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July 16, 2018

Monterey County Civil Grand Jury
PO Box 414
Salinas, CA 93901

RE: Response to the Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Report

Enclosed are the responses to the Findings and Recommendations of the Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Report 2017-18 entitled "School Boards Make a Difference, Improving Education: The Role of Local School Boards" from Salinas City Elementary School District's Board of Education.

Sincerely,

Martha L Martinez
Superintendent

Salinas City Elementary School District

FINDINGS –

	1. AGREE 2. DISAGREE 3. PARTIAL DISAGREE	<i>District Responses</i>
F1	Students achievement suffers when school districts are unproductive or dysfunctional. It can be very costly and take years to address problems if the Monterey County Office of Education and/or California Department of Education have to step in to support or save a school district.	
	The SCESD board and Superintendent agree with this finding.	No response needed
F2	There are proactive steps that can be taken by the Monterey County Office of Education in collaboration with school boards to prevent many pitfalls of poor governance.	
	The SCESD board and Superintendent agree with this finding.	Monterey County Board of Education provides numerous proactive steps to promote effective governance. We agree there can always be improvement but we are also very appreciative of the collaborative efforts and the proactive steps being taken by MCOE for school boards throughout Monterey County.
F3	The Monterey County Office of Education and local school boards can do more to promote effective local governance that is accountable to the community and produces better district outcomes.	
	The SCESD board and Superintendent agree with this finding.	See F2 response.
F4	Promoting effective local governance requires better public information, communication, and a strong commitment to board development.	
	The SCESD board and Superintendent agree with this finding.	We agree that public information and communications can always be improved. Strong commitment to board development is an important priority for Salinas City Elementary School District school board and superintendent.
F5	Although each school district has individual priorities, school boards can each make a commitment to adhering to best practices, training, and ongoing professional development when it comes to school board governance.	
F5	The SCESD board and Superintendent agree with this finding.	No response needed

F6	While the Monterey County Office of Education cannot dictate how school boards govern, they can provide stronger leadership in promoting a culture of effective school board governance.	
F6	The SCESD board and Superintendent agree with this finding.	SCESD board and Superintendent have participated in many of MCOE's leadership opportunities in promoting effective school governance and has found them useful in understanding the role and responsibilities school board's play in establishing positive culture with a focused direction.
F7	Information posted on Monterey County Office of Education and school district websites is insufficient and not user-friendly. It does not provide the public with adequate information about what school boards do, how to evaluate school board performance, or how assess school district outcomes.	
F7	The SCESD board and Superintendent agree with this finding.	No response needed
F8	School boards can do better in fulfilling their responsibility to communicate with school district stakeholders.	
F8	The SCESD board and Superintendent agree with this finding.	No response needed

RECOMMENDATIONS

<i>Recommendation is</i> 1. IMPLEMENTED 2. NOT YET IMPLEMENTED 3. FURTHER ANALYSIS NEEDED 4. WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED	<i>District Response</i>
R1	School Boards should adopt a policy to commit to all National School Board Association best practices.
	This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable. While the National School Board Association has excellent best practices are directly affiliated with the California School Board Association (CSBA). CSBA provides the district with essential resources, research, effective board strategies and board policies align to California rules, regulations and California Education Code. SCESD will continue to attend and utilize CSBA's services as it pertains to this recommendation. www.csba.org/GovernanceAndPolicyResources
R2	School Boards should adopt a bylaw to make initial training and ongoing workshops mandatory.
	This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable. SCESD Superintendent have procedures in place for initial overview with potential board members which include review of the district's vision, mission, goals, accountability structures and as well as review of Board Bylaws and Handbook. Upon being elected, the Superintendent conducts department and site visitations with the newly-elected board members. All board members are encouraged to attend MCOE's School Board Summit, CSBA's annual leadership summit and all school board related local trainings. To date we have had most of our board members attending both state and local trainings, activities and events. Our Board has adopted Board Bylaws as recommended by CSBA Policy Manual. These include the Role of the Board and Members, Organization of the Board, Protocols for Board Members and Governance of Board Members. While there is no law for mandatory training SCESD school board members and Superintendent recently engaged in a retreat to establish best practices and board protocols. This resulted in newly adopted School Board Handbook which outline effective practices for school board members.

R3	School Boards along with their superintendent and teacher union representatives should make annual public presentations on school district goals and student achievement.	
	This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable.	While the school board and the Superintendent are responsible for progress on student achievement based on the district's goals, teacher union representatives are not directly accountable to the board. Administration is responsible and presents progress towards districts goals annually at public school board meetings. However, all stakeholders, including teachers' union have voice and feedback in the development of the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP). The LCAP is a data driven document that focus on sub group achievement and progress to California's eight priority areas. SCESD has a very inclusive process in place for stakeholder feedback on goal and resource development. Our unions are part of the LCAP leadership team that make direct recommendations of the LCAP funding allocations. The Superintendent has established a short and long term goal setting at every level of the organization. This process begins at the beginning of each school year with goals and objectives reset based on current data. A mid year review of these goals are presented to leadership team and board is invited to attend and site administration are held accountable to these goals as part of their evaluation cycles. Annual reports are presented at school board meetings.
R4	School Boards should provide clear, concise, and easy to find communications on their district's goals and outcomes on their district's website.	
	This recommendation has been implemented	This recommendation is in progress. While the district goals and LCAP are posted on the website we agree that a much easier and user friendly communication is needed. We are currently developing an info graphic format for all stakeholders. We will share the document in the fall of 2018.
R5	School Boards should provide information on their district's website about the role and responsibilities of school board members to educate parents, the public and potential school board	
	This recommendation has not been implemented but will be in the near future.	This recommendation is in progress. Our website is under construction and we will place the Board Bylaws as well as our new Board Handbook under the Board tab on the website by Dec. 2018.

R6	School Boards should provide access to informational sessions to educate potential school board candidates on the duties and commitment associated with serving on a local school board.	
	This recommendation has been implemented	SCESD Superintendent have procedures in place for initial overview with potential board members which include review of the district's vision, mission, goals, accountability structures and as well as review of Board Bylaws and Handbook. Upon being elected, the Superintendent conducts department and site visitations with newly-elected Board Members.. All Board Members are encouraged to attend MCOE's School Board Summit, CSBA's annual leadership summit and all school board related local trainings. To date we have had most of our board members attending both state and local trainings, activities and events. Our Board has adopted Board Bylaws as recommended by CSBA Policy Manual. These include the Role of the Board and Members, Organization of the Board, Protocols for Board Members and Governance of Board Members. While there is no law for mandatory training SCESD school board members and the Superintendent recently engaged in a retreat to establish best practices and board protocols. This resulted in newly adopted School Board Handbook which outline effective practices for school board members.