



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

FILED
SUPERIOR COURT of CALIFORNIA
COUNTY of SANTA BARBARA
08/20/2026
Angela Braun Executive Officer
BY *Mark Hanson* Deputy Clerk
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The Honorable Patricia Kelly
Santa Barbara County Superior Court
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
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Stacy Mezzetta de Cossio, Foreperson
Santa Barbara County Grand Jury
sbcgj@sbcourts.org

Regarding: Responses to Findings and Recommendations in the Report: "BULLYING IN SANTA BARBARA COUNTY SCHOOLS: Addressing Aggressive and Violent Behavior Among Students"

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 examination of bullying, student safety, and the prevention of aggressive and violent behavior in Santa Barbara County schools. The District shares the Grand Jury's commitment to maintaining safe, supportive learning environments in which students feel connected, respected, and supported.

Vista del Mar is a small, rural, single-school district currently serving 71 students. The District has not experienced a pattern of repeated or chronic bullying among its students. Its small-school environment allows staff to know students individually, maintain close relationships with families, observe student interactions, and respond promptly when concerns arise. The District also maintains appropriate campus supervision and camera coverage and proactively supports positive relationships among students.

Vista del Mar also benefits from strong parent participation, including an active parent organization, Vista Volunteers. The District's small size allows the administration and staff to communicate directly with families and work collaboratively to address individual student needs when concerns arise.

The District nevertheless recognizes the importance of continued prevention and appreciates the opportunity to review its practices in light of the Grand Jury's report. Vista del Mar will continue practices that are effective for its school community and will consider additional measures when warranted by student needs and local circumstances.

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.

Responses to Findings and Recommendations

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

Response to Finding 1: Agree

Explanation: Vista del Mar agrees that appropriate safety measures, supervision, student supports, and prevention practices can help reduce bullying and promote a safe school environment. The District has not experienced a pattern of repeated or chronic bullying. With 71 students, Vista del Mar's small-school environment allows staff to know students individually, closely observe student interactions, proactively facilitate positive relationships, and respond promptly when concerns arise.

Recommendation 1a: *The Grand Jury recommends that Santa Barbara County schools ensure adequate adult supervision during times and in areas where bullying is most likely to occur.*

Response to Recommendation 1a: Has Been Implemented

Explanation: Vista del Mar currently provides adequate adult supervision for its 71 students. An administrator and an aide provide supervision before school, during breaks, and after school. The District's small student population also allows staff to closely observe student interactions and respond promptly to concerns. The District will continue to evaluate supervision practices and make adjustments if student needs or circumstances change.

Recommendation 1b: *The Grand Jury recommends that Santa Barbara County schools install and maintain sufficient cameras to monitor areas where bullying is likely to occur.*

Response to Recommendation 1b: Has Been Implemented

Explanation: Vista del Mar currently maintains sufficient camera coverage around the campus to monitor student areas. The District will continue to maintain its existing camera system and evaluate coverage as campus conditions or student needs change.

Recommendation 1c: *The Grand Jury recommends that Santa Barbara County schools add counselors as necessary to maintain a student-to-counselor ratio of no greater than 250:1.*

Response to Recommendation 1c: Will Not Be Implemented

Explanation: Vista del Mar currently serves 71 students and does not employ a school counselor. Given the District's small enrollment and current student needs, the District does not believe adding a dedicated school counselor solely to establish a student-to-counselor ratio is warranted at this time. The District has a school psychologist who provides counseling when required as an IEP-related service. For general student concerns, the administrator works directly with students and families and coordinates additional supports as appropriate. The District will continue to evaluate student needs and access additional services when warranted.

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

Response to Finding 2: Disagree

Explanation: This finding does not reflect Vista del Mar's student-support structure or practices. Vista del Mar does not employ a school counselor. Because of the District's small size, the administrator is directly involved in addressing significant student behavior concerns, including bullying should it occur. The District's school psychologist provides counseling when required as an IEP-related service and would be involved when a concern is relevant to a student's IEP or related services. This structure allows student concerns to be addressed directly and promptly without relying on a separate counselor-referral process.

Recommendation 2: *The Grand Jury recommends that school administrators consistently inform school counselors when students under their guidance engage in bullying.*

Response to Recommendation 2: Will Not Be Implemented

Explanation: Vista del Mar does not employ a school counselor; therefore, the specific counselor-notification process contemplated by this recommendation does not apply to the District's current staffing structure. The administrator directly addresses significant student behavior concerns and coordinates with appropriate staff and families when concerns arise. When a concern involves a student's IEP or related services, the District's school psychologist is involved as appropriate. These existing practices accomplish the intent of the recommendation within Vista del Mar's small-school setting.

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

Response to Finding 3: Disagree

Explanation: This finding does not reflect Vista del Mar's experience with parent engagement. The District benefits from strong parent participation and maintains close communication with families. Vista Volunteers, the District's active parent organization, provides an additional avenue for parent involvement and connection to the school community. While the District does not currently conduct bullying-specific parent outreach programs, it has not experienced a pattern of repeated or chronic bullying that would indicate a need for such programming.

Recommendation 3a: The Grand Jury recommends that Santa Barbara County schools improve parent participation in bullying outreach programs by offering programs during evenings or weekends, providing online participation options, and archiving recordings for later viewing.

Response to Recommendation 3a: Will Not Be Implemented

Explanation: Vista del Mar has strong parent participation and has not identified a pattern of repeated or chronic bullying among its students. The District does not currently conduct bullying-specific parent outreach programs and does not believe establishing separate evening, weekend, online, and recorded bullying programs is warranted based on current student or family needs. The District communicates directly with families when concerns arise and will continue to provide parent outreach and education when a demonstrated need exists.

Recommendation 3b: The Grand Jury recommends that Santa Barbara County schools provide non-monetary incentives to increase parent participation in bullying outreach programs.

Response to Recommendation 3b: Will Not Be Implemented

Explanation: Vista del Mar has strong parent participation and has not identified a need to provide incentives to encourage family engagement. The District maintains direct relationships with families and benefits from an active parent organization, Vista Volunteers. Given the District's existing level of parent

involvement and the absence of a demonstrated participation problem related to bullying, the District does not believe establishing incentives for participation is necessary at this time.

Recommendation 3c: *The Grand Jury recommends that Santa Barbara County schools strongly encourage parents of students who repeatedly engage in bullying behavior to participate in appropriate outreach or support programs.*

Response to Recommendation 3c: Has Been Implemented

Explanation: Vista del Mar proactively supports students and facilitates positive relationships to prevent bullying and other harmful behaviors. The District has not experienced a pattern of students repeatedly engaging in bullying. Should repeated bullying behavior occur, the administrator will work directly with the student's parents or guardians and utilize appropriate interventions, including restorative practices, to address the behavior, repair relationships, and support the student in making positive behavioral changes. The District's small-school environment allows this family engagement to occur directly and promptly when concerns arise.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Board of Trustees, Vista del Mar Union School District