



# GRAVENSTEIN UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

**Linda J. LaMarre, Superintendent**  
3840 Twig Avenue  
Sebastopol, CA 95472  
707-823-7008 (v)  
707-823-2108 (f)  
Email: llamarre@grav.k12.ca.us

**Board of Trustees**  
Dennis Andersen  
Kay Crocker  
Tom Harriman  
Jim Horn  
Sandra Wickland

September 12, 2007

# GRAND JURY

SEP 27 2007

Presiding Judge Robert S. Boyd  
Sonoma County Superior Court  
600 Administration Drive, Room 107-J  
Santa Rosa CA 95403

# RECEIVED

## GRAVENSTEIN UNION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT'S RESPONSE TO THE SONOMA COUNTY 2007 GRAND JURY REPORT

**"See Dick. See Jane. See Dick and Jane go to school. Are they Safe?"**

**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 Gravenstein Union Elementary School District (GUSD) already implements this recommendation.

**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.**

Currently, the GUSD funds the costs of required background checks and pre-employment physicals as required for employees. We are planning to fingerprint volunteer coaches and volunteers chaperoning on overnight field trips.

Employment costs are negotiable conditions of employment. Employees are unlikely to voluntarily shoulder this proposed additional cost. It is difficult to find highly qualified employees in certain categories, and we do not wish to make the application process more costly or cumbersome to potential applicants.

**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 GUSD has available for public inspection the names of all volunteers who have checked into our school offices.

**R6: School 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 GUSD will encourage principals and teachers to check for the names of their volunteers on the website whenever they have any suspicion about a potential volunteer and, in other cases, when time permits. We also 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 GUSD plans to implement this recommendation for volunteer coaches and those chaperoning overnight field trips. However, we believe this recommendation is unnecessary and impractical for all volunteers. We have approximately 300 parents and grandparents volunteering in various capacities. Our volunteers are routinely supervised by district employees.

**R8: School districts should, individual 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 GUSD agrees to assist the County Superintendent 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 GUSD already has implemented the recommendation for classified employees. We are considering the recommendation for volunteer coaches and overnight chaperones.

**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 GUSD already fingerprints all employees, including contracted enrichment instructors, and plans to begin fingerprinting all volunteer coaches and overnight chaperones.

**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 GUSD believes it complies with Education Code section 45125.2. Section 33193 does not appear to be applicable.

**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 GUSD does not allow new employees to begin work until all pre-employment requirements are met.

**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.**

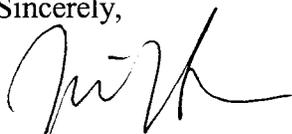
The Gravenstein Union School District agrees with this recommendation.

**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 GUSD will consider this recommendation.

Please contact me if you have questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,



Jim Horn

President, Board of Trustees, Gravenstein Union Elementary School District