

COMPLIANCE REPORT

A Compliance Review of the 2022-2023 Yolo County Civil Grand Jury Investigative Reports



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*“Silence is compliance, and not saying
anything means you are okay with what is going on”
-Porsha Williams*

SUMMARY

As stated in the Introduction, recommendations from a civil grand jury are not binding on the public agency being investigated. Grand jury investigations have little value unless recommendations are taken seriously by responding entities and are presented to the public in a transparent manner. During a one-year term of service, the Yolo County Civil Grand Jury (Grand Jury) completes multiple investigations addressing various issues affecting Yolo County. Reports are written and published with findings and recommendations and include due dates for responses from the entities investigated. Because the term of each grand jury is limited, tracking of responses becomes the responsibility of subsequent grand juries. The 2023-2024 Grand Jury sought to determine the level of response of each agency investigated by the Grand Jury in 2022-2023. The full 2022-2023 report can be found at www.yolocounty.org/living/grand-jury/grand-jury-reports including the agency responses. The 2023-2024 Grand Jury reviewed each agency and public officials’ responses to ensure that all the required or invited responses were received and to verify if the responses met the intent of the findings and recommendations.

BACKGROUND

California Penal Code (PC) Section (§) 933(a) requires the Grand Jury to “submit to the presiding judge of the Superior Court a final report of its findings and recommendations that pertain to county public agency matters during the fiscal or calendar year.” Governing bodies are invited to respond to the findings and recommendations pertaining to matters under their control within 60 days of the release of a Grand Jury’s report. Elected county officers and agency heads are required to respond to the findings and recommendations pertaining to matters under their control within 90 days.

APPROACH

- Reviewed the California Penal Code Sections relevant to report responses, findings and recommendations
- Reviewed the 2022-2023 Yolo County Grand Jury reports and responses
- Communicated with several responding agencies after reviewing the replies

DISCUSSION

The 2022-2023 Consolidated Report consisted of seven investigative reports, which are as follows:

- Are We There Yet? On the Road to School Safety
- Safety is in the Eye of the Beholder, Concerns About Yolo High School
- The Forest for the Trees, City of Davis
- Yolo County Public Cemeteries
- Meeting their Obligations, Yolo County Detention Facilities
- Safe and Secure, Yolo County Elections Office
- Keeping Families Together, Yolo County Child Welfare Services

Most of the agencies responded by the due dates, acknowledged the Findings in the reports, and submitted responses as required. The Grand Jury commends the agencies for responding by the requested deadlines.

The following three agencies didn't respond by the required due date(s):

- Esparto Unified School District - Responded after the third request and the status of the review is outlined below under "SUBJECT/TITLE: ARE WE THERE YET, ON THE ROAD TO SCHOOL SAFETY: Esparto Unified School District."
- Two (2) public cemeteries (Capay and Knights Landing) - A brief overview is provided below under "SUBJECT/TITLE: YOLO COUNTY PUBLIC CEMETERIES."

If the entities responded that the recommendations were implemented and/or would be in the future, verification was requested of the implementation and/or status of the recommendation. As referenced above, the agency responses, as well as the follow-up responses, can be found at www.yolocounty.org/living/grand-jury/grand-jury-reports.

The 2023-2024 Grand Jury, as part of the Compliance Report, is focusing only on significant findings and recommendations based on the follow-up responses as presented below.

ARE WE THERE YET, ON THE ROAD TO SCHOOL SAFETY

Davis Joint Unified School District (DJUSD)

Follow-up to the 2022-2023 Response

R-1 (Safety): 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.

DJUSD: *“When considering school safety, the District considers three primary drivers for school safety, which we believe cannot be viewed in isolation; 1) safety related policies, 2) safety related practices, and 3) safety related physical infrastructure and technology. In the District response, we stated that “To maintain security during school hours, the District has implemented adequate policies and continues to work closely with local law enforcement agencies” as an acknowledgement of the multifaceted reality of school safety.”*

R-3 (Signage): 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.

DJUSD: *“Additional signage needs have been identified throughout the District.”*

Findings by the 2023-2024 Grand Jury:

- F-1 DJUSD stated that it has implemented additional safety measures to some degree in the response to the 2022-2023 Grand Jury Investigative Report. It is unclear from the response what these specific safety measures are and what has been implemented to date.
- F-2 The 2022-2023 Grand Jury Investigative Report listed a finding regarding lack of signage on DJUSD campuses. This was particularly important safety feature for DJUSD since several campuses share open spaces or parking lots to which the public has free access. Though DJUSD responded that signage needs have been identified, there was no implementation schedule provided to the Grand Jury.

