

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

REPORT TITLE: "Reading, Writing, and Therapy: Mental Health Challenges in Our Schools"
REPORT DATE: October 23, 2020
RESPONSE BY: County of Marin Board of Supervisors

GRAND JURY FINDINGS

- We **agree** with the findings numbered: **F1-2, F5**
- We disagree wholly or **partially** with the findings numbered: **F3-F4**

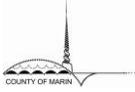
GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendation numbered **R1** has been implemented.

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Dennis Rodoni, President
Marin County Board of Supervisors



RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY FINDINGS

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

Response: Agree.

The causes of mental health and emotional difficulties are varied and complex. Emotional and mental health issues interfere in students' capacity to learn at school. The mental health needs of Marin students have been described as a "crisis" at this point. Students with private insurance have many options for mental health support, and students with Medi-Cal eligibility also have services available. But many lower income students do not have ready access to mental health support services. Community involvement and local stakeholder engagement to help address this gap is needed. Focused efforts to address and de-stigmatize mental health issues and seeking help remains a priority for County Health and Human Services (HHS).

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.

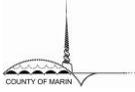
Strategy 6 of the [Marin County Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan](#) is an important resource in planning and implementation. The Marin Schools Wellness Collaborative is leading the implementation of key activities related to Strategy 6. As a partner in this effort, the Marin County Suicide Prevention Collaborative and Schools Team meets regularly. One current area of focus with these entities includes suicide prevention training and education across districts for students, educators, mental health providers and parents, as well as mental health screening and suicide risk assessment.

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: Partially Disagree.

The Finding is one of potentially several solutions to a complex problem. Additional policy options include contracting with local agencies that offer more affordable options for mental health services; increasing the level of training for school psychologists and counselors; partnering with Marin County HHS to better identify youth with Medi-Cal eligibility; or exploring other avenues to provide school-based mental health services, exploring wellness centers in schools, etc.

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



County of Marin Response to Grand Jury Report Findings and Recommendations
"Reading, Writing, and Therapy: Mental Health Challenges in Our Schools"
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Response: Partially Disagree.

One role of the school psychologist is to identify community mental health resources for students. Ongoing training regarding existing/new mental health resources for schools to consider would be a more viable way to meet this need.

F5. The Grand Jury recognizes that the COVID-19 pandemic has severely strained resources at all levels of government. However, the 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.

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Marin County Civil Grand Jury recommends the following:

R1. Health and Human Services and the Marin County Office of Education should direct the Marin Schools Wellness Collaborative to begin implementation of Strategy 6 of the Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan in the fall of 2020.

This recommendation has been implemented.

The Marin Schools Wellness Collaborative has begun implementation of Strategy 6 of the suicide prevention strategic plan, including the following actions:

- **Implementing evidence-based training/education across many districts for students.** The Collaborative is evaluating recommended training programs for mental health providers, educators and students for uniformed implementation in early 2021 across all districts.
- **Ensuring all districts have crisis response and postvention protocol in place.** Most districts have protocol in place and the Collaborative and Schools Team are working to address any/all gaps.
- **Evaluating suicide risk assessment and mental health screeners.** The Collaborative is sharing different tools to better understand common challenges and ways to best address those challenges, with the goal of standardizing these tools in 2021.
- **Supporting youth engagement through mini grants.** Mini grants were provided in 2019 and are being evaluated for 2021 for how they would best be used while students are not physically on school sites.
- **Developing Tier 1 programming.** The County is engaged in discussions concerning a SEL mindfulness curriculum proposal for all districts.