



COTATI-ROHNERT PARK  
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

**GRAND JURY**

SEP 11 2007

**RECEIVED**

**Responses to the Sonoma County Grand Jury Final Report  
2006-2007**

**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 Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District had the system described in this recommendation in place since the Department of Justice introduced its website. Prior to the implementation of live scan service and electronic notification, the District had at least one employee responsible for sending employees for fingerprinting and receipt of notification via facsimile or U.S. Mail.

**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.**

Regular employees, both certificated and classified, pay for the cost of fingerprint clearances. The District pays for clearances for supplemental employees, such as yard supervisors and crossing guards, and substitute employees because of the lower wages they earn.

**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.**

All volunteers are required to sign in at the school office before they are permitted to enter the campus. Sign in logs are records maintained by the District in the conduct of its business, and as such, meet the definition of public records under the California Public Records Act. The logs would likely be subject to release if the District received a records request under the Act.

**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.**

School site administrators in the Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District have done this in the past when they have had concerns about an individual. District staff will continue to encourage this practice.

**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.**

This recommendation does not appear to be necessary given the procedures for volunteers in the Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District. Volunteers who are alone with children are fingerprinted through the Department of Justice. This includes chaperones on over-night field trips, volunteers who oversee tutorial centers or extra-curricular activities, and all athletic coaches.

**R8: School districts should, individually or 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 servers is actually being received.**

The school district receives subsequent arrest notices for any individual previously fingerprinted using live-scan. The District has no reason to believe the Department of Justice has failed to provide such notices at any time. If, however, the County Superintendent of Schools were to request the District cooperate in making such a request of the Department of Justice, we would do so.

**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 Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District will consider this 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 Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District requires Department of Justice clearances for all athletic coaches, paid and volunteer. All volunteers who supervise an extra-curricular activity without a District employee present are required to be fingerprinted. Both of these practices have been in place since at least 1995. Effective

spring 2007, the District requires chaperones on over-night field trips to be fingerprinted. The District's field trip policy states that if a parent cannot transport more than one child in his/her vehicle for a field trip where private automobiles are used, the child who rides in that vehicle must be the driver's own child.

**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 Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District has implemented the provisions of these sections of the California Education Code.

**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.**

This has been the practice of the Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District.

**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 Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District would access this service if the Sheriff's Department chooses to offer it.

**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 Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District provides volunteers with a written guide that outlines expectations for volunteers. School site administrators have the authority to remove a volunteer from his/her school for any reason, and volunteers are informed that it is a privilege, not a right, to volunteer in a school. For these reasons, the District does not believe a written agreement is necessary.

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