



Greenfield Union School District

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August 6, 2018

Honorable Stephanie E. Hulse
Judge of the Superior Court County of Monterey
240 Church Street
Salinas, CA 93101

RE: Response to the 2017-2018 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Final Report - "School Boards Make a Difference, Improving Education: The Role of Local School Boards"

Dear Honorable Judge Hulse:

The 2017-2018 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Final Report, "School Boards Make a Difference, Improving Education: The Role of Local School Boards," focuses on the critical role school boards play in shaping their school districts. This report is a Final Report for the purposes of Penal Code section 33. The Greenfield Union School District must submit comments on the report within ninety (90) days following its transmittal. Our District is responsible for findings F1-F8 and Recommendations R1-R6.

The Greenfield Union School District concurs with the Grand Jury Report that improving student achievement requires full public attention of the community. Please find below the Greenfield Union School District's responses to the recommendations.

FINDINGS

F1. Student 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.

Response: The Greenfield Union School District **agrees** with this finding and has taken a concerted effort to establish systems in our organization to ensure student achievement is of utmost importance. The Greenfield Union School District has made exceptional effort to establish and approve the following in 2017-18:

- A Clear Strategic Plan with a Vision, Mission, Core Values, and Board Priorities
- Organizational Systems of Professional Learning Communities to increase student achievement
- Essential Common Core Standards, Common Assessments, Data Analysis reports and approved Data Action plans to respond to data routinely, frequently, and systematically
- Reorganize the Organizational Structure districtwide to ensure functional school systems and departments
- Invest in Technology, Makerspaces, Instruction, Curriculum, Intervention, and Enrichment programs
- Adopt the Google Applications for Education suite to enhance student's technological skills
- Clear articulation between elementary and middle school and high school course offerings and pathways to ensure college and career success in the postsecondary world for ALL our students

Zandra Jo Galván, Superintendent

Sandra L. Cante, Board President ■ Mayra Perez-Diaz, Vice President ■ Sonia Heredia, Clerk
Leticia Argueta, Member ■ Juergen B. Smith, Member

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.

Response: The Greenfield Union School District **agrees** with this finding and proactively takes advantage of each professional development opportunity available. In fact, we are eager to register for the Masters in Governance trainings hosted by the Monterey County Office of Education this 2018-19 school year. Topics will include:

- Foundation of Effective Governance/Setting Direction
- Student Learning & Achievement/Policy & Judicial Review
- School Finance
- Human Resources/Collective Bargaining
- Community Relations & Advocacy/Governance Integration

F3. The Monterey County Office of Education and local school boards can do more to promote effective governance that is accountable to the community and produces better district outcomes.

Response: The Greenfield Union School District **agrees** with this finding. The Greenfield Union School District has provided leadership for effective governance by participating in the biannual Education Leadership Forums hosted by the Monterey County School Boards Association (MCSBA). This board training event is a full day of training for school board members and covers such topics as:

- Keys to Effective Leadership and Governance: Lessons Learned
- Board Relations and Developing Cohesive and Effective Governance Teams
- Understanding the Legal Requirements of School Boards and Board Members
- Behind the Numbers: Where California Stands in School Funding and What School Districts Can Do to Inform Public Perceptions of Education
- The Shift of Future Ready: Technology Integration and Innovative School Programs
- The Bully, The Bullied, and the Not-So-Innocent Bystander
- California's Fiscal and Political Outlook for K-12 Education and Legislative Overview
- The Role of Equity: California's New Accountability and Continuous Improvement System
- Raising Results for English Learners
- Preparing K-12 Students for the Rigor of College: What Districts Need to Do
- Human Trafficking Happens Here: Identifying and Responding to Human Trafficking
- A Focus on Undocumented Students: Ensuring a Safe and Affirming Learning Environment for All Students.

F4. Promoting effective local governance requires better public information, communication, and a strong commitment to board development.

Response: The Greenfield Union School District **agrees** that better public information, communication, and a strong commitment to board development are important elements of effective governance for school districts.

