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September 13, 2007

**GRAND JURY**  
SEP 18 2007  
**RECEIVED**

Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury  
P. O. Box 5109  
Santa Rosa, CA 95402

Reference: Grand Jury Final Report – June 28, 2007 – *See Dick. See Jane. See Dick and Jane go to school. Are they safe?*

Gentlemen:

In regard to your request for responses to the recommendations in the above-referenced report, the Santa Rosa City Schools District's responses are attached.

Sincerely,

ROBERT THOMPSON  
Assistant Superintendent  
Human Resources

RT:bc

Attachment

c: Sharon E. Liddell, Superintendent  
Doug Bower, Associate Superintendent  
Board of Education

September 13, 2007

**Santa Rosa City Elementary School District and Santa Rosa City High School District Reponse to Grand Jury Report “See Dick. See Jane. See Dick and Jane go to school. Are they safe?”**

**Prepared by: Dr. Sharon E. Liddell, Superintendent**

**Mr. Robert Thompson, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources**

**Approved by the Board of Education on September 12, 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 Santa Rosa City Elementary School District and Santa Rosa City High School District agree with the finding. The Lead Human Resources Technician and each of the four Human Resources Technicians are trained in this practice.

**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 Santa Rosa City Elementary School District and Santa Rosa City High School District disagree with the finding.

It is 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. In addition, employment costs are negotiable conditions of employment (Public Employees Relations Board – *PERB*).

The District currently funds the costs of required background checks, TB clearances, and pre-employment physicals as required for employees. The District funds the cost for fingerprinting volunteers who chaperone on overnight field trips, as well as volunteers who have ongoing contact with students. We are assisted in this process by a volunteer center.

**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 security is provided.**

The Santa Rosa City Elementary School District and Santa Rosa City High School District disagree with the finding and refer the County Grand Jury to the Public Records Act. Sites know who are the classroom volunteers in their classes.

**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 Santa Rosa City Elementary School District and Santa Rosa City High School District partially agree with this finding.

Staff will be encouraged to check the Megan's Law website when practical and feasible whenever it is determined fingerprinting is not scheduled, or whenever they have a reasonable suspicion about a volunteer, in accordance with Penal Code 11166 relating to child abuse reporting.

**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 Santa Rosa City Elementary School District and Santa Rosa City High School District partially agree with this finding.

This recommendation seems somewhat impractical to implement with all volunteers and unnecessary as we have several hundred parents and community members 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 Santa Rosa City Elementary School District and Santa Rosa City High School District agree with this finding and agree to assist the County Superintendent, Dr. Wong, in writing such a letter to the DOJ on behalf of all districts. Currently, the District receives regular subsequent arrest notifications. SCOE also provides us with subsequent arrest notices on substitute teachers that work with our students.

**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 Santa Rosa City Elementary School District and Santa Rosa City High School District agree with this finding and have already implemented the recommendation.

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

The Santa Rosa City Elementary School District and Santa Rosa City High School District partially agree with this finding and have already implemented it for volunteers on overnight trips and volunteer athletic coaches. The many off-campus field trips and school sponsored student activities involve hundreds of volunteers and are supervised by district employees.

**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 Santa Rosa City Elementary School District and Santa Rosa City High School District agree with this finding. Contractors are required to annually confirm that their employees have undergone background checks. Consultants and vendors are also required to have a fingerprint clearance in the event that they will be working around 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 Santa Rosa City Elementary School District and Santa Rosa City High School District agree with this finding. It has been standard practice in the past and continues to be standard practice with all new employees.

**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 Santa Rosa City Elementary School District and Santa Rosa City High School District agree with this finding and, we will work, as appropriate, with the Santa Rosa Police Department to access information and utilize it with respect to potential volunteers. Our School Resource Officers also serve as a direct link to the Santa Rosa Police Department.

**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 Santa Rosa City Elementary School District and Santa Rosa City High School District agree with this finding. The Volunteer Center of Sonoma County supplies the majority of our volunteers, and they have those volunteers sign a behavior agreement. We are also collecting samples of volunteer agreements to create a district-wide agreement for implementation.