

Atascadero Unified School District

5601 WEST MALL • ATASCADERO, CALIFORNIA 93422
DISTRICT OFFICE (805) 462-4200 • FAX (805) 462-4421

Deborah Bowers, Ed.D., Superintendent

September 4, 2012

Presiding Judge Barry T. LaBarbera
Superior Court of California
1050 Monterey Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

Dear Judge LaBarbera:

On June 26, 2012, the Atascadero Unified School District Board of Trustees received the 2011-2012 San Luis Obispo County Grand Jury Report entitled "Are Paso Robles School Budgetary Woes a Lesson for Other Districts?" The report included eleven findings and five recommendations.

The Governing Board of the Atascadero Unified School District was directed to respond to Findings 1, 2, 3, and 6 and to Recommendation 2, 4, and 5 by September 24, 2012. Please find the responses attached.

Sincerely,



Corinne Kuhnle
Board President

cc: Norman A. Baxter, Foreperson
San Luis Obispo County Grand Jury

DEDICATED TO STUDENTS ~ COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE

Carrisa Plains School ~ Creston Elementary ~ Monterey Road Elementary ~ San Benito Elementary
San Gabriel Road Elementary ~ Santa Margarita Elementary ~ Santa Rosa Academic Academy
Atascadero Fine Arts Academy ~ Atascadero Junior High School ~ Atascadero High School
Del Rio Continuation High School ~ West Mall Alternative School

Response to Grand Jury Report Form

Report Title: "Are Paso Robles School Budgetary Woes a Lesson for Other Districts?"

Report Date: June 26, 2012

Authorized Responder: Corinne Kuhnle, Atascadero Unified School District
President, Board of Trustees

FINDINGS

- I (we) agree with the findings numbered: 1,3,6
- I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: 2
(Attach a statement specifying any portions of the findings that are disputed;
include an explanation of the reasons.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered 4 have been implemented.
(Attach a summary describing the implemented actions.)
- Recommendations numbered _____ have not yet been implemented,
but will be implemented in the future.
(Attach a timeframe for the implementation.)
- Recommendations numbered _____ require further analysis.

(Attach an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study,
and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or
director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including
the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall
not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.)
- Recommendations numbered 2 and 5 will not be implemented
because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.

(Attach an explanation.)

Date: Sept. 4, 2012 Signed: Corinne Kuhnle

Number of pages attached 3

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Responses to the Findings and Recommendations of the 2011-2012 San Luis Obispo County Grand Jury Report entitled “Are Paso Robles School Budgetary Woes a Lesson for Other Districts?”

Finding 1: A primary responsibility of a governing board is financial oversight and accountability.

Response to Finding 1: We agree with this finding.

Finding 2: Governing board members overseeing the county's ten districts, similar to governing board members statewide, are offered education and training in school district budgeting and financial oversight, but seldom take maximum advantage of the workshops offered.

Response to Finding 2: We disagree partially with this finding. We agree that board members should be offered education and training in school district budgeting and financial oversight, but we disagree that our board members seldom take advantage of the workshops offered. Our board members have participated in education and training opportunities offered at the local, county, and statewide levels as well as through webinars. Ongoing education is offered through budget-related reports and discussions at our Board of Trustees meetings. In addition, three of our seven board members serve on the district's Budget Advisory Committee that meets regularly to learn about and discuss issues that affect the district's current and future budgets. One of our Trustees is a retired Chief Business Official for a public school district.

Finding 3: All ten school districts in San Luis Obispo County are currently in deficit spending.

Response to Finding 3: We agree with this finding relative to our district.

Finding 6: The County Superintendent has issued “qualified” warnings to four other school districts, Atascadero, Lucia Mar Unified, San Miguel Joint Unified, and Shandon Joint Unified, and suggested that they make new budget cuts to remain solvent over the next two years.

Response to Finding 6: We agree with this finding. To clarify, our district self-certified the qualified status and the County Superintendent concurred with the district's qualified certification.

Recommendation 2: Each governing board in the county should establish a policy requiring new board members to attend a minimum of two days of education on school district

budgeting and financial oversight. Each governing board should also require follow-up financial training for board members annually.

Response to Recommendation 2: This recommendation will not be implemented. Policy is already in place to address board development. We disagree with the suggested minimum of two-days of education for new members, as it is arbitrary. More or less training might be necessary, depending on the background of the new board member. As for the recommended annual follow-up financial training, we believe ongoing education and training for Trustees throughout the year, as noted in our response to Finding 2, is more appropriate.

Recommendation 4: The administration and Governing Boards of Paso Robles, Atascadero, San Miguel, and Shandon school district should establish budget reductions in the coming year that will assure meeting the state's recommended reserve for districts of their size by the end of 2013-2014.

Response to Recommendation 4: This recommendation has been implemented. Each year, our district follows a process for making budget reductions to ensure that we will meet the state's recommended reserve for the current fiscal year.

Recommendation 5: The Governing Boards of Atascadero, Lucia Mar, Paso Robles, San Miguel, and Shandon school districts should seriously consider a parcel tax as a revenue source and educate the public about its importance and viability.

Response to Recommendation 5: This recommendation will not be implemented. Our community passed Measure I-10 in November of 2010 to support the upgrading of our school facilities. To ask for a parcel tax, which requires approval from two-thirds of the voters, would not be reasonable at this time.

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