dr. Dora Dome (an education law practitioner who annually provides professional development training in Marin regarding bullying and other equity related issues)
- Jeannette Prandi Children's Center
- Michael Pritchard (internationally known keynote and motivational speaker with an anti-bullying message focused on the social/emotional health of youth)
- Marin County Youth Court
- YMCA

The District publicizes and encourages staff participation in countywide professional development for educators. In addition, the District publicizes parent information and training workshops are held several times a year by community partners dealing with topics such as teen sexting, digital abuse, student mental health, online behavior, best practices for serving transgender students, Marin Teen Girl Conference and other issues related to the safety of our students.