

Pam Rennick
Superintendent/Principal

BALLARD SCHOOL DISTRICT

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GOVERNING BOARD:

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November 10, 2021

To:

Presiding Judge Gustavo Lavayen
312 E. Cook St.
Santa Maria, CA 93454

Pamela Olsen
Foreperson
Santa Barbara County Grand Jury
sbcgj@sbcourts.org

From:

Pamela Rennick
Superintendent/Principal
Ballard School District
2425 School Street
Solvang, CA 93460

Re:

2021 Santa Barbara County Grand Jury Report on Remote Learning During COVID-19

On behalf of the Ballard School District, I have reviewed the report on "Remote Learning During COVID-19" developed by the 2021 Santa Barbara County Grand Jury and submit the following responses as requested in Foreperson Olsen's communication of November 8, 2021.

Finding 1

In-person learning is more effective than remote learning both academically and emotionally.

Ballard School District response: Agree.

Finding 2

For student achievement, especially for low performing students, in-person learning in small classes or small groups is preferable to larger classrooms.

Ballard School District response: Agree.

Finding 3

Remote learning exposed the importance of outreach efforts to provide coaching to parents on creating a positive home learning environment.

Ballard School District response: Agree.

Finding 4

Santa Barbara County school districts did not use one common test throughout Santa Barbara County, making it impossible to compare countywide testing results.

Ballard School District response: Agree. At the conclusion of the 2020-21 school year, we administered Renaissance STAR reading and STAR math, in addition to Dibels reading assessments in grades 1-6. We did not administer the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) tests in English/language arts and mathematics.

Recommendation 4

That the Santa Barbara County school districts and the Santa Barbara County Education Office work together to develop a common summative testing program to be adopted for all Santa Barbara County school districts for the 2022-23 school year.

Ballard School District response: Will be implemented. By 2022-23 we expect that all Santa Barbara County school districts will have resumed regular administration of California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) tests in English/language arts and mathematics in grades 3-8 and 11. Ballard will administer the CAASPP tests for English/language arts and mathematics in grades 3-6 in the spring of 2022.

Finding 5

Students with the greatest learning loss will require a concentrated effort to bring them up to Federal and State grade level standards.

Ballard School District response: Agree.

Recommendation 5

That Santa Barbara County Schools outline their plans to attain Federal and State grade level standards for math and English language arts.

Ballard School District response: Has been implemented. Goal 5 of the Ballard School District Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) is the implementation of California standards, including ELD standards, to ensure excellence in student learning for all students in all subject areas through high quality instruction. The LCAP contains a detailed action plan to bring about improved student achievement.

Finding 6

As the 2020-21 school year wore on, remote learning and teaching techniques and students' computer skills improved.

Ballard School District response: Agree.

Finding 7

Federal and State COVID relief funds cannot be counted on indefinitely.

Ballard School District response: Agree.

Finding 8

Community organizations provided critical assistance to the Santa Barbara County school districts by expanding their efforts to bridge the learning gap between the home environment and school.

Ballard School District response: Agree.

Recommendation 8

That each Santa Barbara County school district develop plans by the start of the 2022-23 school year to encourage community organizations to continue to provide critical academic and emotional support.

Ballard School District response: Will continue to be implemented. We currently partner with local organizations including People Helping People, Santa Barbara Youth Coalition and the Stuart C. Gildred YMCA to help provide academic and emotional support for students in addition to working with the Santa Ynez Valley Special Education Consortium.

Finding 9

Internet services were critical to remote learning and, in most cases, Santa Barbara County school districts filled the gap for homes that did not have them.

Ballard School District response: Agree.

Recommendation 9

That each Santa Barbara County school district maintain adequate internet services for all students if distance learning or an emergency should again require remote learning.

Ballard School District response: Will continue to be implemented. During the initial school closure, Ballard School supported families in need of internet services, by having those students come to the school and use the school's services and by lending needed devices for home use so that all students had access to the necessary technology. We would be prepared to do the same if distance learning or an emergency required remote learning in the future.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Rennick', written in a cursive style.

Pamela Rennick
Superintendent/Principal
Ballard School District