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FILED
SUPERIOR COURT of CALIFORNIA
COUNTY of SANTA BARBARA
07/17/2026
Angela Braun, Executive Officer
BY *Mark Hanson*
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June 12, 2026

The Honorable Patricia Kelly
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
Santa Barbara County Superior Court
pkelly@sbcourts.org

Stacy Mezzetta de Cossio
Foreperson
2025-2026 Santa Barbara County Grand Jury
sbcgj@sbcourts.org

Re: 2025-2026 Santa Barbara County Grand Jury Report: "Preparing for the Unthinkable: How are Santa Barbara County Schools Preparing to Prevent or Minimize the Effects of a Potential Mass Shooting?"

Dear Honorable Judge Kelly and Foreperson Mezzetta de Cossio:

The Cold Spring School District Governing Board has formally received the 2025-2026 Santa Barbara County Grand Jury Report entitled "Preparing for the Unthinkable: How are Santa Barbara County Schools Preparing to Prevent or Minimize the Effects of a Potential Mass Shooting." On behalf of the Cold Spring School District Governing Board and District administration, we appreciate the Grand Jury's attention to the critical importance of school safety, targeted violence prevention, emergency preparedness, campus security, and student wellness.

Cold Spring School District is a single-school elementary district serving approximately 192 students in grades TK-6. The District has long prioritized a safe, secure, supportive, and responsive school environment. When the Superintendent/Principal arrived at Cold Spring School District nine years ago, the District invited the Department of Homeland Security to conduct a safety review and identify critical areas for improvement. Since that time, the District has implemented significant school safety upgrades, including the Standard Response Protocol, schoolwide emergency training, a fob-based door lock system, window safety coverings, a locked front gate and controlled-access entry system, security cameras, artificial intelligence-aided camera review capabilities, anonymous reporting pathways, and ongoing safety training for staff, students, and families.

Cold Spring School District was also one of the first school districts in Santa Barbara County to implement the Standard Response Protocol prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The District received training from trainers affiliated with the “I Love U Guys” Foundation/Sandy Hook-related school safety work, and the Superintendent/Principal served as the lead trainer for the District. Cold Spring is grateful that the Standard Response Protocol has since been implemented broadly across school districts in Santa Barbara County, creating shared language and expectations for students, staff, families, first responders, and school communities.

The District’s Comprehensive School Safety Plan is reviewed annually and includes emergency response procedures, active threat response, lockdown procedures, safe ingress and egress, communication protocols, student supervision, staff roles and responsibilities, and coordination with local law enforcement, fire authority, and first responders. All staff are trained in the Standard Response Protocol. The District has also created student-friendly and parent-friendly safety videos using artificial intelligence tools, including NotebookLM, so students and families can better understand emergency response procedures in an age-appropriate and accessible way.

The District also gathers annual anonymous feedback from parents and students regarding school safety, school climate, and their sense of belonging and security. The District’s most recent anonymous parent and student survey results reflect strong confidence that Cold Spring School is a safe and secure campus.

Per your instructions and pursuant to California Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the Cold Spring School District Governing Board provides the following responses to the enumerated findings and recommendations in the report.

Finding 1

The Santa Barbara County Education Office provides County school districts training in identifying pathways to targeted violence, although attendance by employees of the various Santa Barbara County school districts in the SBCEO’s School Safety Symposium is limited.

Cold Spring School District Governing Board Response: Agree.

Cold Spring School District agrees that training related to identifying pathways to targeted violence is important and that access to school safety training should be available for school administrators, teachers, classified staff, substitute teachers, temporary personnel, and other school employees.

Cold Spring School District has long prioritized training related to emergency preparedness, threat response, student wellness, and safety protocols. The District has implemented the Standard Response Protocol and trains staff on emergency procedures. In addition, the District values the school safety support provided by the Santa Barbara County Education Office, local law enforcement, fire officials, and first responder agencies.

Recommendation 1b

The Grand Jury recommends that all Santa Barbara County school districts require administrative leaders to attend the School Safety Symposium in person at least once every two years.

Cold Spring School District Governing Board Response: Will not be implemented as written.

Cold Spring School District agrees with the intent of this recommendation, which is to ensure that school district administrative leaders remain current on school safety practices, targeted violence prevention, emergency response procedures, and evolving best practices. However, the District does not believe that requiring attendance at a specifically defined in-person “School Safety Symposium” at least once every two years is necessary, feasible, or the most effective way to accomplish this purpose for Cold Spring School District.

