

BELLEVUE UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

TONY ROEHRICK, Ed.D.
DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

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GRAND JURY

September 19, 2007

SEP 21 2007

Jerel Bagger
Foreperson
2006-07 Sonoma County Grand Jury
P.O. Box 5109
Santa Rosa, CA 95402

RECEIVED

Dear Mr. Bagger:

Enclosed is the Bellevue Union School District's response to the Grand Jury's 2006-07 report "See Dick. See Jane. See Dick and Jane go to school. Are they Safe?" Our Board reviewed and approved the response at our September 18, 2007 regular meeting.

We appreciate this opportunity to communicate with the Grand Jury, and thus the community of Sonoma County, the practices of our District. Our Board and staff strongly believe our first responsibility is to ensure the safe well-being of our students. We support the work of the Grand Jury and have appreciated this opportunity to review our practices.

Thank you for your work on behalf of the citizens, especially the children, of Sonoma County and more specifically, those attending our district schools. Please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

Tony Roehrick, Ed.D.
Superintendent

September 18, 2007

**Bellevue Union School District Response to Grand Jury Report:
“See Dick. See Jane. See Dick and Jane go to school. Are they Safe?”**

Prepared by: Tony Roehrick, Ed.D., Superintendent.
Approved by the Board of Trustees on September 18, 2007

R1: Each public school district in Sonoma County should have at least one employee who is trained and authorized to access DOJ website within an official and specified schedule. This employee should fully understand the way in which information is to be communicated. Further in the absence of this employee, a suitable alternate person or system should be in place to responsibly retrieve valuable information as it is posted. This system should also cover notices from the DOJ sent via U.S. Mail.

The Bellevue Union School District agrees with the finding. The recommendation has been fully implemented. We maintain two such employees. These are our District Secretary and our Business Manager.

R4: School districts should consider changing their policies to require successful employee applicants to pay for their own fingerprinting and background responses from DOJ and FBI. There is at least \$65,000 in 06-07 school district budgets for fingerprinting. As costs are shifted to paid employees, districts could use savings to fund costs for volunteers.

The Bellevue Union School District partially disagrees with the finding. It is already difficult to find highly qualified employees in certain categories; we do not wish to make the application process more costly or cumbersome to potential applicants than it is already. Additionally, employment costs are negotiable conditions of employment (Public Employees Relations Board—PERB).

R5: School districts should amend their policies, if needed, to allow for volunteers names to be public information and readily available so that a greater scrutiny is provided.

The Bellevue Union School District feels this recommendation requires further analysis to determine what, exactly, the recommendation entails and to determine if there may be a Public Records Act issue. In any case, we would not be providing address or telephone information to the public. Our volunteers are the parents of current students, grandparents of current students, Volunteer Center volunteers, and AmeriCorps students (Volunteer Center volunteers and AmeriCorps students undergo fingerprinting and DOJ background checks prior to being assigned to schools.)

R6: Schools should routinely check out names of adult volunteers on Megan's Law website (a public posting of sexual predators) even if fingerprinting is scheduled, and always do so if no fingerprinting is scheduled for that volunteer.

The Bellevue Union School District agrees with this finding and will continue to direct principals and encourage teachers to check for the names of their volunteers on the website, whenever practical and always when they have any suspicion about a potential volunteer. Additionally, we encourage our parents to check the Megan's Law website.

R7: School districts should request criminal activity record from the Sonoma County Superior Courts Records Division on any adult wanting to volunteer with students. This service is available at no cost to a district.

The Bellevue Union School District partially disagrees with this finding. This recommendation seems somewhat impractical to implement with all volunteers and unnecessary as we have hundreds of parents volunteering in various capacities. Volunteers are supervised by district employees so for most volunteers, this recommendation would be unnecessary. We agree with and have implemented the recommendation for those chaperoning overnight field trips.

R8: School districts should, individually and collectively, request that the DOJ implement a system to confirm school district receipt of Notices of Subsequent Arrest. A system that would require the DOJ to follow up if no confirmation was received and would at least give school districts some assurance that information trusted to the U.S. Mail or electronic mail services is actually being received.

The Bellevue Union School District agrees with this finding and agrees to assist the County Superintendent, Dr. Wong, in writing such a letter to the DOJ on behalf of all districts. Currently, we believe we get notices of subsequent arrest. SCOE also provides us with subsequent arrest notices on substitute teachers that work in our district.

R9: School districts should request FBI responses on all classified employees and volunteers that they do a DOJ response regardless of the time they have lived in California. The relatively small fee of \$24 to get prior criminal activity from a national database seems justifiable, reasonable and the right action to take.

The Bellevue Union School District agrees to this finding and has already implemented the recommendation.

R10: School districts should require fingerprinting for all adults (paid and volunteer) involved in athletic programs, overnight field trips, off-campus field trips, and any school sponsored student activity that occurs outside of the normal school day or hours.

The Bellevue Union School District partially agrees with this finding and has fully implemented the recommendation for overnight trips, athletic coaches, AmeriCorps students, and all paid adults.

R11: School districts should implement provisions of Ed. Code Section 33193 and 45125.2 requiring that certain independent contractors and employees of contractors undergo fingerprinting and background checks.

The Bellevue Union School District agrees with this finding and has fully implemented this recommendation. We require contractors to confirm that their employees have undergone background checks and they are supervised by district employees while students are on campus.

R13: School districts should not allow new employees to begin work until all pre-employment requirements are met. Most specifically, this means all fingerprinting and criminal history responses that are required must have been completed and properly evaluated.

The Bellevue Union School District agrees to this finding and has fully implemented the recommendation.

R14: The Sheriff's Office should make available to all school districts information on how to access services available to them through the Sheriff's Office that would aid districts in determining if individuals should be approved to serve as volunteers in our schools and at school sponsored activities.

The Bellevue Union School District agrees to this finding and, if the Sheriff's Office agrees, would disseminate such information to all of my employees. (Our volunteers are parents or grandparents of current students, Volunteer Center volunteers, AmeriCorps students, and high school/college students on community service projects.)

R15: School districts should require all volunteers to sign an agreement that outlines behavior do's and don'ts and consequences if agreement terms are broken.

The Bellevue Union School District agrees to this finding. The recommendation has not yet been fully implemented. Currently, all parents receive the policy on volunteering within the Parent Annual Notification document that outlines expected behaviors and consequences. This recommendation is a good idea for all volunteers that we will implement this school year.