

June 17, 2024

The Honorable Judge Mark Talamantes
Marin County Superior Court
P.O. Box 4988
San Rafael, CA 94913-4988
Email PDF to: CourtroomL@marin.courts.ca.gov

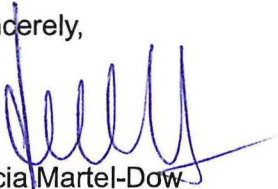
Rod Kerr, Foreperson
Marin County Civil Grand Jury
3501 Civic Center Drive, Room #275
San Rafael, CA 94903
Email PDF to: grandjury@marincounty.org

Dear Judge Talamantes and Foreperson Kerr,

The San Rafael City Schools (SRCS) Board of Education, together with Superintendent Carmen Diaz Ghysels, acknowledge the efforts of the 2023-2024 Marin County Civil Grand Jury for highlighting the importance of school districts providing the supplies, materials and equipment necessary to fully participate at school, outlined in its report "A Free Public Education Includes School Supplies." Attached please find the response requested to findings (F1-F5) and recommendations (R1-R7) from the SRCS Board of Education.

Thank you for your continued interest in and support of our public schools and our greater community.

Sincerely,



Lucia Martel-Dow
Board of Education President



Carmen Diaz Ghysels
Superintendent

FINDINGS

- F1:** Some Marin public schools do not comply with the “free public education” law because they ask students or their families to bring supplies to school.

Response: We agree with the finding.

- F2:** Schools may not circumvent the “free public education” law by offering families any kind of waiver or exemption option.

Response: We agree with the finding.

- F3:** Some Marin public schools distribute supply lists to families that indicate the family can seek a waiver or become exempt from bringing supplies in some specified way.

Response: We agree with the finding.

- F4:** Some Marin public schools distribute supply lists to families that are labeled “optional.”

Response: We agree with the finding.

- F5:** Teachers often spend their personal funds to provide supplies, materials, or equipment for students.

Response: We agree with the finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1:** All Marin public schools should follow California’s “free public education” law.

Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation.

San Rafael City Schools fully agrees that our schools should follow California Education Code 49011 and 56040(a) regarding the provision of a free and appropriate public education. Throughout this Spring, SRCS administration has been working with its school leaders and staff to determine if this is not practiced in whole and providing clear direction and support to follow the California “free public education” law. We will continue to partner with our school leaders and staff over the summer as we prepare for the upcoming 2024-25 school year to ensure that this recommendation is implemented by August 21, 2024.

- R2:** Marin public schools should provide, at no cost to the student or their families, all the supplies, materials, and equipment necessary for students to fully participate at school.

Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation.

SRCS fully agrees that our schools and classes are to provide all required supplies, materials and equipment at no cost to students or their families to fully participate at school. Thanks to state and federal funds, the District is able to provide ample funding to schools for all the necessary supplies, materials and equipment. SRCS administration has been providing clear direction and support to its District and school leaders and staff to ensure that the District and all its schools are using its funds to purchase all required supplies, materials and equipment at no cost to students or their families. We will continue to partner with our school leaders over the summer as we prepare for the upcoming 2024-25 school year to ensure that this recommendation is implemented by August 21, 2024.

R3: Marin public schools should not distribute school supply lists to students or their families.

Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation.

SRCS fully agrees that our District and schools should not distribute school supply lists to students or their families. While we do not believe that the practice of distributing school supply lists to students or their families is widespread in our District, SRCS administration has been diligently working with its District and school leaders and staff to provide clear direction and support to ensure that school supply lists are not distributed to students or their families. We will continue to partner with our school leaders over the summer as we prepare for the upcoming 2024-25 school year to ensure that this recommendation is implemented by August 21, 2024.

R4: Marin public schools should not distribute school supply lists that indicate the supplies are optional.

Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation.

SRCS fully agrees that our District and schools should not distribute school supply lists that indicate the supplies are optional. While we do not believe that the practice of distributing optional school supply lists to students or their families is widespread in our District, SRCS administration has been diligently working with its District and school leaders and staff to provide clear direction and support to ensure that optional school supply lists are not distributed to students or their families. We will continue to partner with our school leaders over the summer as we prepare for the upcoming 2024-25 school year to ensure that this recommendation is implemented by August 21, 2024.

- R5:** The superintendent of each school district should ensure that the schools in their district are in compliance with California law with respect to school supplies.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented.

The SRCS Superintendent has directed that all supplies, materials and equipment needed to participate in educational activities within SRCS schools and classes are provided free of charge. The SRCS Superintendent has directed District and school leaders and staff to ensure that SRCS is in compliance with California law with respect to school supplies.

- R6:** If a Marin public school chooses to solicit donations of any kind from anyone, whether the solicitation is on paper, verbal, or electronic, such as a website or email, the school should make it clear that donations are not required but rather are entirely voluntary.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented.

SRCS does not require donations of any kind and always ensures that any donations are solicited as voluntary contributions. Furthermore, SRCS has a donations process in place through the Business Services department and the donations are brought forward to the Board of Education for the approval of their receipt. SRCS Board Policy 3290 Section 1.1 states:

"The Board of Education may accept on behalf of, and in the name of the District, such gifts, donations, bequests, and devices as are offered. Such gifts, cash contributions, donations, bequests, and devices may be made subject to conditions or restrictions as the Board of Education may prescribe and/or accept." (Education Code 41030-41032)

We are also appreciative of the many community partners, businesses, parent groups and organizations who generously donate supplies to enhance our classroom materials and provide supplies for students to use at home.

- R7:** Marin public schools should not put teachers in a position where they need to use their personal funds to provide supplies, materials, or equipment for students to fully participate at school.

Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation.

SRCS fully agrees that teachers should not be in a position where they need to use their personal funds to provide supplies, materials or equipment for students to fully participate at school. SRCS is committed to providing all the supplies, materials or equipment needed by our teachers and staff. Thanks to state and federal funds, the District is able to provide ample funding to schools for all the necessary supplies,

materials and equipment. SRCS administration has been providing clear direction and support to its District and school leaders and staff to ensure that the District and all its schools are using its funds to purchase all required supplies, materials and equipment at no cost to students or their families. We will continue to partner with our school leaders over the summer as we prepare for the upcoming 2024-25 school year to ensure that this recommendation is implemented by August 21, 2024.