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VIA EMAIL (grandjury@yolocounty.org) & U.S. MAIL

August 2023

Yolo County Grand Jury
Hall of Justice
P.O. Box 2142
Woodland, CA 95776

RE: 2022-2023 YOLO COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT
Washington Unified School District's Response to "ARE WE THERE YET? On the Road to School Safety."

Dear Grand Jury Representatives:

The Board of Education ("Board") of the Washington Unified School District ("District") appreciates the time and effort taken by the Yolo County Grand Jury ("Grand Jury") to conduct its safety analysis of the District. The district has given the Grand Jury's findings serious consideration, and this response will identify several actions that will be implemented consistent with the Grand Jury's recommendations.

The District's responses to the Grand Jury's findings and recommendations are set forth below in accordance with the format required by Penal Code section 933.05.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further information.

Sincerely,

Sarah Kirby-Gonzalez, Board President
Washington Unified School District

Enclosure: Response to Findings/Response to Recommendations
cc: Honorable Daniel M. Wolk, Judge, Superior Court of California, Yolo County
cc: Honorable Sonia Cortés, Judge, Superior Court of California, Yolo County

Response to Findings

Finding F-1: Each school district has implemented school hardening measures to some degree in addition to those discussed in the 2019-20 Yolo County Grand Jury report. The measures in place at school sites vary and can be improved. While some schools in each district have their sites enclosed or have security cameras, others do not. Fences may not be high enough to prevent students or intruders from jumping over them. In addition, gates at schools are sometimes not closed, locked, or are in disrepair.

The District agrees with this finding regarding school hardening measures.

Finding F-2: Each school district conducts California Healthy Kids Surveys, while some use additional methods for assessing student mental health. The response rate of students completing such surveys, however, may not be enough to generate reliable conclusions about student mental health.

The District partially agrees with this finding. The District has implemented a Social-emotional screener to be completed in grades 3-12 twice a year. The implementation began in February 2022. Additionally, in Spring 2023, the District implemented the California Healthy Kids Survey for grades 3-12, which will be administered annually. Student participation results have allowed the district to identify areas of strength and growth, and we intend to continually increase participation rates for students and families. Our SEL Coordinator and the Director of Special Programs and Student Services are committed to overseeing and administrating the assessments. Efforts will include communicating the importance of completing each assessment and how the data informs best practices to support students.

Finding F-3: California Education Code mandates that all school districts require visitors to go to a school's office upon arrival and wear identification while on site. At some Yolo County schools, however, the location of the school's office is not clear. Better signage is needed to direct visitors to the office. This is particularly important for schools, such as in the Davis, Winters, and Woodland school districts, where sharing open spaces or parking lots can make clear signage and prevention of intruders from entering school grounds more challenging.

The District agrees with this finding. The District is committed to increasing signage visibility before the start of the 2024-2025 school year to denote school office locations, and we are committed to implementing this change to ensure the safety and security of our schools.

Finding F-4: Each school district appropriately uses a web-based third-party provider for safety training modules. Annual training related to violent threats, such as active shooter, is not required by the Davis, Esparto, Washington, and Woodland school districts, although Esparto and Woodland plan to add such training at the start of the 2023-24 school year. Ensuring staff is trained in responding appropriately to threats of violence would lessen the chances of another tragedy similar to that in Uvalde, Texas.

The District agrees with this finding. The District has identified the need for yearly web-based and in-person training on Active Shooter/violent events and has collaborated with the West Sacramento Police Department to facilitate in-person Active Shooter (Run, Hide, Fight) training.

Finding F-5: The Esparto and Woodland school districts have assessed the effectiveness of their school safety training through surveys, as recommended by the 2019-20 Yolo County Grand Jury, while Davis, Washington, and Winters districts have not. Assessing effectiveness based on quantifiable data can provide more accurate guidance for decisions about training.

The District partially agrees with this finding. We value multiple methods of collecting feedback from our staff, parents/caregivers/community members and recognize the value of including surveys in our current feedback collection methods.