Cold Spring is a single-school elementary district serving approximately 192 students. The Superintendent/Principal serves as both the district and site leader and is directly responsible for implementing, training, reviewing, and updating the District’s safety practices. Given the size and structure of the District, safety training is most effective when it is ongoing, site-specific, practical, and directly connected to the actual systems, campus layout, response protocols, and procedures used at Cold Spring School.

The District already participates in ongoing safety-related training, meetings, and collaboration throughout the year. The Superintendent/Principal works closely with superintendents across Santa Barbara County, the Santa Barbara County Education Office, local law enforcement, fire officials, and other first responders to remain current on school safety expectations, emergency response procedures, and updates to the Standard Response Protocol.

Cold Spring School District was an early adopter of the Standard Response Protocol and continues to monitor updates and new guidance as protocols evolve. When new information, revised procedures, or updated best practices become available, the Superintendent/Principal reviews and incorporates that information into site-based training, staff communication, emergency procedures, and the District’s Comprehensive School Safety Plan as appropriate.

For these reasons, Cold Spring School District will not implement the recommendation as written. The District will, however, continue to ensure that administrative leadership remains current through ongoing trainings, countywide meetings, collaboration with law enforcement and first responders, review of updated Standard Response Protocol guidance, and annual site-based safety planning.

Recommendation 1c

The Grand Jury recommends that all Santa Barbara County school districts encourage teachers and staff to attend the School Safety Symposium in person, and if not in person, access the online seminar annually.

Cold Spring School District Governing Board Response: Will not be implemented as written.

Cold Spring School District agrees with the intent of this recommendation: all teachers and staff should receive regular, meaningful, and current school safety training. However, the District does not believe that requiring or formally encouraging all teachers and staff to attend a specific School Safety Symposium in person, or to access a specific online seminar annually, is necessary, feasible, or the most effective way to meet this objective for Cold Spring School District.

Cold Spring School District has already implemented annual school safety training for certificated and classified staff. Each year, the Superintendent/Principal provides school safety training that includes the District’s Comprehensive School Safety Plan, Standard Response Protocol, emergency procedures, campus security expectations, student supervision, communication protocols, and

response procedures for a range of emergency situations. Staff are trained on the specific systems, procedures, campus layout, and expectations that apply directly to Cold Spring School.

The District believes school safety training is most effective when it is site-specific, practical, repeated, and directly connected to the actual emergency systems and procedures used on campus. Cold Spring was an early adopter of the Standard Response Protocol and continues to train staff, students, substitutes, and temporary personnel using clear common language and developmentally appropriate procedures.

In addition to District-led annual training, staff may access online safety videos, seminars, and updated safety resources when appropriate to remain current on new protocols, procedures, and best practices. The Superintendent/Principal also works closely with superintendents across Santa Barbara County, the Santa Barbara County Education Office, local law enforcement, fire officials, and other first responders to review safety practices, share information, and support consistent emergency preparedness across school districts.

For these reasons, Cold Spring School District will not implement the recommendation as written. The District will, however, continue to provide annual school safety training to all staff, review updated safety guidance, participate in relevant countywide safety discussions, and ensure that staff are trained on the protocols and procedures necessary to keep Cold Spring students, staff, and families safe.

Finding 2

Santa Barbara County school districts are compliant in creating Comprehensive School Safety Plans for their schools, but some staff require more information and training on safety protocols.

Cold Spring School District Governing Board Response: Agree.

Cold Spring School District agrees that all staff should receive clear, consistent, and repeated training on safety protocols. The District also agrees that training should include full-time staff, part-time staff, substitutes, temporary personnel, and students.

Cold Spring School District has an adopted Comprehensive School Safety Plan and provides training and drills related to emergency response procedures. The District was an early adopter of the Standard Response Protocol and continues to train staff and students using common language and age-appropriate expectations.

Cold Spring has also created student-friendly and parent-friendly videos using AI technology, including NotebookLM, to help students and families better understand the Standard Response Protocol and the District's safety procedures. The District believes that effective emergency preparedness requires not only written plans, but also accessible communication, repeated training, and shared understanding among staff, students, families, and first responders.

Recommendation 2a

The Grand Jury recommends that the Santa Barbara County school districts train and drill all fulltime campus personnel and students for campus safety at least once per semester.

Cold Spring School District Governing Board Response: Has been implemented.

Cold Spring School District trains and drills staff and students in campus safety and emergency procedures, including the Standard Response Protocol. The District conducts safety drills and reviews emergency procedures with staff and students in a developmentally appropriate manner.

All staff are trained on the Standard Response Protocol, and students are provided with age-appropriate safety instruction. The District's student-friendly safety video helps students understand safety procedures in a calm, accessible, and developmentally appropriate way.

