



RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT FORM

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

Report Date: June 10, 2004

Catherine A. Townsley
Superintendent

Response by: Stephanie Stein Title: Board President

FINDINGS

I/we agree with the findings numbered: F1, F2

I/we disagree wholly or **partially** with the findings numbered: F3

Attach a statement specifying any portions of the findings that are disputed;
include an explanation of the reasons therefore

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

RECOMMENDATIONS

Anne K. Brush

Recommendations numbered 2 & 3 have been implemented
Attach a summary describing the implemented actions

Julie McMillan

Scott Minick

Recommendations numbered _____ have not yet been implemented,
but will be implemented in the future

Elizabeth Robbins, M.D.

Attach a timeframe for the implementation

Stephanie Stein

Recommendations numbered _____ 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 _____ will not be implemented because
they are not warranted or are not reasonable

Attach an explanation

A California
Distinguished
School

Date: 8/24/04 Signed: Stephanie S Stein

Number of pages attached 2

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FINDINGS

- F1. Findings: 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: While comparisons between districts must be done taking into consideration each district's unique circumstances, having functional code reports produced by the MCOE would be helpful to the Ross School Board.
- F2 Findings: The number of students in a school district does not appear to affect the percentage of the budget spent on general administration because of Office of Education provides the administration for the smallest school districts.
- Response: The Marin County Office of Education does provide administrative services for the small rural districts - Nicasio with an average daily attendance (a.d.a.) of 59; Laguna with an a.d.a. of 26; Lincoln with an a.d.a. of 14; and Union Joint with an a.d.a. of 17. It makes good sense for MCOE to coordinate the administration of these districts in a cost-effective way that provides quality service and avoids duplication.
- F3 Findings: 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: One of our Trustees served on the County Wide task force that looked at consolidation and unification. The findings showed that consolidations have occurred in Marin when the citizens in the communities involved wanted that change on behalf of student learning. Efforts to consolidate or unify are indeed difficult and require strong community support. As a smaller district, we have chosen to work together with other districts in areas where it benefits student learning and would be more cost effective to

“act as one district.” Ross is an active participant in the Education Task Force (ETF) which brings together all the Southern Marin districts that feed into the Tamalpais Union High School District. ETF provides a vehicle for all these districts to work together on curriculum issues to assure a smooth articulation in learning when our students move into high school. Ross also participates in a consortium for transportation of special education students and receives our Business Services from the Marin County Office of Education.

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

Response: The Country Wide Task Force concluded any potential savings in administrative costs as the result of reorganization might be offset by other costs of reorganization. We agree with this statement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Response: The Marin County Office of Education provides business services for our district. Business services include analysis of expenditure codes to ensure conformity with appropriate function reporting.

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

Response: Last year the Ross Trustees reviewed a “program budget” which looked at the funds for each program in depth. We also analyze our budget using functional categories. These are very valuable exercises.