Finding F-6: Each school district has contracted with a web-based third-party provider to notify parents of emergencies. The providers report on how many parents or guardians were reached per technology (e.g., email, text, app, or voice/phone). All school districts' providers, except Washington, reach 90% or more of their students' parents or guardians. Ensuring that virtually all parents or guardians can be reached when needed is desirable.

The District agrees with this finding and continues to communicate the importance of having up-to-date parent/caregiver contact information on file.

Response to Recommendations

Recommendation R-1: The Grand Jury recommends that, prior to the start of the 2024-25 school year, each school district identify additional hardening approaches and develop a plan to further protect areas of its schools that remain vulnerable.

The recommendation has not been implemented. However, this will be implemented no later than June 30, 2024. In March 2023, in collaboration with the West Sacramento Police Department, WUSD provided School Vulnerability Assessment Training to all school administrators. The District is working with the West Sacramento Police Department, the Maintenance, Operations, Transportation Department, and an independent safety consultant to assess campuses for site safety vulnerability. This assessment will determine hardening approach needs and provide the necessary information to develop a plan to implement before the start of the 2024-2025 school year.

Recommendation R-2: Prior to the start of the 2024-25 school year, each school district should develop a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound) plan to encourage all students to

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complete the California Healthy Kids Survey and similar surveys to produce meaningful data. Each school district should act on survey findings, especially those related to potentially violent actions.

The recommendation has been implemented. The District annually completes the California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) for grades 3-12. In addition, the District administers a Social Emotional Screener twice a year to students in grades 3-12. The survey results and screeners are used to set goals and measurable action steps to support student needs and decrease potentially violent actions. On August 4, 2023, administrators were notified that the CHKS and an SEL screener would be administered this year, just as in past school years. In the 2023-2024 school year, we are increasing our efforts to ensure all students can participate in both assessments.

Recommendation R-3: Prior to the start of the 2024-25 school year, each school district should evaluate and improve signage for all of its schools so that visitors can easily find the school's office to register upon their arrival.

The recommendation has been implemented. On August 4, 2023, administrators were notified to review the signage on their campuses directing visitors to the main office. School administrators must submit work orders for appropriate signage based on their review results. The District is committed to increasing signage visibility before the start of the 2024-2025 school year to denote the office's location, and we are committed to implementing this change to ensure the safety and security of our schools.

Recommendation R-4: Prior to the start of the 2024-25 school year, each school district should require and document that training related to threats of violence is completed by its teachers (regular and substitute), staff, and administrators every year.

The recommendation has not been implemented. This will be implemented no later than November 1, 2023. Safety training, including all those related to threats of violence, will be provided to teachers (regular and substitute), staff, and administrators yearly. Multiple opportunities for training will be available throughout the 2023-24 school year, and attendance will be monitored.

Recommendation R-5: Prior to the start of the 2024-25 school year and each subsequent school year, Davis, Washington, and Winters school districts should identify and document a statistically reliable method or tool for measuring the effectiveness of school safety training, including an annual survey of teachers, staff and administrators.

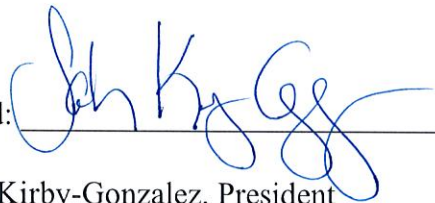
The recommendation has not been implemented. This will be implemented no later than June 5, 2024, following the District's review and development of a survey process to evaluate the effectiveness of safety training.

Recommendation R-6: Prior to the start of the 2024-25 school year and each subsequent school year, each district should achieve and maintain an emergency notification contact rate of at least 95% with parents or guardians, as verified by their third-party emergency notification providers.

The recommendation has not been implemented. This will be implemented no later than June 30, 2024. Before starting the 2024-25 school year, the district will strive to achieve and maintain an emergency notification rate of at least 95%.

Grand Jury Report Response approved on **August 24, 2023**

Signed: _____



Sarah Kirby-Gonzalez, President

Washington Unified School District, Board of Trustees