

SHORELINE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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January 20, 2020

The Honorable Judge Andrew Sweet
Marin County Superior Court
P.O. Box 4988
San Rafael, CA 94913-4988

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

Response to the Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report: *Reading, Writing, and Therapy: Mental Health Challenges in Our Schools*.

Dear Judge Sweet and Foreperson Dilworth:

The Shoreline Unified School District has received the Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report *Reading, Writing, and Therapy: Mental Health Challenges in Our Schools* dated October 23, 2020. The Grand Jury has requested a response to Findings 1-5 (F1-F5). Enclosed, please find a copy of the completed *Response Form* and a detailed summary of the Shoreline Unified School District's responses.

Thank you for your interest in and support our Marin County youth's current and ongoing mental health needs.

Sincerely,

Bob Raines, Superintendent
Shoreline Unified School District

Enclosures

Report Findings and Response

- F1:** Many mental health issues result from social and cultural factors that lie outside the schools but affect students' ability to learn and schools to teach. This is a complex problem that the community must help address.

Response Agree

Schools are only one element within a constellation of support necessary for a comprehensive approach to student wellness. The Shoreline Unified School District supports the community approach to mental health identified in the Marin County Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan.

- F2:** Strategy 6 of the Marin County Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan, which includes a promise of support by the county and designates the Marin Schools Wellness Collaborative with responsibility for leading its implementation, presents an especially appropriate opportunity for addressing mental health needs.

Response: Agree

The Marin County Schools Wellness Collaborative is well equipped to effectively support Strategy 6 of the Marin County Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan. The group's expertise, coupled with their shared knowledge and understanding of how school systems operate, will work to enhance student wellness across all of Marin County's schools. Representatives of the Shoreline Unified School District Mental Health Wellness Team regularly participate with the MC Schools Wellness Collaborative.

- F3:** To help provide therapeutic counselors at affordable costs, most districts need assistance from licensed therapists who have the time and skills to recruit, train, and supervise interns from local graduate school programs.

Response: Agree

The need for additional mental health support in schools is real and one that is even more heightened in the current COVID-19 environment. Utilizing mental health interns can be an effective strategy to bolster mental health staffing. Still, as noted in the report, the approach does come with additional responsibilities related to training and supervision. Additionally, interns' placement does not meet the ongoing staffing needs, as internships do not typically evolve into a permanent school district position. More solutions to this pervasive problem are necessary. For example, the Shoreline Unified School District currently partners with the Coastal Health Alliance in Point Reyes Station to provide additional mental health support. We are continually examining our existing support systems to determine where we can enhance services to reduce the number of students who require direct support from mental health professionals on an ongoing basis.

- F4:** Most districts need staffing help to identify, arrange, and maintain relationships with community mental health resources.

Response: Agree

While the Shoreline Unified School District staff could benefit from receiving assistance related to navigating the mental health system's resources and services available within the community, a dedicated team for this task alone would not meet this need efficiently. The provision of ongoing training and updates from public and private agencies, as needed, and direct collaboration for case management would be most beneficial to the Shoreline Unified School District students and families.

F5: The Grand Jury recognizes that the COVID-19 pandemic has severely strained resources at all levels of government. However, mental health concerns for students will remain. It is appropriate to expand teacher and staff training and parent education even while funding is sought for more costly programs.

Response: Agree

Now more than ever, the need for proactive and targeted training and education related to wellness is paramount. The Shoreline Unified School District believes that all students, families, and staff can benefit from education and training that focuses on proven, research-based strategies to support wellness and increase coping skills and resilience. Please find attached a listing of training and education opportunities available to the Shoreline Unified School District community during the 2020-2021 school year.