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January 7, 2005

Ms. Betty J. Mattea, Foreperson
Civil Grand Jury 2003-2004
County of Marin
3501 Civic Center Drive, Room 303
San Rafael, CA 94903

Dear Ms. Mattea:

Re: Report Title: School Administration – Is the Cost Too High?

I would like to apologize for the late submission of our response to the Grand Jury Report published June 10, 2004. Susan Schmidt (from the Tamalpais High School District) and I enjoyed meeting with the Grand Jury in the spring to review our efforts to increase the level of shared services in Marin County.

Following are our responses to Findings F1 to F4 and Recommendations R2 and R3.

F1: While the Marin County Office of Education currently may not be reporting information to the districts using the function codes, I would agree that this report could be helpful in future planning. Over the past twenty-five years as Superintendent of the Kentfield School District, the Marin County Office of Education has quickly and completely responded to all of our requests for reports and information.

F2: I would agree that it is difficult to come to conclusions about the relation between the number of students in a district and the level of administration. Each district in Marin has its own system of meeting the critical and changing needs of students, parents and staff members.

F3: While there may be some expenditure savings in the unification of districts, I would suggest that there may be a possible reduction in overall income that would offset the expenditure savings. It may be difficult to pass parcel taxes or there may be a decrease in foundation giving when the system seems too large and community members and parents feel they have lost local control.

In addition, representatives from the Kentfield School District were instrumental in the initiation of the effort last year to form the Task Force on Cost Effective Opportunities for Sharing Resources. Superintendent Mary Jane Burke has been very supportive of the concept that as a county

we act as "one large district when it is more cost effective and, most importantly, when it is good for students."

F4: We would agree that the costs to average up the salaries of staff in the affected districts would exceed any savings in administrative costs.

R2: Our staff will work with the Marin County Office of Education Business staff to ensure that they accurately code expenses to include function codes.

R3: Our Board of Trustees reviews annually the school budgets by program and function in order to evaluate the level of administrative services in the district.

I hope I have covered all the required findings and recommendations. If I can elaborate upon any of these responses, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert B. Caine".

Robert B. Caine
Superintendent

RBC/mcg