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Gail Ahlas

Roseland School District

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

**GRAND JURY**

SEP 10 2007

**RECEIVED**

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

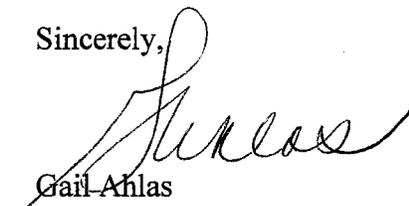
September 11, 2007

Dear Judge Boyd and Foreperson Bagger:

The Roseland School District has reviewed the Grand Jury's report, findings and recommendations in regards to background screening of school employees and volunteers.

The district respectfully submits our response to recommendations R1, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10, R11, R13, R14 and R15.

Sincerely,



Gail Ahlas  
Superintendent  
Roseland School District

**Response to 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 district agrees with this finding and has appointed and trained an alternate person to be responsible for retrieval of valuable information.**

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 district currently funds the costs of required background checks, TB clearance, and pre-employment physicals as required for employees and TB Clearance for consultants, all volunteers, and fingerprinting for volunteers chaperoning on overnight field trips. The district will review costs and determine the impact to the district's budget. The district may consider shifting costs for fingerprinting to employees in the future.**

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 district will conduct further analysis to determine what the recommendation entails and will research the legalities of volunteers' names to be public information.**

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 district will encourage principals and teachers to check for the names of their volunteers on the website.**

**Additionally, the district will implement a procedure in which a district employee will check Megan's Law website prior to any volunteers chaperoning overnight field trips or coaching sports.**

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.

**Volunteers are always supervised by district employees on school campus and in classrooms. We will implement the recommendation for those chaperoning overnight field trips or coaching sports.**

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 district agrees with this recommendation and will request the follow up notification from the DOJ should the DOJ provide this service.**

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 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 district agrees with this finding and has already implemented it for overnight trips and athletic coaches. Currently, all paid adults must be fingerprinted prior to working with students.**

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 district has implemented it in that we require contractors to confirm that their employees have undergone background checks and they are supervised by district employees while students are on campus unless the district has determined that the entity has limited or no contact with students.**

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 district has already implemented the recommendation and this policy has been in effect since 1997.**

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 district agrees with the recommendation that it would aid districts if the Sheriff's Office would disseminate such information.**

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 district agrees with the recommendation and will request sample agreements from Sonoma County Office of Education and County School Districts in order to develop a volunteer agreement for district use.**