

Administrative Office
411 Sycamore Avenue
Mill Valley, California 94941
tel (415) 389-7700
fax (415) 389-7773

September 7, 2004

The Honorable Terrence R. Boren
Marin County Superior Court
P. O. Box 4988
San Rafael, CA 94913-4988

Betty J. Mattea, Foreperson
Marin County Civil Grand Jury
3501 Civic Center Drive – Room 303
San Rafael, CA 94403

Your Honor and Madame Foreperson,

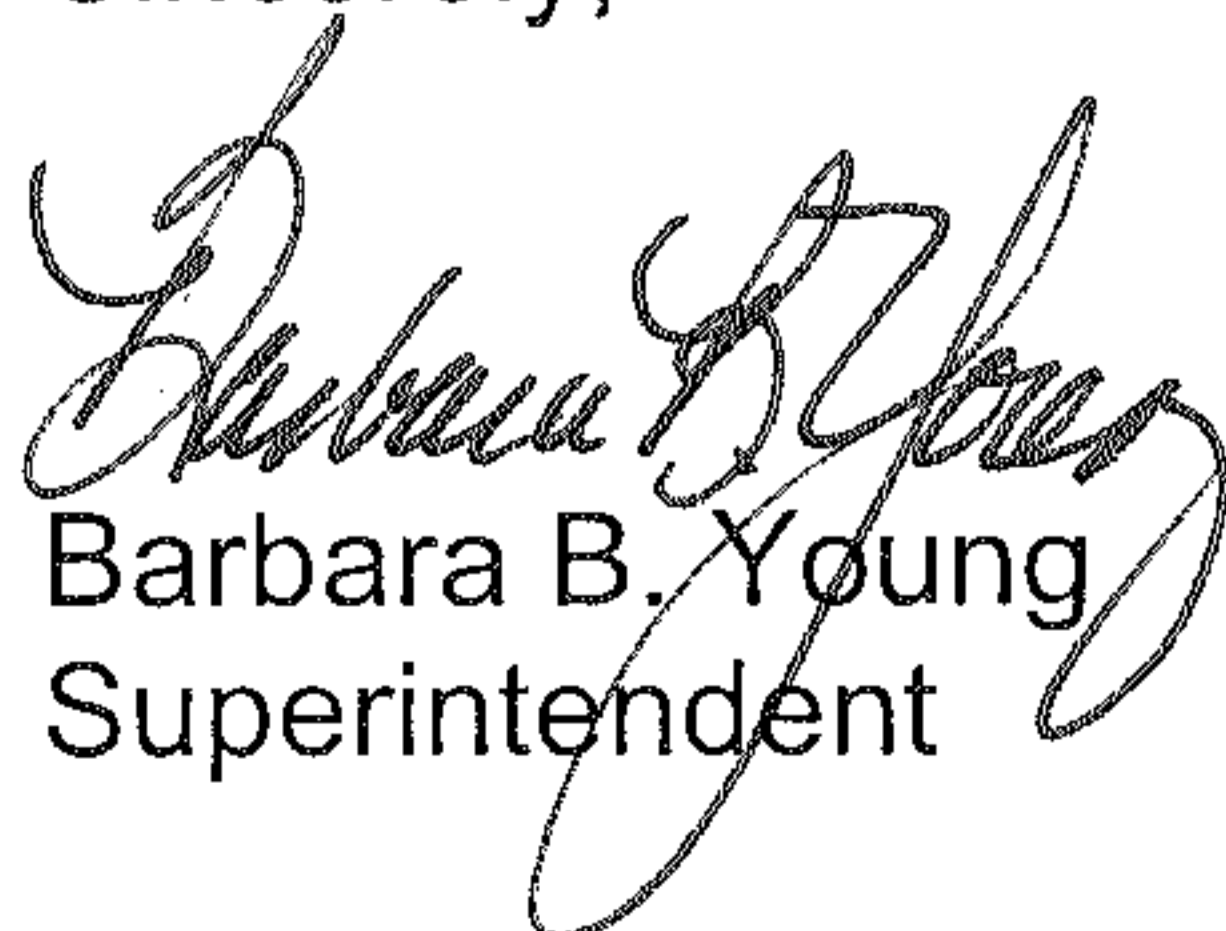
Thank you for your continued commitment to ensure that the public address concerns regarding issues within Marin County. Your interest in once again reviewing the questions of consolidation/unification as well as our budgets and administrative levels in order to identify potential savings is appreciated. The school districts in Marin County are committed to working closely together to share resources, including staff in order to ensure accountability for the limited resources in education. We are continually challenged to meet the increasing needs of students and the State and federal mandates with fewer resources including administration.