Cold Spring will continue to conduct emergency drills, review protocols with staff and students, and maintain a balanced approach that prepares students and adults for emergencies without creating unnecessary fear or trauma.

Recommendation 2b

The Grand Jury recommends that the Santa Barbara County school districts provide written and verbal instruction to all temporary personnel, including substitute teachers, prior to their entering a new classroom location.

Cold Spring School District Governing Board Response: Has been implemented.

Cold Spring School District has implemented this recommendation district-wide. All substitute teachers and temporary personnel receive written directions regarding the District's emergency procedures and Standard Response Protocol every time they substitute or serve on campus.

The District provides substitute teachers with a one- to two-page written document that includes the Standard Response Protocol, emergency procedures, and clear directions regarding what to do in the event of an emergency. This information is provided as part of the substitute materials so that temporary personnel have immediate access to the safety expectations and response procedures for the classroom or assignment they are covering.

Cold Spring also uses a "30-second implementation plan" approach to ensure that emergency procedures are clear, concise, and easy to follow in real time. This helps substitute teachers and temporary personnel quickly understand how to respond in different emergency situations, including lockdown, evacuation, shelter, hold, secure, or other campus safety responses.

Because substitute teachers and temporary personnel receive written emergency response directions and Standard Response Protocol information each time they serve on campus, the District considers this recommendation implemented. Cold Spring will continue to review and update these materials as part of its annual safety planning process.

Recommendation 2c

The Grand Jury recommends that the Santa Barbara County school districts provide quick reference situational cards and/or information posters conveying simple instructions for emergency response procedures in every classroom and in public rooms.

Cold Spring School District Governing Board Response: Has been implemented.

Cold Spring School District has implemented the Standard Response Protocol and provides staff with clear emergency response procedures. The District uses common emergency response language and has trained staff in the Standard Response Protocol.

The District provides simple emergency response information in classrooms and appropriate public spaces so staff can quickly reference emergency procedures. The District will continue to ensure that quick-reference emergency response information is available in classrooms and appropriate public spaces.

The District will also continue to review posted information as part of its annual safety review to ensure that emergency response procedures remain clear, visible, and aligned with the Standard Response Protocol.

Finding 3

While many Santa Barbara County school districts have a watch, listen, and report culture for enhancement of threat detection in their schools, not all schools have anonymous pathways for reporting threats or potential threats online or on campus.

Cold Spring School District Governing Board Response: Agree.

Cold Spring School District agrees that a strong watch, listen, and report culture is essential to school safety. The District also agrees that students, parents, and staff should have multiple ways to report concerns, including concerns related to threats, weapons, student wellness, bullying, self-harm, or other safety issues.

As a small single-school district, Cold Spring benefits from close relationships among students, staff, families, and administration. Students are known well by adults on campus, and staff are trained to respond quickly when concerns arise. The Superintendent/Principal, teachers, school psychologist, support staff, and families communicate regularly regarding student safety, social-emotional needs, peer conflict, and behavioral concerns.

The District also administers anonymous annual surveys to parents and students regarding school climate, safety, and student well-being. These survey results are used to monitor school climate and inform District planning.

Recommendation 3a

The Grand Jury recommends that all Santa Barbara County school districts train school personnel on how to gain trust, understand healthy boundaries, and engage in strategic partnerships with community service groups to support student needs.

Cold Spring School District Governing Board Response: Has been implemented.

Cold Spring School District has implemented practices designed to build trust, maintain healthy boundaries, and connect students and families with appropriate support. As a small elementary school district, Cold Spring places a high value on relationships, student belonging, social-emotional support, and proactive communication with families.

The District supports student needs through classroom teachers, the Superintendent/Principal, the school psychologist, intervention staff, special education staff, and community partnerships. Cold Spring also partners with the Cook Center for Human Connection through ParentGuidance.org, which provides families with access to parent coaching, mental health resources, webinars, and practical tools related to anxiety, emotional regulation, social media, bullying, family communication, student wellness, and other social-emotional needs.

The District will continue to train and support staff in maintaining trusted relationships with students, recognizing concerns, understanding appropriate professional boundaries, and engaging families and community partners when students need additional support.

Recommendation 3b

The Grand Jury recommends that all Santa Barbara County school districts provide an anonymous reporting mechanism on school-provided devices, in addition to a drop box available on campus.

Cold Spring School District Governing Board Response: Has been implemented.

Cold Spring School District has implemented multiple pathways for students and parents/guardians to report concerns, including anonymous reporting options. Each year, students complete an anonymous survey that allows them to communicate concerns related to school safety, school climate, peer relationships, belonging, and overall well-being. The District reviews this feedback to identify concerns, monitor trends, and strengthen student support and campus safety practices.

