



SANTA MARIA
**Smart City
Safe City**



CITY OF SANTA MARIA
OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER
City Manager, Ext. 2200

110 EAST COOK STREET • SANTA MARIA, CA 93454-5190 • 805-925-0951 • FAX 805-349-0657 • www.cityofsantamaria.org

August 4, 2026

Presiding Judge Patricia Kelly
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93121

FILED

SUPERIOR COURT of CALIFORNIA
COUNTY of SANTA BARBARA

08/19/2026

Angela Braun, Executive Officer

BY 
M. Hanson Deputy Clerk

SUBJECT: Responses to 2025-26 Grand Jury Report "Gangs of Santa Barbara
County: Should the Schools Do More to Address Them?" dated June 20, 2026

Dear Honorable Judge Kelly:

The City of Santa Maria is pleased to provide the following responses requested to the above-referenced report for Findings 1 and Recommendation 1b. Please note the following responses:

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.

Response: Agree. Student altercations may occur before and after school hours in areas beyond direct school supervision, highlighting the importance of ongoing coordination between local law enforcement and school districts to support student safety.

RECOMMENDATION 1b

The Grand Jury recommends that 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. To be implemented by December 31, 2026.

Response: Has been implemented. While many components of Recommendation 1b are already being implemented through existing partnerships and operational practices, the Santa Maria Police Department recognizes the value of continuing to strengthen collaborative efforts aimed at enhancing student safety beyond the school campus.

The Santa Maria Police Department maintains School Resource Officers (SROs) at local high schools who foster strong relationships with students, staff, and parents. In



SANTA MARIA
**Smart City
Safe City**



CITY OF SANTA MARIA
OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER
City Manager, Ext. 2200

110 EAST COOK STREET • SANTA MARIA, CA 93454-5190 • 805-925-0951 • FAX 805-349-0657 • www.cityofsantamaria.org

addition, SROs and patrol officers routinely conduct high-visibility patrols before and after school, particularly during dismissal periods, at bus stops, and in areas students commonly gather. These patrol efforts are adjusted and focused as needed based on school concerns, specific incidents, crime trends, community complaints, or requests from school officials. Patrol supervisors may also deploy additional patrol resources to campuses and surrounding neighborhoods when appropriate.

The Santa Maria Police Department also maintains open lines of communication with both school site administrators and district administration offices and remains in frequent contact to address emerging issues, coordinate responses, and support overall campus and student safety efforts.

The City of Santa Maria currently provides supervised after-school opportunities through facilities such as the Abel Maldonado Community Youth Center and Edwards Community Center, which offer students safe and structured environments after school hours. Elementary and junior high school students also benefit from programs such as the Boys & Girls Club, which provide organized activities, mentorship, and adult supervision during after-school hours.

Additionally, officers assigned to Community Services and School Resource Officers regularly participate in outreach events and community engagement activities designed to strengthen relationships with youth, build trust within the community, and encourage the reporting of safety concerns. Existing partnerships between the Police Department, Parks and Recreation, community organizations, and local school districts already provide multiple layers of supervision and support extending beyond school campuses.

Consistent with the Grand Jury recommendation, the Santa Maria Police Department supports evaluating opportunities to further formalize these collaborative efforts with local school districts. This may include identifying preferred or high-priority student travel routes for enhanced patrol during dismissal periods, exploring a more formal "Safe Passage" or "Safe Routes" program, coordinating with community partners and volunteers where appropriate, and evaluating whether formal written agreements or memorandums of understanding would further strengthen interagency coordination. Formalizing and documenting these existing practices and partnerships would help ensure a coordinated and sustainable approach to extending student safety beyond the school campus.

ALICE M. PATINO
Mayor