



Vista Del Mar Union School District
Vista de las Cruces School
9467 San Julian Rd.
Gaviota, CA 93117

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

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

Regarding: RFI 18: Brown Act

Dear Presiding Judge Patricia Kelly and Members of the Santa Barbara County Grand Jury:

The Vista del Mar Union School District appreciates the Santa Barbara County Grand Jury's review of public participation and transparency practices among education governing boards throughout Santa Barbara County. The District recognizes that clear meeting procedures, accessible public information, and meaningful opportunities for public participation are fundamental to transparent governance and public trust.

Vista del Mar is a small, rural, single-school district. The District's Board meetings are conducted in person and are open to the public, and members of the public have been permitted to address the Board without providing a name, address, or other identifying information. Board agendas and meeting information are also publicly available through the District's website. Because of the District's small size and rural location, its practices and public participation needs may differ from those of larger school districts and governing bodies.

FILED
SUPERIOR COURT of CALIFORNIA
COUNTY of SANTA BARBARA
08/20/2026
Angela Braun, Executive Officer
BY *Mark Hanson*
M. Hanson Deputy Clerk

The District nevertheless appreciates the opportunity to review its practices and identify opportunities to further support public access. Where appropriate, Vista del Mar has taken reasonable steps to make existing meeting information even easier to locate.

In accordance with California Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the Vista del Mar Union School District respectfully submits the following responses to the findings and recommendations for which the District was requested to respond. The District's responses reflect Vista del Mar's existing practices and local circumstances while affirming its continued commitment to open, accessible, and transparent governance.

Responses to Findings and Recommendations

Finding 1: *Some education governing boards' agendas and public comment instructions imply that members of the public must complete a speaker card, sign-up sheet, online form, or provide identifying information in order to speak at a public meeting.*

Response to Finding 1: Disagree

Explanation: This finding does not reflect Vista del Mar's practices. The District does not require members of the public to complete a speaker card, sign-up sheet, or online form, or to provide a name, address, or other identifying information in order to address the Board. The District's public comment section does not contain language stating or implying that identification is required. Members of the public may address the Board during public comment without providing identifying information.

Recommendation 1: *The Grand Jury recommends that each education governing board review agenda language and public comment instructions to plainly state that speaker cards, sign-up sheets, and online forms are optional tools used solely to help organize public comment, and to affirm that any person may address the board during public comment periods without providing a name, address, or other personal identifying information.*

Response to Recommendation 1: Has Been Implemented

Explanation: Vista del Mar's existing public comment practices are consistent with this recommendation. The District does not require members of the public to complete a speaker card, sign-up sheet, or online form, or to provide identifying information as a condition of addressing the Board. Because the District's public comment section does not contain language stating or implying that such information is required, no corrective change to the District's public comment procedures is necessary. The District has reviewed its agenda language and public comment practices as recommended and will continue to ensure they remain consistent with applicable Brown Act requirements.

Finding 2: Website structure, language access, and accessibility issues at some education governing boards hinder the public's ability to find agendas, minutes, and participation instructions, particularly for Spanish-speaking community members and individuals who rely on accessible document formats.

Response to Finding 2: Disagree

Explanation: This finding does not reflect Vista del Mar's current website practices. The District maintains a dedicated School Board section on its website where agendas, minutes, and meeting information are publicly available and readily accessible. Current Board meeting information can be accessed directly from the District's primary homepage, and current and historical meeting materials are available through the District's Agendas & Minutes page. The District has not identified website structure or language-access issues that have hindered public access to Board meeting information and will continue to maintain clear and accessible online access to its public meeting materials.

Recommendation 2a

The Grand Jury recommends that each education governing board place a prominent, direct link to current agendas on its primary homepage, as required by Government Code section 54954.2.

Response to Recommendation 2a: Has Been Implemented

Explanation: Vista del Mar provides direct access to current Board meeting agendas from the District's primary homepage and maintains a dedicated Agendas & Minutes page with access to current and historical Board meeting materials. The District has reviewed the placement of its agenda links and ensured that current Board meeting information is prominently and readily accessible to the public.

Recommendation 2b

The Grand Jury recommends that governing boards serving districts with more than a 20% Spanish-speaking population provide Spanish language translations of their meetings, agendas and minutes on their websites.

Response to Recommendation 2b: Has Been Implemented

Explanation: Although Vista del Mar does not meet the 20 percent Spanish-speaking population threshold identified in the recommendation, the District already provides language access consistent with the intent of the recommendation. Board agendas and minutes are available through the District's Gamut platform, which provides translation into multiple languages, including Spanish, allowing families to access these materials in their preferred language. In addition, a staff member is available at Board meetings to provide translation assistance as needed. These existing practices provide families with meaningful

language access to Board meeting information and participation regardless of the District's demographic threshold.

Finding 3: Some governing boards provide no way to participate remotely while public comment is officially open.

Response to Finding 3: Agree

Explanation: Vista del Mar conducts its Board meetings in person and does not currently provide a remote public participation option. Board meetings are open to the public, and members of the public may attend and provide public comment in person. The District remains committed to providing meaningful public access to its Board meetings in accordance with the Brown Act.

Recommendation 3a

The Grand Jury recommends that each education governing board provide video conferencing for remote participation, which can also be used as a broadcast archive.

Response to Recommendation 3a: Will Not Be Implemented

Explanation: Vista del Mar will continue to conduct its regular Board meetings in person and provide public access and public comment through in-person attendance. The District is a small, rural, single-school district, and its Board meetings generally receive little to no public attendance. The District's rural location also experiences inconsistent internet connectivity, and providing reliable two-way video conferencing would require improvements to the District's internet infrastructure. Given Vista del Mar's local circumstances, historical public participation, and current infrastructure limitations, the District does not believe establishing routine video conferencing for remote public participation is warranted at this time. The District may utilize remote meeting options when legally authorized and operationally necessary.

Recommendation 3b

The Grand Jury recommends that, where remote participation is offered, agendas clearly explain how the public may observe and provide comment remotely at any time public comment is open.

Response to Recommendation 3b: Will Not Be Implemented

Explanation: Vista del Mar does not currently offer remote participation during its regular Board meetings and, as explained in its response to Recommendation 3a, does not plan to establish routine remote public participation at this time. Recommendation 3b expressly applies "where remote participation is offered." Because the District does not currently offer remote participation, there is no remote participation process to describe on its regular meeting agendas. If the District offers remote public participation for a future meeting, the applicable

agenda will clearly explain how members of the public may observe the meeting and provide remote comment while public comment is open.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Ray Fausel, Superintendent/Principal, Vista del Mar Union School District

Board of Trustees, Vista del Mar Union School District