



GRAND JURY

SEP 25 2007

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EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

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August 28, 2007

The Honorable Robert S. Boyd
Presiding Judge
Sonoma County Superior Court
Hall of Justice
600 Administration Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Dear Judge Boyd:

On Behalf of the Sonoma County Office of Education (SCOE) and pursuant to the requirements of California Penal Code Section 933C, I have enclosed our required responses to the 2006-2007 Final Report of the Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury.

School campus safety and security is a top priority of the Rincon Valley Union School District board members, administrators, teachers, and classified staff, as it is for the parents of the students in our schools.

We have carefully reviewed the Grand Jury's findings, conclusions, commendations and recommendations in accordance with subdivision (b) of Section 933 and are pleased to enclose our response to recommendations R1, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10, R11, R13, R14, and R15.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Diane Moresi".

Diane Moresi
District Superintendent

cc: Jerel Bagger, Grand Jury Foreperson



EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

August 28, 2007

Prepared by: Diane Moresi, Superintendent
Debbie Takeda, Human Resources Officer

RE: Rincon Valley Union School District (RVUSD) Responses to the 2006-2007 Grand Jury Report Recommendations Report Pages 68-70, recommendation numbers R1, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10, R11, R13, R14, and R15.

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.

Response: The Rincon Valley Union School District agrees with this finding. Debbie Takeda, Human Resources Officer, is trained and authorized to access the DOJ website. In her absence, Roxanne Gilpatric, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, will have authority to access the website and receive any U.S. Mail that arrives.

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.

Response: Currently, RVUSD funds the cost of all fingerprinting and background services through the DOJ and FBI, including volunteers. The only volunteers that currently go through the process are ones that will be going on an overnight field trip. SCOE offers a half price discount once a week for volunteers. This discount runs from October 2007 through May 2008. In response to requiring applicants to pay for their own fingerprinting, this is not an avenue RVUSD would agree with. The reasons behind this decision are: efficiency, financial hardship of many applicants, and systemic control over the process.

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.

Response: RVUSD believes that this recommendation needs further study to determine what the recommendation entails. School volunteers' names are regularly published in school newsletters. All volunteers sign in and out at the school office each time they volunteer. Beginning with the 2007-2008 school year, the District will request a list of all volunteers from each school. If there were a specific request for information on a volunteer, the Superintendent would meet with the party to determine what information to provide. The majority of volunteers in our schools are parents, grandparents or guardians of students attending school in the RVUSD.

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.

Response: The RVUSD partially agrees with this finding. In our school district, approximately 95% of volunteers are parents. For the 2007-2008 school year, the District will recommend that HR and the Principals check names of their volunteers on the Megan's Law website for any volunteer who is not a parent, any volunteer going on an overnight excursion, or if they have any concerns about an individual volunteer. As a general policy, all volunteers work with students while in the presence of at least one school employee.

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

Response: RVUSD will pilot the use of Sonoma County Superior Court Records to determine the amount of time involved in accessing information and whether it is warranted due to so few non-parent volunteers. In addition, the district will use the Sonoma County Superior Court Records to check for the parent volunteers chaperoning overnight field trips.

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 would at least give school districts some assurance that information trusted to the U.S. Mail or electronic mail servers is actually being received.

Response: RVUSD agrees with this finding and will support the County Superintendent, Carl Wong, in writing such a letter to the DOJ on behalf of all districts. Debbie Takeda, Human Resources Officer, has received fewer than five (5) subsequent arrest notices in four years. These have been received after the employee has left employment.

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.

Response: Currently, FBI responses are only asked for if the employee has resided in California less than six (6) months. If FBI responses were to be requested for all new classified employees, it would increase the cost from \$60.00 to \$ 84.00. The RVUSD will take this recommendation into consideration after gathering data on the number of new classified

employees and volunteers, and the time and expense involved. At first glance, however, it does seem to be reasonable and the right action to take.

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.

Response: Only one program, Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) classes occur outside of the normal school day. Instructors for this program will now be fingerprinted before they begin instruction. Currently, all coaches, overnight field trip volunteers and Enrichment Program instructors are fingerprinted before they begin service with the District.

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

Response: All NPA (Non Public Agencies) and NPS (Non Public Schools) require fingerprinting of employees. Therefore, any of these employees would have previously undergone the fingerprint and background check prior to working with RVUSD. During our construction project, all contractors were fingerprinted by their agency prior to working on a school site. Any independent contractor used for any purpose other than educational, would only work when children are not present, or under the supervision of 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 that all fingerprinting and criminal history responses that are required must have been completed and properly evaluated.

Response: RVUSD agrees to this finding. The district has always waited for pre-employment requirements to be met before any new employee is hired.

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

Response: RVUSD would welcome any assistance from the Sheriff's Office that they are able to provide.

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

Response: The RVUSD agrees with this finding. To date implementation has been left to individual schools. The district is in the process of developing a standard volunteer agreement, which all volunteers will be required to sign. In addition, the Annual Parent Notification outlining volunteer policies is sent out to all parents at the beginning of the school year.