Please be assured Mill Valley is committed to an open, transparent budgeting process. Although we are struggling to manage with fewer resources, we are determined to keep the impact of budget reductions as far from the classroom and student programs as possible.

And thank you for recognizing the commitment of our community in your report. Without the continual support through bonds, parcel taxes, Parent Teacher Associations, and our schools foundation, as well as the hundreds of volunteer hours spent in our schools, we would not be able to provide the education we do for children.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,



Barbara B. Young
Superintendent

BBY:kh
Enclosures

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT FORM

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

Report Date: June 10, 2004

Response by: Barbara B. Young **Title:** Superintendent, Mill Valley School District

FINDINGS

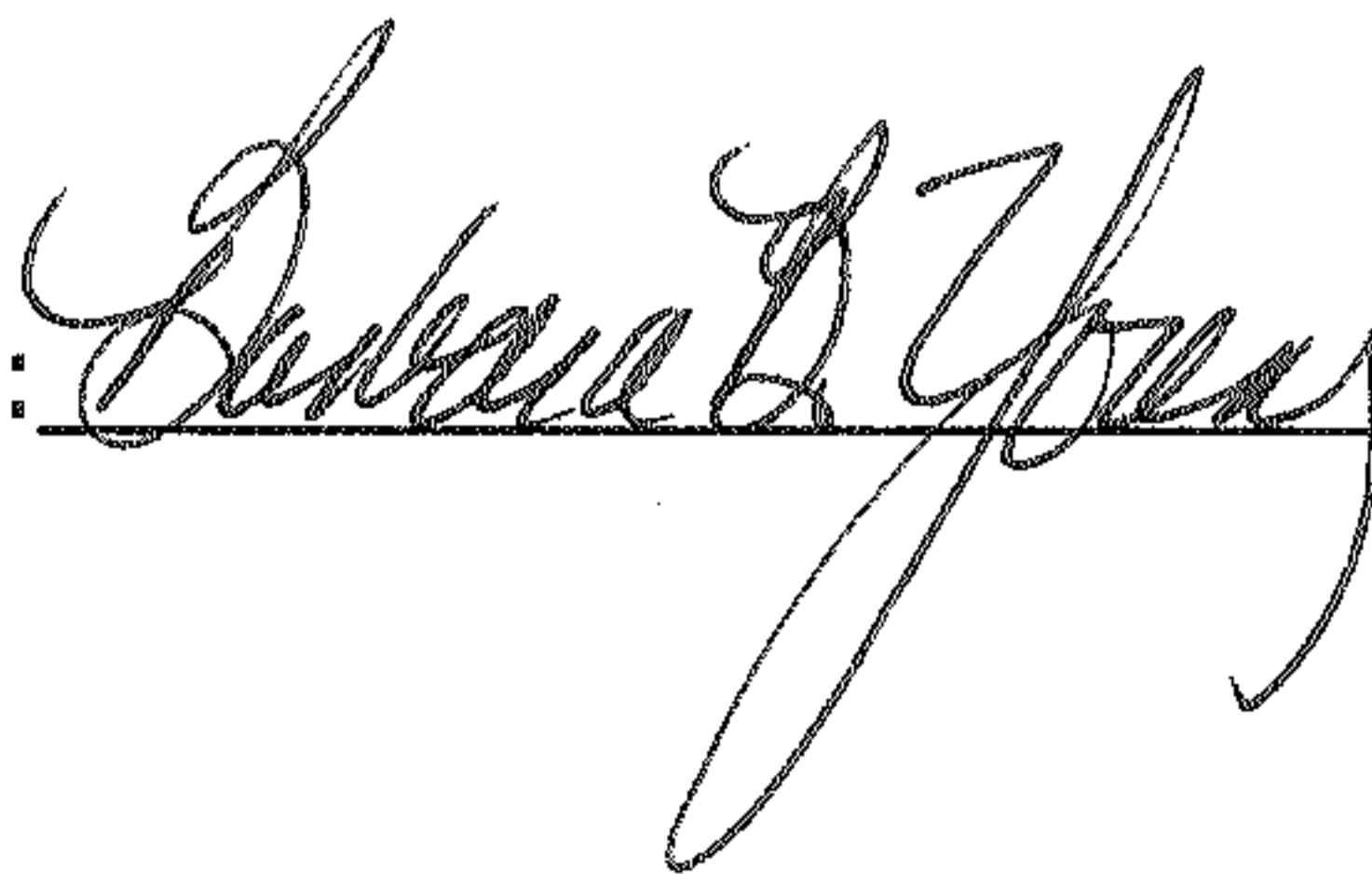
- I/we agree with the findings numbered: F1
- I/we disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: F2., F3., F4
 - ❖ Attach a statement specifying any portions of the findings that are disputed; include an explanation of the reasons therefor

