



July 10, 2026

The Honorable Patricia Kelly
Santa Barbara County Superior Court
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Stacy Mezzetta de Cossio, Foreperson
Santa Barbara County Grand Jury
sbcgj@sbcourts.org

FILED
SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

JUL 10 2026

Angela Braun, Executive Officer
By M. Hanson
Deputy Clerk
M. HANSON

**Re: Montecito Union School District Response to the 2025-26 Grand Jury Report:
"Bullying in Santa Barbara County Schools: Addressing Aggressive and Violent Behavior
Among Students"**

Dear Judge Kelly, Foreperson Mezzetta de Cossio, and Members of the Grand Jury:

Finding 1: Bullying in County schools will be reduced by implementing additional safety measures.

- MUSD Agrees. Bullying, aggressive student behavior, and violent student behavior can be reduced by implementing additional safety measures, including giving social-emotional supports, targeted therapies, and proactive measures to address the antecedents of this behavior. Furthermore, a strong home-school connection in which all parties work collaboratively towards more positive student outcomes will continue to be of paramount importance.

Recommendation 1a: The Grand Jury recommends that school boards increase staff presence in areas where students congregate before, during breaks, and after school. To be implemented by December 31, 2026.

- MUSD has already implemented this recommendation. MUSD has long prioritized small class sizes and an excellent staff to student ratio. Currently, we have more than one staff member for every four students, allowing for excellent supervision, support, and intervention.

Recommendation 1b: The Grand Jury recommends that school boards have sufficient cameras in order to monitor where students congregate before, during, and after school. To be implemented by June 30, 2027.

- MUSD has already implemented this recommendation. MUSD has more than thirty cameras across our one-school district. Moreover, these cameras utilize artificial intelligence to support effective monitoring. While the main purpose of these cameras is to support us in identifying emergencies and outside threats, they also assist us in monitoring student behavior before, during, and after school where appropriate. In our TK-6th grade environment, we do not detect a large number of violent interactions with students. In the rare instances when these occur during school hours, there are almost always several adult staff members on hand to support student safety. The cameras become a second layer of support in these instances. The cameras also record images and store these long after the event itself. If there were reports of student violence before or after school, which we can't recall ever happening in our TK-6th grade school, these recordings would be helpful in discerning the facts of the event and would assist us in supporting student safety.

Recommendation 1c: The Grand Jury recommends that school boards add more counselors to achieve a ratio no greater than 250:1. To be implemented by June 30, 2027.

- MUSD has already implemented this recommendation. MUSD employs a 0.8 full-time equivalent counselor and a full-time psychologist for a student body of approximately 357 students.

Finding 2: Administrators do not consistently inform school counselors when students under their guidance engage in bullying.

- MUSD Disagrees Partially. MUSD informs our counselor, psychologist, and other key personnel when students engage in bullying. We cannot speak to the actions across the county.

Recommendation 2: The Grand Jury recommends that school boards inform school counselors whenever any students under their guidance engage in bullying. To be implemented by December 31, 2026.

- MUSD has already implemented this recommendation. MUSD informs our counselor, psychologist, and other key personnel when students engage in bullying. Moreover, a plan is put in place to support these students and to ensure all students and staff members are safe.

Finding 3: Parent participation in outreach programs for bullying has been poor.

- MUSD Disagrees Partially. MUSD's parents are actively involved and regularly attend many outreach programs and opportunities. Parents attend social-emotional workshops, participate in child study team meetings, participate actively in individual education plan meetings, attend Superintendent Coffees where student behavior is actively discussed, attend the Superintendent Report during Montecito Union School Foundation Meetings, attend Board Meetings where student behavior is discussed, and attend individual meetings with counselors, administrators, and teachers. We cannot speak to participation levels across the county.

Recommendation 3a: The Grand Jury recommends that school boards direct school administrators to schedule parent outreach programs regarding bullying on evenings, weekends, online and with archived recordings to accommodate working parents. To be implemented by December 31, 2026.

- MUSD has already implemented this recommendation. MUSD has offered parenting workshops both immediately after drop off, in the evenings, and on the weekends. The video recording of these sessions would limit participation, by slide decks and packets of information are offered digitally. Moreover, we have produced several social-emotional learning podcasts for parents to be able to access on demand.

Recommendation 3b: The Grand Jury recommends that school boards implement non-monetary incentives to encourage parents to attend outreach programs. To be implemented by December 31, 2026.

- MUSD has already implemented this recommendation. MUSD drives parent participation by connecting our outreach efforts to highly-attended community events. For example, our Friday Flag Assemblies are highly attended by parents and guardians, and Superintendent Coffees (where social emotional learning, student behavior, and similar topics are presented) are held immediately following. We also incentivize attendance by offering experiences and take-aways for participants, such as when parents attended a recent workshop at our Nature Lab and were able to construct aromatherapy sachets to use at home.

Recommendation 3c: The Grand Jury recommends that school boards strongly encourage parents of students who have engaged in repeated acts of bullying to attend outreach programs. To be implemented by December 31, 2026.

- MUSD has already implemented this recommendation. In our TK-6th grade one-school district, chronic or repeated behavioral disruption triggers mandatory administrative and counseling interventions. These interventions explicitly require direct parent or guardian participation, ensuring that families are brought in as active partners in targeted behavioral strategies, conflict-resolution resources, and direct support.

The Montecito Union School District remains committed to the safety and security of our students, staff members, and community and is grateful for the opportunity to respond to the Grand Jury's Report.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anthony Ranii', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Anthony Ranii, Superintendent

The Board of Trustees, Montecito Union School District