

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT

Report Title: Marin Public Schools Fail to Beat Bullies

Report Date: June 2, 2016

Agenda Date: August 22, 2016

Response by: Dr. Daniel Zaich Title: Superintendent's Office

FINDINGS

- I (we) agree with the findings numbered: F1, F3
- I (we) disagree *partially* with the findings numbered: F2
- 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, R2, R3, R4, R6 have been implemented.
(Attach a summary describing the implemented actions.)
- Recommendations numbered _____ have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.
(Attach a timeframe for the implementation.)
- Recommendations numbered R5 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: 8/24/16 Signed: _____

Number of pages attached 3

August 23, 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:


Thank you and the Marin County Civil Grand Jury's for your hard work and efforts researching and providing this very important report -- ***Marin Public Schools Fail to Beat Bullies.***

Bullying prevention is of the highest priority to our Board, schools, and community. San Rafael City Schools is taking great strides addressing the issue of bullying. For San Rafael City Schools addressing bullying includes continued education and training for students and staff. Working closely with our community partners, San Rafael City Schools is actively engaging in prevention strategies to ensure that all students feel safe and comfortable in our schools and community.

You will find attached San Rafael City Schools response to the findings and recommendations of the Marin County Civil Grand Jury's report which was Board approved on August 22, 2016. San Rafael City Schools prioritizes any issues related to the health and safety of ALL students in our schools to the highest levels. Our responses will reflect this priority for ALL students to feel safe in our schools.

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

Sincerely,


Rachel Kertz, President
Board of Education


Michael Watenpaugh, Ed.D.
Superintendent

San Rafael City Schools Response
to the 2015-2016 Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report
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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. There may be some schools that need to update their policies in accordance with the law. However, we can confirm that San Rafael City Schools are in compliance at each of our school sites. Student safety is our top priority and our staff have received training to respond to bullying in accordance with Board Policies and state guidelines.

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

Response: Agree

Please note, San Rafael City Schools have added direct links on all school websites to 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: Agree

Requirements related to Seth's Law have been implemented in San Rafael City Schools programs. We have adopted policies based on the California School Boards Association (CSBA). Extensive legal review has verified compliance with the law. Additionally, we review with each school these policies/ procedures, including with students, families, and staff on an annual basis.

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: Agree

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San Rafael City Schools ensures that complainants remain confidential as outlined within our policies and procedures. Bullying prevention policies and procedures are reviewed both at our District Office and school sites.

- 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:

San Rafael City Schools' each have a button to directly publicize our anti-bullying policies and complaint procedures. These links include information on step-by-step guidelines and contact information.

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

Response:

San Rafael City Schools is in compliance with this recommendation.

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

Response:

Currently, each of our school site websites have information regarding bullying complaint procedures. San Rafael City Schools next steps to improve our procedures include researching and addressing security and confidentiality concerns with submitting online complaints electronically. Further research is required in order to better understand the legal and technical requirements with completing and submitting online complaints.

- 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 No Bully Solution Team process has been explored and used by San Rafael City Schools in past years. We have made progress towards bullying prevention

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by implementing a robust Restorative Practices program in combination with our Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS).

Additionally, we have several anti-bullying programs in partnership with Beyond Differences: 1) a prevention program centered around lunchtime titled, *No One Eats Alone*; 2) *Be Kind On-line* awareness program; and 3) we are initiating a new inclusion program entitled *Know your Classmate*. These are just a few of the strategies employed to create positive school cultures in San Rafael City Schools. Further, each school site also has specific examples of programs to eradicate bullying in our schools, such as *Capturing Kids Hearts*, and the ICAN program at our middle schools.

San Rafael City Schools also publicizes and encourages staff participation in countywide professional development for educators. In addition, we publicize parent information and training workshops several times a year. Topics include 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 of safety of our students.

Additionally, San Rafael City Schools students, parents, teachers, and staff participate in countywide bullying prevention activities and professional development by the Marin County Office of Education. Often these trainings are in collaboration with community partner organizations, agencies and individuals including No Bully^o to prevent and respond to bullying and harassment.

Partner agencies include:

- The Marin School/Law Enforcement Partnership
- Beyond Differences (*Superintendent Watenpugh – Board Chair)
- National Equity Project
- 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 Restorative Practices and After-School Training
- Canal Alliance Youth Support Programs