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.*

Response: The Greenfield Union School District **agrees** with this finding. The Board has been active in recent years in Monterey County School Boards Association trainings, as well as the National/California School Boards Association Annual Conferences, workshops, and trainings. The School Board has also participated in trainings locally regarding professional development and school governance. Some of the local training topics include:

- Superintendent & Board Relations
- District Vision, Mission, Core Values, and Board Priorities
- Collective Bargaining Workshop
- Finance, Budgets, and Human Resources
- Ethics and Law Training
- District Organization and Reorganization
- Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) and LCFF
- Superintendent Goal Setting

F6. *While the Monterey County Office of Education cannot dictate how school boards govern, they can provide strong leadership in promoting a culture of effective school board governance.*

Response: The Greenfield Union School District **agrees** that the Monterey County Office of Education can provide strong leadership in promoting a culture of effective school board governance. In recent years, the Greenfield Union School District has participated in effective school board workshops hosted by the Monterey County School Boards Association. Topics of these workshops include:

- Public Records What You Need to Know
- Annual Educational Leadership Summits November of each year
- MCSBA Annual Dinner & Organizational Meetings of each year
- Back to School Legal Updates Workshop by Lozano Smith

F7. *Information posted on Monterey County Office of Education and school district websites is insufficient and not user-friendly. It does not provide with adequate information about what school boards do, how to evaluate school board performance, or how to assess school district outcomes.*

Response: The Greenfield Union School District has a comprehensive website with documents that are accessible to the public. The District's link to the School Board is <http://www.greenfield.k12.ca.us/>

Active links from the District's website include the following:

- Our District Vision, Mission, and Core Values

- Our School Board of Trustees
- Our Schools
- Our Departments
- Our Parents and Students
- Our Community
- Live Calendar Events, Facebook and Twitter feeds
- All postings are available in Spanish Language

The Greenfield Union School District makes sure the website accessible to the public and maintain it in accordance with Section 204 of the Rehabilitation Act and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The District's website also conforms to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0.

F8. School boards can do better in fulfilling their responsibility to communicate with school district stakeholders.

Response: The Greenfield Union School District **agrees** that communication can always be improved and this requires efforts of continuous improvement. The District communicates with the public by providing weekly and monthly newsletters, current website information, Parent Square communication application, Parent Cafes at all school sites, Parent Academies, and school Marquees. The district also communicates with the public through Twitter and Facebook, with hundreds of followers every day.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. School Boards should adopt a policy to commit to all National School Boards Association best practices.

Response: The Greenfield Union School District **agrees** that school boards should adopt a policy to commit to all National School Boards Association best practices. The Greenfield Union School District Board of Trustees has attended the California School Boards Association Annual Conference for the past several years. They continue to seek out best practices from a National and State Perspective. The strands that have been presented include the following:

- New School Board Members
- Closing the Achievement Gap
- Community and Adolescent Resiliency-Unifying Solution
- School Safety
- Disrupting Poverty: Where to Start...What to Stop
- School Boards and Superintendents Partnering for Innovation
- School Board/Superintendent Relations
- What the Public Wants from our Schools
- Addressing Neighborhood effects in High Poverty Schools
- Strategies Proven to Inspire & Engage Every Student

R2. School Boards should adopt a bylaw to make initial training and ongoing workshops mandatory.

Response: Greenfield Union School District **agrees** with this statement. It is important for school board members to develop their skills and knowledge to become highly effective board members. Our current bylaw on Board training indicates that training is encouraged by board members. Budgeted funds available for board members to attend the necessary trainings is of utmost importance.

R3. *Schools Boards, along with their superintendent and teacher union representatives, should make annual public presentations on school district goals and student achievement*

Response: The Greenfield Union School District **agrees** with this recommendation. This recommendation has already been implemented in accordance with the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP). This plan requires the engagement of all stakeholders in the process, including bargaining units. Also, the LCAP is presented at a public hearing and approved at a regular board meeting each year.

R4. *Schools Boards should provide clear, concise, and easy to find communications on their district's goals and outcomes on their district's website.*

Response: The Greenfield Union School District **agrees** with this recommendation. The Greenfield Union School District is required to post the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) on the website each year. The LCAP includes the District's LCAP goals and student achievement results. In addition, the District is required to post their Annual Accountability Report Cards by February 1st of each year on our website.

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 candidates*

Response: The Greenfield Union School District **agrees** with this recommendation. The District has posted on the website the roles and responsibilities of school board members to educate parents, the public, and potential school board members.

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.*

Response: The Greenfield Union School District Board of Trustees **agrees** with this recommendation. Potential school board candidates should attend school board meetings, and read information on the district's website, which includes board policies, administrative regulations, and board by-laws. Potential candidates should also contact other board members or the district superintendent to learn more about board member roles and responsibilities.