



NOVATO
UNIFIED
SCHOOL
DISTRICT

Dr. Tracy Smith
Superintendent

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June 25, 2024

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

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

Dear Judge Talamantes and Foreperson Kerr,

Below is the Novato Unified School District's response to the 2023-2024 Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report dated April 19, 2024, *A Free Public Education Includes School Supplies*.

FINDINGS:

F1: Some Marin public schools do not comply with "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 fund to provide supplies, materials, or equipment for students.

Response: *We agree with the finding.*

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RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1: All Marin public schools should follow California's "free public education" law.

Response: This recommendation has been implemented. All Novato Unified School District (NUSD) schools and classes follow California Education Code 49011 and 56040(a) regarding the provision of a free and appropriate public education.

- 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: This recommendation has been implemented. NUSD schools and classes provide all required supplies, materials and equipment at no cost to students or their families to fully participate at school.

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

Response: This recommendation has been implemented. NUSD schools and classes do not provide school supply lists to students or their families.

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

Response: This recommendation has been implemented. NUSD schools and classes do not distribute school supply lists indicating that the supplies are optional.

- 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: This recommendation has been implemented. The Novato Unified School District Superintendent has directed and ensured that all supplies, materials, and equipment needed to participate in educational activities within NUSD schools and classes are provided free of charge.

- 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 clear it clear that that donations are not required but rather are entirely voluntary.

Response: This recommendation has been implemented. NUSD does not require donations of any kind and always ensures that any donations solicited are voluntary contributions. Each year, NUSD emails to families and staff information about a student's right to a free education for all school/education activities, whether curricular or extracurricular, and whether a student gets a grade for the activity or class. It also includes information on voluntary contributions. The letter can be found [here](#).

Novato Unified School District Response to the Marin County Grand Jury Report

"A Free Public Education Includes School Supplies"

- 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 in school.

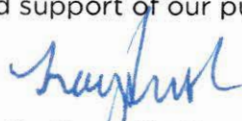
Response: This recommendation has been implemented. NUSD is committed to providing all the supplies, materials, or equipment needed by our teachers and staff. In addition, NUSD is very fortunate to have the support from School Fuel, NUSD's education foundation, many Parent Teacher Associations/Organizations, booster organizations, and other specialized program foundations that support our schools and teachers.

Sincerely,

Thank you for your continued attention and support of our public schools and our county's young people and families.



Julie Jacobson
President, NUSD Board of Trustees



Dr. Tracy Smith
Superintendent

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Grand Jury Report **RESPONSE FORM: 2023-2024 Marin Civil Grand Jury Report**

Report Title: "Free Public Education Includes School Supplies" _____

Respondent/Agency Name: Novato Unified School District _____

Submitter Name: Dr. Tracy Smith _____ Title: Superintendent _____

FINDINGS

- Agree with the findings numbered: __F1, F2, F3, F4, F5_____
- Disagree *partially* with the findings numbered: _____
- Disagree *wholly* with the findings numbered: _____

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7__ 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 _____ will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.
(Attach an **explanation**.)

Date: 6/25/24 Signed: Tracy Smith

Number of pages attached: 2