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered R2 and R3 have been implemented
 - ❖ Attach a summary describing the implemented actions
- Recommendations numbered NA have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future
 - ❖ Attach a timeframe for the implementation
- Recommendations numbered NA require further analysis
 - ❖ Attach an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the Grand Jury report
- Recommendations numbered NA will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable
 - ❖ Attach an explanation

Date: 9-7-04

Signed: _____



Number of pages attached 3

**RESPONSES FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT OF THE MILL VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT
TO THE FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS OF
THE 2003-2004 MARIN COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY**

F1. Finding: The County Office of Education, while producing numerous statistical reports using the object codes, has produced no statistical reports using the function codes even though this information is available for each district.

Response: Agree

F2. Finding: The number of students in a school district does not appear to affect the percentage of the budget spent on general administration because the Office of Education provides the administration for the smallest school districts.

Response: I agree that the County of Office continues to increase its administrative support of small districts; however I disagree that the number of students is the reason stated for the level of administration. One of the primary reasons for the difference seen in level of administrative support is the loss of resources available to districts. Mill Valley School District has continued its commitment to maintaining salaries in the top 25% of comparable districts, in order to remain competitive in recruiting and hiring new staff. Just last year we were able to negotiate a cap on health benefits. Many districts in Marin have not had the same level of health benefits. Increased benefit costs and the reduction of our budget by \$1.5 million dollars due to the loss of State revenue has resulted in the loss of our Director of Curriculum and Instruction as well as additional support staff. Even with sharing resources among the Education Task Force districts has not allowed us to fully meet the needs of the State, students and staff. With a similar level of administrative support as many smaller districts, we are trying to meet the needs of many more students.

F3. Finding: Although *consolidation* of smaller districts is unlikely to produce administrative savings, *unification* appears to offer up to a 3% savings of the combined budgets.

Response: I agree that there would be little administrative savings; however am not convinced that there would be a savings in the budget. Over 87% of a District's budget is for personnel costs. It is difficult to see how there could be a 3% savings if the remaining small percentage of a budget is for supplies, utilities, and operating costs.

F4. Finding: In any reorganization, savings in administrative costs may be offset by other cost of reorganization such as averaging up salaries.

