Santa Barbara County Education Office

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Susan C. Salcido, Superintendent of Schools

June 9, 2023

The Honorable Pauline Maxwell
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Christian McGrath, Foreman
Keith Staub, Chair, Cities and Districts Committee
Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury
sbcgj@sbcourts.org

Re: Cybersecurity in Santa Barbara County Schools

Dear Judge Maxwell, Foreperson McGrath, Chair Staub, and Grand Jury Members:

Thank you for your attention to the topic of cybersecurity in Santa Barbara County
schools. Given the ever-increasing complexity and sophistication of cybersecurity attacks, I am
grateful for your support as we work to protect the educational system from significant threats to
information and integrity. School leaders throughout Santa Barbara County continually focus on
and increase efforts to enhance cybersecurity in their respective districts.

On behalf of the Santa Barbara County Education Office (SBCEO), I am responding to your
report dated June 6, 2023, by the requested deadline of June 9, 2023.

Please note: In the Grand Jury's report of findings, it is unclear whether the Grand Jury uses the
title "Santa Barbara County school districts" synonymously with "Santa Barbara County
Education Office." The Santa Barbara County Education Office is a <u>separate</u> entity from Santa
Barbara County school districts, and therefore the responses are written to reflect the
difference.

Finding 1
Santa Barbara County school districts have not mandated formal cybersecurity training for
school administrators, teachers, staff, and students.

SBCEO response: "Santa Barbara County school districts" (of which there are 20 districts, plus
10 charter schools), each has a local superintendent and school board that determine the types
of training it requires beyond what is required by law. The Santa Barbara County Education
Office does not mandate formal cybersecurity training for districts over which they do not have
jurisdiction.

Finding 2
Santa Barbara County school districts have not required the use of multi-factor authentication.

SBCEO response: "Santa Barbara County school districts" locally determine their level(s) of security authentication.

Finding 3
That some Santa Barbara County school districts are not adequately insured for losses arising from cybersecurity incidents, not insured for cybersecurity, or lack sufficient coverage limits.

SBCEO response: Each "Santa Barbara County school district" makes local and independent decisions as to whether to carry cybersecurity incident insurance, and if so, how much.

Finding 4
That the districts fail to report cyber-attacks.

SBCEO response: Local districts report cyber attacks to various sources as are required by law, and are not required to report attacks to county offices of education. Entities to which a district may report: the school district's insurance company, legal counsel, local law enforcement, the California Cybersecurity Integration Center, and notifications to those whose personally identifying information has been compromised.

Finding 5
Although some district IT members meet from time to time to discuss recent cyber updates, problems, and problem resolution, attendance is voluntary and many rarely attend.

SBCEO response: A district's IT team and its members meet as required by their local administration. SBCEO convenes voluntary countywide IT meetings approximately 3 to 5 times per year.

Thank you for the work you do on behalf of Santa Barbara County, and for your consideration of the 20 school districts and nearly 70,000 students throughout our county. We are grateful for your concern for preventing cybersecurity attacks and safeguarding our systems and sensitive data.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Susan Salcido
Santa Barbara County Superintendent of Schools