LOMPOC UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Trusting Relationships + High Expectations = Every Student Achieves

September 27, 2026

FILED
SUPERIOR COURT of CALIFORNIA
COUNTY of SANTA BARBARA
09/29/2026
Angela Braun, Executive Officer
BY M. Hanson Deputy Clerk

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

Re: 2025-26 Santa Barbara County Grand Jury Report on Bullying in Santa Barbara County Schools

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

The Lompoc Unified School District ("LUSD") shares the Grand Jury's commitment to student safety and well-being. We recognize that bullying in all forms can have a significant impact on students' academic success, mental health, and sense of belonging at school.

California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) results show that bullying and mistreatment do occur on our campuses. Some findings from the 2025 CHKS taken by fifth graders (142 total respondents), seventh graders (673 respondents), ninth graders (548 respondents), and 11th graders (403 respondents) in LUSD:
27% of seventh graders, 21% of ninth graders, and 14% of 11th graders said they had experienced some kind of harassment or bullying in the past year
9% of seventh graders, 5% of ninth graders, and 5% of 11th graders said they had been harassed or bullied one or more times in the past year due to their race, ethnicity, or national origin
8% of seventh graders, 7% of ninth graders, and 6% of 11th graders said they had been harassed or bullied one or more times in the past year due to their sexual orientation
28% of seventh graders, 26% of ninth graders, and 22% of 11th graders reported that other students spread mean rumors or lies about them one or more times in the past year

Cyberbullying – spreading mean rumors, hurtful images, or threats online, on social media, or by text – is also being experienced by students. Some findings from the 2025 CHKS:
17% of fifth graders reported being victimized by cyberbullying by other students some, most, or all of the time

22% of seventh graders, 23% of ninth graders, and 16% of 11th graders reported being victimized by cyberbullying by other students one or more times in the past year
Bullying involves repetitive and intentional harm by one person or group toward another person or group in the context of an imbalance of power. and this definition is often misunderstood and student experiences that are not bullying are sometimes categorized as such.

LUSD's efforts to foster safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environments for all students are on several fronts:

An overall focus on trusting relationships and high expectations, as reflected in a revised motto, values, vision, mission, and goals.

PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports)
Since 2017, our schools have implemented Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), an evidence-based framework that emphasizes clear communication of behavioral expectations across a variety of school settings, incentives for positive behavior, and targeted interventions for students who experience behavioral challenges.

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)
The district operates an MTSS Behavior program, a comprehensive, data-driven framework designed to organize instruction and interventions so that every student receives support matched to their individual level of need. All schools conduct monthly school-wide behavior team meetings and weekly targeted behavior team meetings to analyze behavioral data and discuss student behavioral concerns, including incidents of bullying. Additional information regarding behavior is provided in the response to Recommendation 2.

Student Supervision, Surveillance, and Reporting
The district has worked to provide active and attentive staff supervision on school campuses, including during school hours and high-traffic drop-off and pick-up times before and after school. We have also installed more than 347 cameras districtwide to serve as both a deterrent and a monitoring tool. In addition, LUSD 360 monitors student online activity for indicators of cyberbullying, bullying, and threats. An anonymous reporting system is also available through which students and parents can report bullying concerns.

Behavioral Support
The district has invested in additional elementary counselors, psychologists, Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs), assistant principals, deans, social workers, and wellness coaches, with the goal of providing additional support and addressing student behavioral needs.

Staff Training
School staff have received training on PBIS and restorative practices designed to help prevent and address behaviors such as bullying.

Parent Communication and Training
The District has made significant efforts to communicate with parents regarding bullying, including providing information about what constitutes bullying. Bullying involves repetitive and intentional harm by one person or group toward another person or group in the context of an imbalance of power. Students and parents sometimes characterize an incident as "bullying" when

it may instead involve conflict—a disagreement or argument in which both parties express their views.

Community Partnerships
The district has partnered with Gateway Education Services for Stop the Hate programs at elementary schools each of the past three years. Programs include presentations, classroom poster contests, and student artwork. The district also partners with the local Santa Maria-Lompoc chapter of the NAACP for assemblies that similarly address issues of diversity, inclusion, and hate speech.

Students in LUSD generally report positive perceptions of overall school safety on the California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS). Only 11% of fifth-grade students report that they "never" feel safe at school, while 4% of seventh graders, 4% of ninth graders, and 5% of eleventh graders report that they believe their school is "unsafe" or "very unsafe." We also note that student responses regarding school safety are more positive than statewide responses, as reflected in the School Climate Report Card.

While challenges involving bullying and mistreatment persist, the available data indicate that these concerns do not appear to be significantly affecting students' overall perceptions of safety on their campuses.

With this background information provided, Lompoc Unified School District respectfully submits the following responses to the Grand Jury's findings and recommendations.

Responses to Findings

Finding 1

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

Lompoc agrees that additional safety measures can contribute to reducing bullying in schools. However, such measures must be evidence-based, locally appropriate, and center around family and community knowledge in order to achieve the desired outcomes.

Finding 2

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

Our school administrators and counselors work collaboratively to address bullying, mistreatment, and other student behavioral concerns. When incidents occur on campus, administrators and counselors work together to determine the appropriate response and identify steps that can be

taken to prevent similar incidents in the future. Communication occurs on a daily basis, with the appropriate follow-up in the appropriate weekly or monthly behavioral meetings.
LUSD 360 also provides an important source of information regarding student behavior. The system conducts real-time monitoring of student online activity, including searches and posts, for indicators related to self-harm, depression, violence, threats, and bullying. When LUSD 360 identifies a concerning search or post, an email notification is immediately sent to a district administrator, allowing the district and school site to respond promptly. School administrators and counselors then collaborate to determine appropriate follow-up with the student.
The district's anonymous reporting system provides another means for schools to become aware of potential bullying. An anonymous reporting form is available on each school website, and reports are sent directly to school administrators for follow-up. Counselors are typically included in the follow-up process.