Response: This is a difficult area to analyze since you would not be able to determine savings or cost increases until you had completed a lengthy negotiation process. Unification/consolidation requires two separate district's unions reaching agreement on many issues that involve costs including seniority rites, salary, benefits, working conditions, etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS

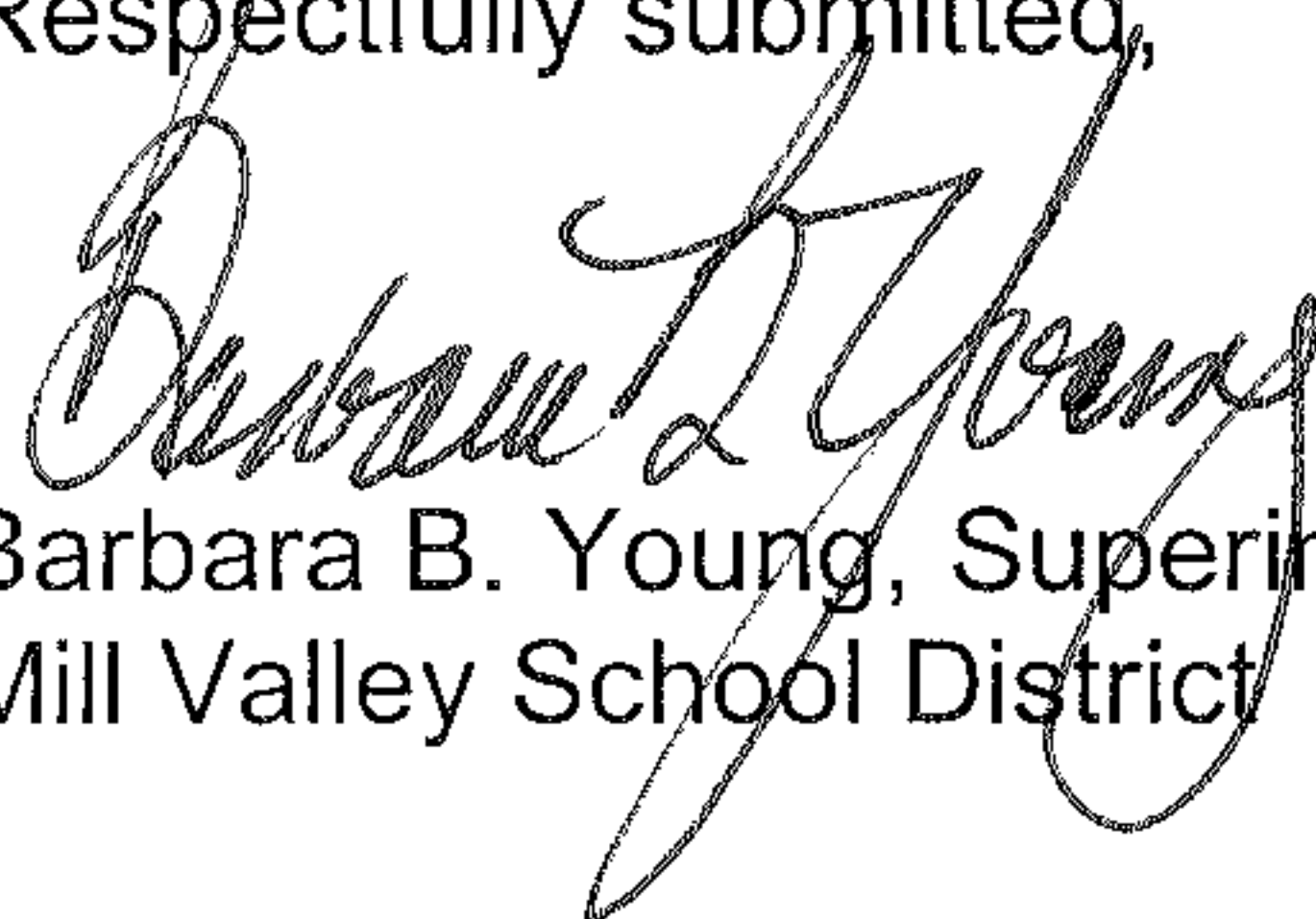
R2. Recommendation: Every school district should ensure that it accurately codes expenses to conform with the functional system.

Response: The Mill Valley School District implemented prior to this report.

R3. Recommendation: Every school district should analyze its breakdown of expenses for all functional categories.

Response: The Mill Valley School District implemented prior to this report.

Respectfully submitted,



Barbara B. Young, Superintendent
Mill Valley School District