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*VIA EMAIL ([grandjury@yolocounty.org](mailto:grandjury@yolocounty.org)) & U.S. MAIL*

August, 2023

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

**RE: 2022-23 YOLO COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT**  
**Washington Unified School District Response to “SAFETY IS IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER. Concerns about Yolo High School”**

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 identifies 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

## **Response to Findings**

**Finding F-1:** Unlike the District's Student Behavioral Expectations Handbook, the Yolo High School Student Handbook does not mention prohibitions against and consequences of having weapons, such as guns or knives, on school grounds during school hours despite incidents involving knives continuing to occur. Not including such discussion might prevent Yolo High School students from fully understanding the seriousness of bringing such items onto school grounds.

The District agrees with this finding. The principal will include the WUSD Student Behavioral Expectations in the Yolo High School Student Handbook on or before Friday, September 1, 2023.

**Finding F-2:** Teachers and administrators are not notified of student suspensions as they occur. This increases the chances that a suspended student could return to school before allowed, possibly with intent and the means to harm others or property.

The District disagrees with this finding. All teachers, including Yolo High School teachers, receive Behavior Alert emails when a student on their roster is suspended from campus.

**Finding F-3:** Investigations of incidents of threats or acts of violence are not as thorough or considered as needed.

The District partially agrees with this finding. The District continues to provide numerous training opportunities for school administrators on the investigation process throughout the year. In addition, the Director of Special Programs and Student Services collaborates with school administrators to investigate threats or acts of violence. The District collaborates with the West Sacramento Police Department for threats or acts of violence as needed.

**Finding F-4:** A significant percentage of Yolo High School students are in what is commonly known as independent study at any given time, thereby unable to attend classes or events on the campus. This isolation prevents them from receiving the full benefit of services provided to attending students.

The District disagrees with this finding. An analysis of enrollment in the Independent Study program at Yolo High School does not demonstrate that a significant percentage of students were enrolled. At a minimum, 90 percent of Yolo High School students were enrolled in in-person instruction daily.

## **Response to Recommendations**

**Recommendation R-1:** By January 1, 2024, the Washington Unified School District should revise the Yolo High School Student Handbook to identify opportunities to address prohibitions against and consequences of having weapons on Yolo Education Center grounds.

The recommendation has not been implemented. However, it will be implemented as of September 1, 2023. Yolo High School will update its Student Handbook to align with the behavior expectations listed in the WUSD Student Behavioral Expectations Handbook.

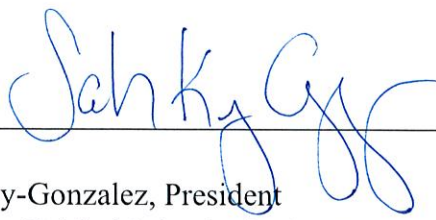
**Recommendation R-2:** By January 1, 2024, the Washington Unified School District should develop a plan to improve the process by which teachers and administrators are promptly notified of student suspensions from the campus.

The recommendation has been implemented. On August 14, 2023, administrators and teachers were notified that Behavior Alert emails would be sent this year, just as in past school years. Using a web-based program, all teachers are notified of suspensions through Behavior Alert emails. Administrators and teachers are to review the Behavior Alert notifications process annually. In addition to the notification process, the principal of Yolo High School will notify teachers by email when students are suspended.

**Recommendation R-3:** By January 1, 2024, the Washington Unified School District should initiate an audit of investigations involving violence and bullying, conducted by Yolo High School leadership between 2021 and 2023, using independent experts in order to identify any investigations found to be incomplete or improperly concluded, then take remedial action. In addition, the District should review the investigations training completed by school administration to evaluate its effectiveness and seek opportunities for improvement. The findings and outcomes of this review should be shared with the Grand Jury.

This recommendation has not been implemented to date. By December 1, 2023, the District will enlist an independent expert's support to review school-level investigations involving violence and bullying between 2021 and 2023 for Yolo High School. Changes or modifications to the investigatory process utilized by Yolo High School leadership will be based on the audit results. In addition, the District will review discipline investigations regularly to determine areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.

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

Signed:  \_\_\_\_\_

Sarah Kirby-Gonzalez, President  
Washington Unified School District, Board of Trustees