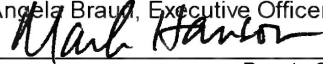


COLD SPRING SCHOOL DISTRICT

2243 Sycamore Canyon Road | Santa Barbara, California 93108 | (805) 969-2678 | www.coldspringschool.net

July 21, 2026

The Honorable Patricia Kelly
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
Santa Barbara County Superior Court
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
pkelly@sbcourts.org

FILED
SUPERIOR COURT of CALIFORNIA
COUNTY of SANTA BARBARA
08/13/2026
Angela Braut, Executive Officer
BY 
M. Hanson Deputy Clerk

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

Re: 2025-2026 Santa Barbara County Grand Jury Report: “Gangs of Santa Barbara County: Should the Schools Do More to Address Them?”

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 “Gangs of Santa Barbara County: Should the Schools Do More to Address Them?” On behalf of the Governing Board and District administration, we appreciate the Grand Jury’s attention to youth safety, prevention, student well-being, and the responsibility of public schools to maintain safe and supportive learning environments.

Cold Spring School District is a small, single-school elementary district serving students in transitional kindergarten through sixth grade in Montecito. Gang activity, gang recruitment, weapons, and student fights in the areas surrounding the campus have not been identified as concerns affecting Cold Spring School or its immediate school community. Accordingly, several findings and recommendations in the report do not reflect the conditions, needs, or risk profile of the District.

At the same time, the District recognizes the broader value of protective factors that support all children, including strong student-adult relationships, visible supervision, constructive after-school opportunities, social-emotional learning, character development, family engagement, accessible reporting pathways, and timely intervention when a student needs additional support. Cold Spring maintains these supports as part of its commitment to the whole child and a positive school climate—not in response to a local gang problem.

Per the Grand Jury’s 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 findings and recommendations for which the District is identified as a responding entity.

Finding 1

Many student fights occur in the areas surrounding school campuses before and after school hours, outside school supervision, leaving a gap in County schools’ responses.

Cold Spring School District Governing Board Response

Disagree wholly

This finding does not reflect conditions at Cold Spring School. The District has not experienced a pattern of student fights on or in the areas surrounding the campus before or after school. Gang-related conflict has likewise not been identified as a concern affecting the District or the immediate school community.

Cold Spring maintains visible adult supervision during student arrival and dismissal, and the District communicates directly with families when any student safety or behavioral concern arises. Because the

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underlying condition described in the finding is not present at Cold Spring, the District disagrees wholly with the finding as applied to the District.

Recommendation 1b

Local law enforcement agencies, in conjunction with school districts, create policies and programs to extend the safe space for students to go to or from home.

Cold Spring School District Governing Board Response

Will not be implemented because it is not warranted

Cold Spring values its collaborative relationship with local law enforcement and first responders and will continue to communicate with them when a specific safety concern requires assistance. However, the District has not identified student fights, gang activity, or a related safety gap during travel to or from Cold Spring School that would warrant creation of a new policy or program.

In addition, conduct occurring in public areas beyond school grounds and outside school-sponsored activities generally falls outside the District's direct supervision and control. For these reasons, a separate program under this recommendation is not warranted for Cold Spring School.

Recommendation 1c

All school districts consider the templates, policies, and programs proposed in Recommendations 1a and 1b.

Cold Spring School District Governing Board Response

Will not be implemented because it is not warranted

The District routinely reviews its Comprehensive School Safety Plan, supervision practices, arrival and dismissal procedures, and collaboration with first responders. Cold Spring will continue those established safety-review processes. However, because the conditions described in Finding 1 are not present in the District, adoption of additional gang- or fight-related procedures for the surrounding area is not warranted.

Finding 2

When children lack a set structure to occupy their time on constructive activities outside of regular school hours, they become vulnerable to recruitment from criminal street gangs.

Cold Spring School District Governing Board Response

Disagree partially

The District agrees that structured, constructive activities and supportive adult relationships are beneficial to children and can strengthen student connection, belonging, confidence, and well-being. The District does not agree, however, that a lack of structured after-school activity alone establishes vulnerability to gang recruitment, or that this finding reflects a local concern at Cold Spring.

Gang recruitment has not been identified as an issue affecting Cold Spring students. The District provides after-school supervision and enrichment because these opportunities benefit children and families—not as a response to gang activity.

Recommendation 2a

Santa Barbara County school districts implement more after-school programs such as music, sports, art, drama, and other extracurricular activities.

Cold Spring School District Governing Board Response

Has been implemented

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Cold Spring School District provides an established after-school program that operates until 5:30 p.m. and offers students adult supervision, enrichment, recreation, and constructive opportunities beyond the regular instructional day. The District also provides a broad educational program that includes music, visual art, physical education, athletics and movement, STEAM, garden experiences, student leadership, and other enrichment opportunities.

The District will continue to evaluate student and family needs and maintain high-quality after-school and enrichment opportunities consistent with available staffing, facilities, enrollment, and resources.

Recommendation 2b

Santa Barbara County school districts partner with community-based organizations and local government entities to offer after-school programs.

Cold Spring School District Governing Board Response

Has been implemented

Cold Spring regularly collaborates with community organizations, educational partners, local agencies, and service providers to expand student enrichment, wellness, recreation, and family support opportunities. The District's after-school and enrichment offerings are already supported through a combination of District resources and community partnerships.

The District will continue to pursue partnerships that are developmentally appropriate, aligned with student needs, and consistent with the District's instructional and safety standards.

Finding 3

Gangs are increasingly grooming and recruiting students in elementary, middle, and junior high schools, yet many anti-gang programs focus on older students.

