



BUPELLTON UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

301 Second Street - Room 1 • Buellton, CA 93427
Telephone (805) 686-2767 • Fax (805) 686-2719

DR. RANDAL HAGGARD
Superintendent

LISA MELBY
Principal
JONATA SCHOOL
301 Second Street
Buellton, CA 93427-9476
(805) 688-4222 • Fax (805) 688-6611

LISA MELBY
Principal
OAK VALLEY ELEMENTARY
595 Second Street
Buellton, CA 93427-6801
(805) 688-6992 • Fax (805) 688-1364

TRUSTEES
Elaine Alvarado
Allison Jordan
Christy Nordgren
Jessie Skidmore
Ryan Sullivan

November 9, 2021

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

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

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

Honorable Judge Lavayen and Ms. Olsen,
On behalf of the Buellton Union 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.

BUPELLTON USD response: Agree. Some families preferred the remote learning format and for various reasons a small number of families have sought to have their students continue in independent study in 2021-22.

- **Finding 2**

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

BUPELLTON USD response: Agree. This was part of the district rationale in providing this type of learning support for our most at-risk students throughout the 2020-2021 school year, even while providing “distanced learning” through our Virtual Academy.

- **Finding 3**

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

BUPELLTON USD response: Agree. Indeed, remote learning exposed the importance of efforts such as the district’s Student Engagement Teams (SET) approach to maintain student and family engagement in learning.

- **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.

BUELLTON USD response: Agree. For summative testing at the conclusion of the 2020-21 school year, the district administered Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments in English/Language Arts and Mathematics in grades 1-8.

- **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.

BUELLTON USD response: Will be implemented. By 2022-23 at the latest, the district expects 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.

- **Finding 5**

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

BUELLTON USD response: Agree. Efforts to engage students through targeted interventions and expanded learning opportunities are essential to address incomplete learning for all students.

- **Recommendation 5**

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

BUELLTON USD response: Has been implemented. Goals 2 & 3 of the Buellton Union School District Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) is to provide students high quality instruction that maximizes student achievement, including all academic content areas. All Buellton USD School Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) documents include specific goals for student achievement in English/Language Arts and Mathematics, with the goal of all students achieving proficiency. The LCAP and SPSA include detailed action plans to bring about improved student achievement. These plans can be accessed in their entirety at:

<http://www.buelltonusd.org/>

- **Finding 6**

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

BUELLTON USD response: Agree.

- **Finding 7**

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

BUELLTON USD response: Agree. The district appreciates the additional support in this challenging time and is hopeful that this may precipitate further discussions regarding inequities in school funding.

- **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.

BUELLTON USD response: Agree. Partnerships with People Helping People, Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCA, and the City of Buellton all increased capacity for the district to provide support for families in this challenging time.

- **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.

BUELLTON USD response: Has been implemented. The district has only enhanced and augmented partnerships with People Helping People, Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCA, and the City of Buellton to provide increased capacity for the district to support families. Each community partnership provides important support for students and families.

- **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.

BUELLTON USD response: Agree. This is a particular challenge for families living in rural areas where the infrastructure to support high-speed internet does not exist.

- **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.

BUELLTON USD response: Has been implemented. Though it remains a challenge, the district continues to support internet services, either by providing information on low-cost internet access or by loaning families Wi-Fi hot spots to support learning. Until further state-wide commitment to provide bandwidth to rural areas, this will continue to be a challenge for some of the district's most vulnerable students who live in rural areas beyond the reach of commercial internet providers.

Respectfully submitted,



Randal L. Haggard, Ed. D.
Superintendent
Buellton Union School District