



Miller Creek School District
380 Nova Albion Way
San Rafael, CA. 94903
(415) 492-3706

July 15, 2022

The Honorable Judge James Chou
Marin County Superior Court
P.O. Box 4988
San Rafael, CA 94913-4988

Deborah Haase, Foreperson
Marin County Civil Grand Jury
3501 Civic Center Drive, Room #275
San Rafael, CA 94903

Dear Judge Chou and Foreperson Haase,

Attached please find the response requested by the 2021-2022 Marin County Civil Grand Jury from the **Miller Creek Elementary School District Board** to recommendations (R1-R2) and findings (F1-F8) from the **Marin Schools: A Prescription for COVID Recovery** report.

Thank you for your continued interest in and support of our public schools and the health and wellness of our county's young people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Alissa Chacko".

Ms. Alissa Chacko, President
Miller Creek Elementary School District Board

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Becky Rosales".

Ms. Becky Rosales, Superintendent
Miller Creek Elementary School District

**Miller Creek Elementary School District
Response to Grand Jury Report**

Report Title:	Marin Schools: A Prescription for COVID Recovery
Respondent / Agency Name:	Miller Creek Elementary School District Board
Name: Title:	Alissa Chacko President, Miller Creek Elementary School District Board
Name: Title:	Becky Rosales Superintendent, Miller Creek Elementary School District

Findings:

We agree with the findings numbered:	F1, F2, F5, F6, F8
We <i>partially</i> disagree partially with the findings numbered:	F3, F4, F7
I (we) <i>wholly</i> disagree partially with the findings numbered:	

(Attached is a statement specifying any portions of the findings that are disputed; include an explanation of the reasons therefor.)

Recommendations:

- Recommendations numbered **R-2** have been implemented.
(Attach a summary describing the implemented actions)
- Recommendations numbered **R1** have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.
(Attach a timeframe for implementation)
- Recommendations numbered **N/A** 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 **N/A** will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.
(Attach an explanation.)

Date: July 15, 2022 Signed: 
Number of pages attached: 4

Miller Creek School District
Responses to the 2021-2022 Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report
Marin Schools: A Prescription for COVID Recovery

Recommendation:

R1:	By August 1, 2022 the Marin County Superintendent of Schools and all Marin public school districts should convene a countywide Lost Learning Task Force to rapidly develop lost learning recovery models that are available for implementation by all of Marin's public school districts.
Response:	This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. Our County Office of Education has for many years facilitated countywide curriculum and program teams, such as the Transitional Kindergarten Working Group, the Innovative Learning Team, Elementary and Middle School Principals Networks, and the Marin County Schools Wellness Collaborative, along with a number of others. These existing groups and structures were in place before the pandemic and were used during the COVID response to leverage collaboration on developing and implementing plans for learning loss mitigation to some degree throughout the pandemic, with the clear understanding that remote learning is not effective or accessible for many students. Annually, our County Superintendent of Schools schedules a monthly meeting of Marin County School District Superintendents to coordinate efforts and share best practices for supporting student learning and success. These meetings were wisely scheduled <u>weekly</u> through a majority of the pandemic, and included the regular participation of the Marin County Public Health Office and/or Deputy Public Health Officer. Through these meetings and additional opportunities among the group to share best practices, superintendents were able to learn from each other and then work with their districts to implement robust student and staff mental health and wellness supports. Miller Creek Elementary School District, like all Marin County school districts, applied for and received the Learning Loss Mitigation Funding (LLMF) to support pupil academic achievement and mitigate learning loss related to COVID-19 school closures. In order to accept those funds, all school districts were required to create learning continuity and attendance plans. The Miller Creek Elementary School District plan was adopted by trustees on April 13, 2021 and then submitted to the California Department of Education. It is our understanding that the Marin County Office of Education will position the Innovative Learning Team (ILT) to serve as the <i>Lost Learning Task Force</i>, and will agendize learning loss mitigation to rapidly develop lost learning recovery models that are available for implementation by all of Marin's public school districts, and provide updates on best practices to the Superintendents.

Recommendation:

R2:	By August 1, 2022 the Marin County Superintendent of Schools and all Marin public school districts should also call on the Lost Learning Task Force, as a second but vital priority, to develop and recommend protocols and policies for minimizing the length of emergency school closures during future disruptions.
Response:	This recommendation has been implemented. This recommendation has been implemented, although not in the exact name of a <i>Lost Learning Task Force</i>, but clearly in purpose and function. The impact of the pandemic will be felt for some time and this work will be ongoing. Prior to COVID, Miller Creek Elementary School District, along with others experienced school closure days due to wildfire, flooding, air quality, winter storms and PGE Public Safety Power Shutoffs. Closures in one district impact other district, such as for staff with their own children attending in another district or Miller Creek parents with high school age students having their children in more than one district. There has been strong consensus among all Marin County public school leaders that continuity of school operations and in person learning is a critical priority. Tools to support this priority through recent experiences have been developed in collaboration with Marin County Public Health and the Office of Emergency Services, including an air quality chart that identifies appropriate indoor and outdoor activities at school to support health and safety depending on changing air quality indicators, systems of communication and planning for potential closures, and many districts taking the step of adding additional potential instructional days (similar to snow days in the mountainous areas) in the event of a closure. When the first shelter in place and suspension of classroom activity was ordered in the Spring of 2020, immediate steps were taken by Marin County Office of Education in coordination and collaboration with Public Health to design protocols and procedures for a safe return to site-based classroom instruction, resulting in the development of the Marin County School Guidelines (30 Point Plan) first issued June 18, 2020. These guidelines have been revised and updated multiple times through May 3, 2022, including a transition to a 32 Point Plan on August 18, 2021, and more recently to the Marin County SMARTER Schools Plan on March 24, 2022. Public Health is continuing to work with all Marin County public, private, independent and parochial schools in planning and preparation for the 2022-23 school year including the development of a COVID mitigation strategies chart, similar to the air quality chart, to help schools continue implement best practices and procedures aligned with changing COVID-19 transmission levels and risks due to future variants and uncertainties. This work is ongoing and represents the shared priority of keeping students in site-based classroom instruction at school.

**Miller Creek Elementary School District
Responses to the 2021-2022 Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report
Marin Schools: A Prescription for COVID Recovery**

Finding

F1	Excellent collaboration between Marin County Public Health officers and Marin's public school administrators during the COVID-19 pandemic produced science-based and demonstrably workable guidelines for reopening Marin County's public schools safely early in the 2020-21 school year.
Response	We agree with the finding.

Finding

F2	Since experts agree that in-person classroom instruction is best for students, putting students first by keeping schools open as much as possible should be an imperative for all of Marin's educators.
Response	We agree with the finding.

Finding

F3	Because labor negotiations over resuming in-person classroom instruction added to the complexity and delays in public school reopenings, Marin's public school districts would benefit by developing standard practices and models for resolving staff concerns.
Response	We <i>partially</i> disagree partially with the finding. It is true that labor negotiations added to the complexity of the process of planning and implementing public school reopenings. The structure and nature of labor units, negotiations, and collective bargaining agreements appropriately are designed to address a wide variety of individualized and localized concerns and circumstances that must be addressed to reach agreement in each respective district. These negotiations were meaningful and vital to the Miller Creek Elementary School District in order to ensure that staff and students could return safely in-person to our campuses, ranging in enrollment size from 300-625. These "delays" enabled the district to customize protocols specific to campus, age of students and measures taken to implement required and recommended health practices. We disagree that standard practices and models should be developed for resolving staff concerns. We further believe that Miller Creek Elementary School District school teachers and staff (labor), as well as their public school counterparts throughout Marin County should be commended for their efforts to help Marin County public schools to be among the first in the state to return to and sustain in person classroom instruction with a very low in-school transmission rate.

Finding

F4	Marin's Public schools would benefit from studying the private and public schools that demonstrated an ability to fully reopen early in the 2020-21 school year while complying with Marin's Public Health requirements.
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Response	I (we) <i>partially</i> disagree with the finding. Private and public schools worked collaboratively and directly with Public Health to develop the 30-point plan that allowed Miller Creek Elementary School District and all Marin schools to reopen complying with Marin's Public Health requirements, and to continually adjust to conditions and changing guidance to remain open during the biggest surges of COVID-19 in our community. While it is beneficial to review best practices and resources that were developed by schools during the pandemic, we disagree that additional study is needed regarding how private and some public schools were able to reopen early in the 2020-21 school year. After the recommendation from Public Health for a remote learning start in August, 2021, Miller Creek Elementary School District's first classes returned to in-person instruction in October, 2021.
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Finding

F5	As a consequence of significant differences in the amount of in-person instruction time offered by Marin County's 18 public school districts during the 2020-21 school year, Marin's public school students experienced wide disparities in educational instruction.
Response	We agree with the finding.

Finding

F6	A shortage of in-person instruction during the 2020-21 school year slowed measurable learning progress for many Marin public school students, resulting in deficits that should be addressed over the long-term with a concerted recovery program.
Response	We agree with the finding.

Finding

F7	Slow in-person school reopenings undermined confidence in public schools and contributed to an enrollment decline, potentially weakening long-term financial support for Marin's districts that rely on attendance for state funding.
Response	We <i>partially</i> disagree partially with the finding. Miller Creek School District is not funded through daily attendance. Our priority is to ensure that our public schools offer the highest level of academic rigor and expectations for learning while supporting the social emotional growth and well-being of our children.

Finding

F8	The Marin County Superintendent of Schools and Office of Education are best positioned to take a leadership role in enabling school districts to coordinate and implement a focused pandemic recovery plan that addresses students' academic, social, and emotional needs.
Response	We agree with the finding.