Cold Spring School District Governing Board Response

Disagree wholly

The District does not have evidence of gang grooming or recruitment involving Cold Spring students, on the Cold Spring campus, or within the immediate school community. No local conditions have been identified that would support applying this countywide finding to Cold Spring School.

The District remains attentive to all forms of student vulnerability and provides age-appropriate supports that promote belonging, positive decision-making, responsible citizenship, digital safety, healthy relationships, and access to trusted adults. These universal supports are appropriate for Cold Spring's elementary students and current school context.

Recommendation 3

Santa Barbara County school districts implement programs aimed at dissuading elementary, middle, and junior high school students from gang membership.

Cold Spring School District Governing Board Response

Will not be implemented because it is not warranted

A gang-specific program is not warranted at Cold Spring School because gang activity and recruitment have not been identified as concerns affecting the District. Implementing a specialized program in the absence of a demonstrated need would not be developmentally or contextually appropriate for the District's TK-6 student population.

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Cold Spring will continue its existing prevention-oriented supports, including social-emotional learning, the Leader in Me framework, character and leadership development, digital citizenship, close student-adult relationships, family communication, school psychology services, and individualized intervention when concerns arise. Should credible evidence of a gang-related risk emerge in the future, the District would consult with appropriate county and law-enforcement resources and respond accordingly.

Finding 5

Students who bring guns, knives, and other weapons on campus, even when provided by parents for their children's safety, pose a threat to school safety.

Cold Spring School District Governing Board Response

Agree

The District agrees that guns, knives, and other weapons on a school campus pose a serious threat to students, staff, and visitors, regardless of the reason for which a weapon is brought to school. Cold Spring prohibits weapons on campus and maintains school safety procedures designed to prevent and respond to threats or dangerous items.

The District also agrees that parents and guardians should receive clear reminders regarding safe firearm storage and the prohibition against sending weapons to school.

Recommendation 5

Santa Barbara County school districts remind parents and guardians annually of California Penal Code section 25100 regarding the criminalization of unsafe storage of guns.

Cold Spring School District Governing Board Response

Will be implemented

By December 31, 2026, the District will ensure that its annual parent and guardian notifications include or clearly reference California requirements related to safe firearm storage, including Penal Code section 25100, as applicable. The District may also reinforce this information through its regular school safety communications.

Finding 6

Anonymous communications systems, both digital programs and physical drop-boxes, when made available to school students and personnel, can help identify gang activity ahead of serious consequences.

Cold Spring School District Governing Board Response

Agree

The District agrees that accessible and confidential reporting pathways can help students, staff, and families raise safety concerns before they escalate. At Cold Spring, such reporting mechanisms are valuable as general school-safety tools, although gang activity has not been identified as a local concern.

The District also emphasizes that students have regular access to trusted adults, including teachers, the Superintendent/Principal, support staff, and the school psychologist, and are encouraged to report concerns immediately.

Recommendation 6

Santa Barbara County school districts provide all schools with anonymous communications systems for student or staff reporting of danger on and off campus, both via digital media and local drop boxes.

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Cold Spring School District Governing Board Response

Will be implemented

Cold Spring currently maintains an anonymous communication pathway through which safety concerns may be reported. By December 31, 2026, the District will review the accessibility and visibility of its existing anonymous reporting process and will confirm an on-campus physical option so that both digital and non-digital reporting pathways are available.

The District will communicate these options to students and staff in an age-appropriate manner and will continue to respond promptly to any report involving student or campus safety.

Finding 7

Socially isolated students can benefit from engagement with responsible mentors as a deterrent to negative manipulation by outside influences, such as gangs, social media, or other ongoing stresses in family life.

Cold Spring School District Governing Board Response

Agree

The District agrees that socially isolated students and other students experiencing stress can benefit from a consistent relationship with a trusted adult. Positive adult relationships strengthen student belonging, resilience, confidence, and willingness to seek help.

Although gang influence is not a concern at Cold Spring, the broader principle of ensuring that every child is known, connected, and supported is fully consistent with the District's educational approach.

Recommendation 7

Santa Barbara County school districts create systems in their schools to pair socially isolated students with school mentors.

Cold Spring School District Governing Board Response

Has been implemented

Cold Spring's small-school structure allows teachers, administrators, instructional assistants, specialists, and support personnel to know students well and identify children who may need additional connection or support. Students may be connected with a classroom teacher, the Superintendent/Principal, the school psychologist, intervention staff, special education staff, or another appropriate trusted adult based on the student's needs.

The District uses staff collaboration, family communication, student support processes, and individualized follow-up to ensure that students who appear isolated or in need of additional support are connected with caring adults. Cold Spring will continue to strengthen these relationship-based supports as part of its commitment to student well-being.

Conclusion

The Cold Spring School District Governing Board supports the Grand Jury's broader goal of protecting young people and maintaining safe, positive school environments. The District's responses also recognize that local context matters. Cold Spring has not experienced gang activity, gang recruitment, weapons on campus, or recurring fights surrounding the school, and specialized gang-response programs are therefore not warranted at this time.

The District will continue to maintain strong supervision, enrichment opportunities, social-emotional and leadership development, family partnerships, accessible reporting systems, and trusted-adult supports for students. The Board remains committed to reviewing credible safety information and adapting District practices if local conditions or student needs change.

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Respectfully submitted,

Michael Marino, Board President
Cold Spring School District Governing Board

Dr. Amy Alzina, Superintendent/Principal
Cold Spring School District

Approved by the Cold Spring School District Governing Board on: _____