



Guadalupe Union School District

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Emilio M. Handall, Ed.D.
District Superintendent

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December 8, 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: Emilio M. Handall, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Guadalupe Union School District
4465 Ninth Street
Guadalupe, CA 93434

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

On behalf of the Guadalupe 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.

GUSD response: Agree. We do note that some families preferred the remote learning format and 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.

GUSD response: Agree.

Finding 3

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

GUSD 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.

GUSD response: Agree. For summative testing during the 2020-21 school year, we administered Renaissance/STAR assessments in reading and mathematics in grades K-8 and California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) tests in English/language arts and mathematics in grades 3-8 at the conclusion of the school year.

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.

GUSD 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.

Finding 5

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

GUSD 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.

GUSD response: Has been implemented. Goal 1 of the Guadalupe Union School District Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) is to provide students high quality instruction that maximizes student achievement, including student accomplishment of English/language arts and mathematics standards.

Finding 6

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

GUSD response: Agree.

Finding 7

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

GUSD 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.

GUSD 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.

GUSD response: Will be implemented. We are one of several school districts participating in a county consortium that is working to build stronger links between schools and governmental and community supports. The goal of the consortium is to foster “warm handoffs” when referrals are made so as to ensure that youth and families are accessing the services they need. Our school district is represented on the Fighting Back Santa Maria Valley board of directors, and we value the programs FBSMV provides in support of students, parents, and families. Finally, we already partner with local organizations ranging from the Santa Maria Valley YMCA to Central Coast Boys and Girls Club to United Way of Santa Barbara County to Allan Hancock College. Each partnership provides important support for students.

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.

GUSD 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.

GUSD response: Has been implemented. Our Technology Department routinely supports families with internet services, either by providing information on low-cost internet access or by loaning them Wi-Fi hot spots.

Sincerely and respectfully submitted,



Emilio M. Handall, Ed. D.

Superintendent

Guadalupe Union School District