We also want to emphasize that school staff—including administrators and counselors—understand the importance of addressing bullying and mistreatment. At the beginning of each school year, all school employees, including teachers, administrators, and classified staff, are required to complete a training module addressing bullying. The training defines bullying and cyberbullying, reviews best practices for bullying prevention, and addresses common misconceptions. Employees must successfully complete an end-of-module assessment to receive a certificate of completion.

Finding 3
Parent participation in outreach programs for bullying has been poor.
LUSD Response to Finding 3: Disagree in Part

Parent participation in education and outreach programs is variable. Some topics generate significant interest, while others receive more limited participation. During the past two school years, Lompoc has offered both in-person and Zoom parent education workshops focused on online safety, including information related to cyberbullying. Both sessions generated considerable interest, and the district plans to offer this topic again in the future.

Responses to Recommendations
Recommendation 1a
LUSD Response to Finding 3: Disagree in Part

Parent participation in education and outreach programs is variable. Some topics generate significant interest, while others receive more limited participation. During the past two school years, Lompoc has offered both in-person and Zoom parent education workshops focused on online safety, including information related to cyberbullying. Both sessions generated considerable interest, and the district plans to offer this topic again in the future.

Responses to Recommendations

Recommendation 1a

The Grand Jury recommends that school boards increase staff presence in areas where students congregate before, during breaks, and after school.
LUSD Response to Recommendation 1a: Has Been Implemented

Lompoc supports the intent of this recommendation and agrees that active, visible adult supervision is an important component of a safe school environment. Lompoc works to ensure that staff are present to monitor student play areas, eating areas, and drop-off and pick-up zones before, during, and after the school day. The district also provides training to staff regarding active and attentive student supervision practices.

Recommendation 1b

The Grand Jury recommends that school boards have sufficient cameras to monitor where students congregate before, during, and after school.
LUSD Response to Recommendation 1b: Has Been Implemented

Lompoc has embraced the use of campus cameras as an additional tool for maintaining safe learning environments. Cameras can serve as a deterrent to inappropriate behavior and provide valuable information when incidents occur. As of this date, the district has a total of 347 cameras installed across its school sites.

Recommendation 1c

The Grand Jury recommends that school boards add more counselors to achieve a ratio no greater than 250:1.
LUSD Response to Recommendation 1c: Will Not Be Implemented

Lompoc recognizes the significant value of counseling and mental health support; however, the district does not have the financial resources necessary to achieve a student-to-counselor ratio of 250:1.

It is important to note that the district has strategically utilized available resources (i.e. Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) funding, Title I funds, HCAI Wellness Coach grants, CYBHI billing funds, and more) to implement a comprehensive approach to addressing student behavioral needs. These resources have supported additional elementary and secondary counselors, wellness coaches, psychologists, Board Certified Behavior Analysts, school social workers, deans, and assistant principals.

The district is seeing positive results from these investments. At this time, however, Lompoc does not have sufficient resources to add additional counselors while maintaining its other student support services.

Recommendation 2

The Grand Jury recommends that school boards inform school counselors whenever any students under their guidance engage in bullying.
LUSD Response to Recommendation 2: Has Been Implemented

As noted in the response to Finding 2, Lompoc school administrators work closely with school counselors to address bullying and other student behavioral concerns. Additionally, all schools conduct regular behavior team meetings to analyze behavioral data and discuss student behavioral situations, including incidents of bullying. These teams typically include school administrators, school counselor(s), school social worker(s), the school psychologist, the BCBA assigned to the school site, and Special Education and general education staff, as appropriate. Behavior teams play an important role in communication, coordination, planning, and follow-up related to bullying and other behavioral concerns. This collaborative structure helps ensure that appropriate staff are informed and involved in developing and implementing supports for students.

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.
LUSD Response to Recommendation 3a: Has Been Implemented

Our district has consistently worked to schedule parent education and outreach programs during evenings and, when appropriate, online to provide greater flexibility and convenience for families. The District has also made parents aware of the extensive library of parent education workshops available through YouthWell of Santa Barbara County, including online resources that families can access at their convenience.

Recommendation 3b

The Grand Jury recommends that school boards implement non-monetary incentives to encourage parents to attend outreach programs.
LUSD Response to Recommendation 3b: Has Been Implemented

Our experience has shown that providing meals and childcare can be effective incentives for encouraging parents to participate in in-person parent education and outreach programs. We have also found that virtual sessions provide parents with the flexibility to participate from the comfort and convenience of their own homes. Both approaches have been effective in increasing parent participation.

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.
LUSD Response to Recommendation 3c: Has Been Implemented

LUSD agrees that family engagement is an important component of addressing repeated bullying behavior and supporting student well-being. Families are encouraged to participate in available support and outreach programs, including those provided by community organizations such as YouthWell, CADA, Family Service Agency, and CALM. The district also recognizes the value of specialized community resources, including PFLAG Santa Barbara and Aha! Programs, in providing additional support and education to students and families.

LOMPOC UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Respectfully submitted,

Tracy Phillips
President, Board of Education

Dr. Clara A. Finneran
Superintendent