In addition to the annual anonymous student survey, Cold Spring School District provides a physical dropbox outside the Superintendent/Principal's office. Students and parents/guardians may leave anonymous notes, concerns, or information in this box at any time. Students may also submit an anonymous letter directly to the school office if they have a concern they wish to share.

As a small single-school district, Cold Spring also maintains a strong "watch, listen, and report" culture through trusted relationships among students, staff, families, and administration. Students are encouraged to report urgent concerns immediately to a trusted adult, while the anonymous survey and dropbox provide additional options for students or families who may feel more comfortable sharing concerns anonymously.

The District will continue to promote these reporting pathways and review the information received through them as part of its ongoing commitment to student safety, threat prevention, wellness, and a safe and supportive school climate.

Finding 4

School Resource Officers or Deputies are valuable in preventing or addressing potentially dangerous situations on campus, but many schools do not employ them.

Cold Spring School District Governing Board Response: Disagree partially.

Cold Spring School District agrees that School Resource Officers or Deputies may be valuable in preventing or addressing potentially dangerous situations on some campuses, particularly larger middle schools and high schools. The District also agrees that strong relationships with local law enforcement are essential to school safety.

However, Cold Spring School District is a small TK-6 elementary school district with approximately 192 students and does not employ a full-time School Resource Officer or Deputy. The District maintains strong working relationships with local law enforcement and first responders and consults with them as part of its ongoing safety planning.

Cold Spring believes that its current model—secure campus access, camera systems, schoolwide fob-based locking systems, visible supervision, trained staff, strong relationships with students and

families, school psychology support, and coordination with law enforcement—is appropriate for its size, grade span, and campus context.

Recommendation 4

The Grand Jury recommends that all Santa Barbara County school districts have School Resource Officers or Deputies.

Cold Spring School District Governing Board Response: Will not be implemented at this time.

Cold Spring School District does not plan to employ a full-time School Resource Officer or Deputy at this time. The District is a small TK-6 elementary school district, and based on its size, grade span, campus design, safety infrastructure, and existing relationship with local law enforcement, the District does not believe that a full-time School Resource Officer or Deputy is currently necessary or the most appropriate use of limited school resources.

The District has implemented significant safety infrastructure and procedures, including the Standard Response Protocol, controlled campus access, a locked front gate, a camera-based entry system, perimeter cameras, artificial intelligence-aided security camera review capabilities, schoolwide fob-based door locks, window coverings that allow staff to see out while limiting visibility into classrooms, emergency drills, staff training, and close coordination with local first responders.

Cold Spring will continue to maintain strong relationships with law enforcement and first responders and will evaluate its safety needs annually through the Comprehensive School Safety Plan process. If student needs, safety conditions, or law enforcement guidance change, the District will revisit whether additional law enforcement presence is warranted.

Finding 5

Some schools in Santa Barbara County school districts lack adequate controls for visitor access.

Cold Spring School District Governing Board Response: Disagree as to Cold Spring School District; agree that strong visitor access controls are essential.

Cold Spring School District agrees that visitor access controls are essential to school safety. However, the District does not agree that this finding accurately describes Cold Spring School.

Cold Spring maintains a locked campus during school hours. Visitors cannot enter campus without first using the front gate entry system. Office staff are able to see and communicate with visitors before granting access. The District also maintains security cameras at the front entry, in the back of campus, and around the perimeter of the school.

The District installed a new front gate and controlled-entry system as part of its broader safety improvements. These measures significantly limit unauthorized access to campus and support the District's ability to monitor who enters during the school day.

Recommendation 5a

The Grand Jury recommends that Santa Barbara County school districts improve visitor access control during school hours by requiring valid government-issued photo identification verified by school personnel, utilizing a system that checks for restraining orders or other legal restrictions.

Cold Spring School District Governing Board Response: Will not be implemented.

Cold Spring School District agrees that visitor access control is essential to school safety. However, the District will not implement an additional government-issued identification verification system or database system to check for restraining orders or other legal restrictions at this time because Cold Spring already has strong visitor access controls in place that are appropriate for its size, campus design, and school community.

Cold Spring School District is a single-school elementary district serving approximately 192 students. As a small school community, staff know the students, parents, guardians, and regular visitors who come onto campus. During school hours, Cold Spring maintains a locked campus. Visitors cannot enter campus without first using the locked front gate entry system. The District's access system includes camera and facial-recognition capabilities that allow staff to identify visitors before granting access.

Once a visitor is admitted through the front gate, the visitor is required to report directly to the school office. Visitors are then checked in and provided with a visitor badge before entering campus. Visitors are expected to wear the badge visibly while on campus.

