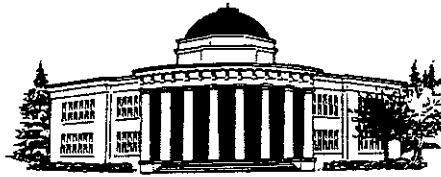


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September 2, 2016

The Honorable Donald Segerstrom
Tuolumne County Superior Court
60 North Washington Street
Sonora, CA 95370

Re: Response to Grand Jury Report – School Reorganization Committee Report

Dear Judge Segerstrom:

On behalf of the Sonora Union High School District Governing Board, we would like to thank the entire Grand Jury panel for their time and effort serving the citizens of Tuolumne County. As requested by the Grand Jury, we have carefully reviewed each finding and recommendation and provide the following response.

Grand Jury Findings

- F1** There is a redundancy in purchasing, bus fleet management and other management scenarios that would benefit from further transparency. Participation in a JPA appears to have potential for greater efficiencies and cost savings

Response: SUHSD agrees. But the amount of redundancy has greatly diminished over the last several years due to school district sharing of services.

- F2** The high level of inter-district transfer requests creates administrative and enrollment issues for the districts.

Response: SUHSD agrees. But if schools were reorganized into one or more districts, there would be just as many intra-district transfers which would have the same issues for the schools.

Grand Jury Recommendations

- R1** A cost benefit analysis of opportunities for more JPA efforts should be undertaken by every school district, and greater purchasing by the JPA should be implemented where savings are apparent.

Response: This recommendation has already been largely implemented. All of the districts in the county already receive lower pricing through Apple, Dell, Office Depot, Staples, Ricoh, and most large vendors for school supplies due to a piggyback bid or

prices negotiated by the State. SYSCO also provides discount pricing for cafeteria supplies for all school districts based upon the total number of students. The SELPA program consolidated all busing for Special Education Students.

The Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools conducts joint propane bidding with local propane companies on behalf of all school districts giving districts the lowest price possible for propane. All school districts benefit equally from E-Rate, Mandated by Congress in 1996 and implemented by the FCC in 1997, which provides discounted telecommunications, Internet access, and internal connections to all schools in Tuolumne County, funded by the Universal Service Fund. All school districts contract with the County Superintendent of Schools for technology services, who serves as a quasi-IT JPA, offering high quality network, security and phone service at a significantly reduced rate than what districts could purchase independently. The Tuolumne JPA, operated by the Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools, administers property, liability and worker's compensation insurance programs for member school districts in Alpine, Amador, Calaveras and Tuolumne. Each school district in Tuolumne County is a member of the Tuolumne JPA and receives the benefit of the group pricing for insurance, liability and workers compensation and training. The school districts within Tuolumne County collaborate with the Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools, who provide high quality cost efficient professional development, saving districts travel and hotel expenses for State mandated programs and/or required trainings. Medical, dental and vision insurance rates are based on the number of participants in the health plans living in Tuolumne County.

- R2** The Grand Jury recommends that an independent and definitive study of the economic benefits and costs of school district reorganization be undertaken. The results of this study, and the section of the California Education Code pertaining to school district consolidation, should be actively made available to all Tuolumne County taxpayers and elected officials. Grants from appropriate public or private agencies should be pursued to pay for this study.

Response: This recommendation has already been implemented. There has been a study conducted in the county regarding unification or unionization of districts. Recently, a small but vocal group tried to place this matter on a local ballot but did not get enough public support. If a new study is conducted we look forward to evaluating the recommendations.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the above finding and recommendation. Please feel free to contact us should you have any questions regarding same.

Sincerely,



Patrick A. Chabot
Secretary, Board of Trustees
Superintendent
cc: Board of Supervisors