



# ORCUTT Union School District

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*First*

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November 9, 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: Holly Edds, Ed.D.  
Superintendent  
Orcutt Union School District  
500 Dyer St.  
Orcutt, CA 93455

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

On behalf of the Orcutt 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.

**OUSD 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.

**OUSD response:** Agree.

### **Finding 3**

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

**OUSD 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.

**OUSD response:** Agree. For summative testing at the conclusion of the 2020-21 school year, we administered Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) tests in reading and mathematics in grades 1-8 and California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) tests in English/language arts and mathematics in grade 11.

**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.

**OUSD 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.

**OUSD 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.

**OUSD response:** Has been implemented. Goal 1 of the Orcutt Union School District and Orcutt Academy Charter Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs) is to provide students high quality instruction that maximizes student achievement, including student accomplishment of English/language arts and mathematics standards. Goal 1 of all Orcutt schools' School Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) documents is to improve student achievement in English/language arts, with the goal of all students achieving proficiency. Goal 2 of all Orcutt schools' SPSAs is to improve student achievement in mathematics, with the goal of all students achieving proficiency. The LCAPs and SPSAs contain detailed action plans 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.

**OUSD response:** Agree.

**Finding 7**

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

**OUSD 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.

**OUSD 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.

**OUSD 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 Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce 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.

**OUSD 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.

**OUSD 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 wifi hot spots.

Sincerely and respectfully submitted,

Holly Edds, Ed. D.  
Superintendent  
Orcutt Union School District