Recommendations by the 2023-2024 Grand Jury:

- R-1 By October 1, 2024, DJUSD should submit a written report to the Grand Jury that they have established a plan on additional hardening measures, what those measures are, and an implementation schedule.
- R-2 The California Education Code mandates all school districts require visitors to report to a school’s office upon arrival and wear identification while on school campuses. Signage should be a priority for all DJUSD school sites especially since DJUSD schools share open public spaces. Though DJUSD states it has identified signage needs, the school district should improve the signage on all campuses prior to the start of the 2024-2025 school year and report to the Grand Jury by October 1, 2024.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code Section(s) 933 and 933.05, the Grand Jury requests responses to its Finding and Recommendations within 60 days as follows:

- Board of Education/Trustees Davis Joint Unified School District F-1, F-2; and R-1, R-2

ARE WE THERE YET, ON THE ROAD TO SCHOOL SAFETY

Esparto Unified School District (EUSD)

Note: As the EUSD hadn't responded by late October 2023, a reminder letter was mailed requesting a response. With still no response by December 2023, another letter was sent and the school district did respond by January 23, 2024. EUSD claimed the investigative report from the 2022-2023 Grand Jury was never received as well as the October 2023 letter from the 2023-2024 Grand Jury.

Follow-up to the 2022-2023 Response

R-1 (Safety): 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.

EUSD: *"We were directed by the RTAC team that provided the assessment to keep the document internal and not provide copies to others. However, please feel free to come and view the Elementary Assessment in our office. The middle school and high school assessments were done internally. This list was prioritized by our District Safety Committee and our First Responders Partnership."* Note: The EUSD submitted the prioritized list to the Grand Jury.

Findings by the 2023-2024 Grand Jury:

- F-1 The Grand Jury finds safety measures should be further implemented for all campuses. For example, while visiting on other matters, three 2023-2024 Grand Jury members were able to easily walk onto the high school campus without staff promptly stopping the entry of the members. Safety measures on the high school campus are still lacking as it relates to locking of gates and doors leading into the classrooms.

Recommendations by the 2023-2024 Grand Jury:

- R-1 The EUSD should identify and implement additional hardening measures at all campuses within the school district to further protect areas of the schools that remain vulnerable prior to the start of the 2024-2025 school year and report safety measures taken to the Grand Jury by October 1, 2024.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code Section(s) 933 and 933.05, the Grand Jury requests responses to its Finding and Recommendations within 60 days as follows:

- Board of Education/Trustees Esparto Unified School District F-1 and R-1

YOLO COUNTY PUBLIC CEMETERIES
Capay Cemetery District
R-6 (Website): The Grand Jury recommended to the District that they should establish a website, by January 1, 2024. The Grand Jury didn't receive a response and with the assistance of the office of the 5 th District Board of Supervisor, Angel Barajas, the Grand Jury was finally able to reach out to one of the Board Members. The member did state they will be adopting a resolution to claim hardship on establishing a website, as the District has limited funding and staff. The Grand Jury verified the trustees will adopt a resolution claiming hardship.

Findings by the 2023-2024 Grand Jury:

- F-1 The Capay Cemetery District is out of compliance with state law (Government Code sections 6270.6 and 53087.8) requiring independent special districts in California either maintain a website by January 1, 2020, or adopt an annual hardship resolution.

Recommendations by the 2023-2024 Grand Jury:

- R-1 The Capay Cemetery District should establish a website or adopt a hardship resolution by September 1, 2024.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code Section(s) 933 and 933.05, the Grand Jury requests responses to its Finding and Recommendations within 60 days as follows:

- Capay Cemetery District Board of Trustees F-1 and R-1

YOLO COUNTY PUBLIC CEMETERIES
Knights Landing Cemetery District
R-6 (Website): The Grand Jury recommended to the District that they should adopt a website by January 1, 2024, as required under State Law. The Grand Jury contacted the office of YCBOS Angel Barajas, and the Grand Jury were notified that since the District is going through a transition and welcomed new members in February 2024, they will then have an opportunity to approve a hardship resolution. The Grand Jury will be asking for an update on the hardship resolution.

Findings by the 2023-2024 Grand Jury:

F-1 The Knights Landing Cemetery District is out of compliance with state law (Government Code sections 6270.6 and 53087.8) requiring independent special districts in California either maintain a website by January 1, 2020, or adopt a hardship resolution annually.

Recommendations by the 2023-2024 Grand Jury:

R-1 The Knights Landing Cemetery District should establish a website or adopt a hardship resolution by September 1, 2024.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code Section(s) 933 and 933.05, the Grand Jury requests responses to its Finding and Recommendations within 60 days as follows:

- Knights Landing Cemetery District Board of Trustees F-1 and R-1