Given the District's small size, existing locked-campus procedures, camera-based visitor screening, facial-recognition capabilities, office check-in process, and visitor badge requirement, the District believes that adding a separate government-issued identification verification and restraining-order database system would create an unnecessary cost and operational burden without a demonstrated additional safety benefit for Cold Spring School District.

The District will continue to review visitor access procedures annually as part of its Comprehensive School Safety Plan process and will make adjustments if student safety needs, legal requirements, or law enforcement guidance indicate that additional measures are necessary.

Recommendation 5b

The Grand Jury recommends that Santa Barbara County school districts require all schools to issue visitors a badge and require its visibility on the visitor while on campus during school hours.

Cold Spring School District Governing Board Response: Has been implemented.

Cold Spring School District requires visitors to check in through the school office before entering campus. Visitors are identified before access is granted through the locked front gate and controlled-entry system.

Once admitted to campus, visitors report directly to the office, check in, and receive a visitor badge. Visitors are expected to wear the badge visibly while on campus during school hours.

The District will continue to review visitor procedures annually to ensure that visitor identification remains clear, consistent, and aligned with current safety expectations.

Finding 6

Not all schools in Santa Barbara County have adequate safety infrastructure, including fences, cameras, classrooms that lock from the inside, restricted access points, and instantaneous communication devices.

Cold Spring School District Governing Board Response: Disagree as to Cold Spring School District; agree that all districts should regularly review safety infrastructure.

Cold Spring School District agrees that schools must have strong safety infrastructure and regularly review the adequacy of fences, cameras, locking systems, controlled access points, and communication systems. However, the District does not agree that this finding accurately describes Cold Spring School.

Cold Spring has implemented significant safety improvements over the past nine years. Following a safety review by the Department of Homeland Security, the District identified and addressed critical safety needs, including the implementation of the Standard Response Protocol and the installation of a schoolwide fob-based door lock system. Every classroom and key campus door is part of the fob-based system, allowing authorized staff to lock and unlock doors and allowing the District to maintain campuswide control over door access.

The District also installed window safety coverings so staff can see out while limiting visibility into classrooms from the exterior. The campus has a locked front gate, controlled-entry system, security cameras, cameras in the back and perimeter areas of campus, and artificial intelligence-aided camera capabilities that allow the District to review past footage when needed.

Recommendation 6

The Grand Jury recommends that all Santa Barbara County school districts have each school conduct an annual security review with respect to video security cameras at key points across school grounds, two-way communications on campus, and innovations, such as artificial intelligence-aided technologies or drones, and make improvements based on those reviews.

Cold Spring School District Governing Board Response: Has been implemented.

Cold Spring School District conducts ongoing and annual review of school safety through its Comprehensive School Safety Plan process. The District's safety planning includes review of emergency procedures, campus access, communication, supervision, law enforcement coordination, and physical safety infrastructure.

Cold Spring has already implemented several of the safety infrastructure improvements referenced in the Grand Jury's report. These include video security cameras at key points across campus, a controlled-entry front gate, a locked campus during school hours, a schoolwide fob-based door lock system, window coverings to limit visibility into classrooms, and artificial intelligence-aided security camera capabilities that allow the District to search and review past footage.

The District will continue to review video security camera placement, campus access, communication systems, door-locking systems, emerging security technologies, and overall safety infrastructure annually as part of its Comprehensive School Safety Plan process. The District will make improvements as needed based on student safety needs, campus conditions, available resources, law enforcement input, and emerging best practices.

Conclusion

Cold Spring School District appreciates the Grand Jury's work and its focus on the safety and well-being of students throughout Santa Barbara County. The District remains committed to

maintaining a safe, secure, respectful, inclusive, and supportive school environment where all students are known, valued, protected, and prepared.

Cold Spring School District has been proactive in school safety planning for many years. The District was an early adopter of the Standard Response Protocol, implemented recommendations following a Department of Homeland Security safety review, installed a schoolwide fob-based door lock system, strengthened visitor access controls, added security cameras and a locked front gate, trained staff and students, created student- and parent-friendly safety videos, implemented anonymous reporting pathways, and continues to survey students and parents anonymously regarding safety and school climate.

The Cold Spring School District Governing Board will continue to review its policies, practices, Comprehensive School Safety Plan, emergency response procedures, campus access systems, camera systems, communication systems, school psychology support, parent and student education, staff training, and relationships with law enforcement and first responders to ensure that school safety and targeted violence prevention remain among the District's highest priorities.

Sincerely,

Dr. Amy Alzina
Superintendent/Principal
Cold Spring School District

On behalf of the Cold Spring School District Governing Board