

READ AND CONSIDERED

DATE 8/6/08 BY [Signature]

July 30, 2008

Superintendent: Pamela A. Martens, Ph.D.

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

Trustees:
 Nicole Abatè Ducarroz
 Daniel Gustafson
 Camerino Hawing
 Sandra Lowe
 Helen Marsh

Dear Judge Boyd;

I am writing in response to the request that school districts respond to Recommendations R-5, R-6, R-7, and R-8 of Grand Jury Report 2008. As the Director of Student Services for Sonoma Valley Unified Schools, one of my responsibilities is student safety and disaster planning. It is a responsibility that we take seriously. As we have seen too many times in just the past year alone, a disaster can strike at any time and place without warning. The safety and well-being of our students, staff, and parents is paramount. This requires both preparation and planning.

Response to Recommendations:

- **R5-**Each of our school sites annually revises their School Safety Plan which includes a section of Disaster Response based on the SEMS model as required by education code. These plans are developed by a representative group of students, parents, and staff under the direction of the site administrator and are approved by both the School Site Council for that site and the District Board of Directors. All School Safety Plans are modeled on the compliance requirements of the 2002 edition of the Safe Schools: A planning Guide for Action Workbook. Training in developing a School Safety Plan is generally provided by SCOE through their Safe Schools Unit. A binder of the district's School Safety Plans is also kept at the City's Emergency Operations Center.
- **R-6-**As I mentioned previously, Sonoma Valley Unified School District considers school safety and disaster preparedness top priorities. We are working closely with RESIG, SCOE, the American Red Cross, and the City of Sonoma in developing a coordinated plan and emergency response for our school sites, district, and the community as a whole. District personnel have participated in disaster drills at the Sonoma County Office of Education and the Sonoma Valley Hospital and regularly attend disaster planning and training workshops coordinated by SCOE and Resig. We are currently participating in the SCOPE training through RESIG to provide disaster response training to our individual school sites and to coordinate a district-wide tabletop drill. District Personnel also serve on the City of Sonoma's Disaster Council. Our Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent both participate in Government Emergency Telecommunications Service Drills (GETS) as requested through RESIG.

- **R7**-School Sites administrators and representative staff develop their Disaster Response Plans and drills using the SEMS model and practice fire, evacuation, and lockdown drills as stipulated by education code. Each site submits logs of the dates of these drills at the end of the school year to the Child Welfare Specialist. Evacuation routes/procedures and emergency phone trees are included in the School Safety Plans. The School District Office has an Emergency Phone Tree for notifying district staff in the event of an emergency and is in the process of developing a District-wide Disaster Response Plan in conjunction with RESIG.
- **R8**-Each of our sites struggles each year to collect basic emergency supplies in conjunction with their Parent Organizations, community donations, wish lists and limited site and district funds. Food and water are maintained at each site through the District's Food Services program and are rotated at least monthly.

As you mention in the "Reason for Investigation" section of the report, lack of funding is a critical issue in relation to disaster planning and preparedness for both County Offices of Education and School Districts. In fact a "lack of funding" is a common string attached to many of the mandates for which schools are responsible and one which consistently seems to go unaddressed at any governmental level. In many school districts, the community is already stepping up to support their schools in being able to provide the mandated educational requirements and instructional programs and strategies necessary to improve student academic progress and performance for all of our students, one of the State's top priorities. In an era of escalating budget cuts at the city, county, and state levels and increasing educational mandates perhaps we should also be investigating what we can do together as the Sonoma County community to fiscally assure that all of the educational and safety needs of all of our children can be met.

Sincerely,



Nanci B. Mathison
Director of Student Services

