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To: Roberta Robinson, Foreperson
Marin County Grand Jury

From: Ken Benny, Superintendent 
Mill Valley School District

Re: 2007-2008 Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report
Emergency Communications at Marin Schools: A Tale of Catastrophe

Date: June 12, 2008

Enclosed please find two copies of the Mill Valley School District's responses to the 2007-2008 Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report "*Emergency Communications at Marin Schools: A Tale of Catastrophe*". As requested, the Board of Trustees responded to Findings #3, #5, #9, #10 and #11 and Recommendations #1 and #2.

Please contact me at 415-389-7705 if you need further information.

Cc: Mary Jane Burke, Superintendent
Marin County Office of Education

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT FORM

Report Title: **Emergency Communications at Marin Schools: A Tale of Catastrophe**

Report Date: **March 13, 2008**

Response by: **Board of Trustees, Mill Valley School District**

By: Ken Benny, Superintendent

FINDINGS

- I (we) agree with the findings numbered: F3, F9, F10
 - I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: F5, F11
- (Attach a statement specifying any portions of the findings that are disputed; include an explanation of the reasons therefor.)**

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered _____ have been implemented.
(Attach a summary describing the implemented actions.)
- Recommendations numbered R1, R2 have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.
(Attach a timeframe for the implementation.)
- 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.)

Date: June 11, 2008 Signed: *S. J. Sell*
Steven J. Sell, President; Board of Trustees

Number of pages attached 2

Mill Valley School District Responses to Findings (F) and Recommendations (R) to 2007-2008 Marin County Civil Grand Jury

Report Title: *Emergency Communications at Marin Schools: A Tale of Catastrophe*

Report Date: March 13, 2008

Response Date: June 11, 2008

FINDINGS:

F3. No public or private school in Marin is part of MERA.

Response: Mill Valley School District agrees.

F5. The present public school emergency radio communication is about to go belly up, leaving the schools with no emergency radio communications capabilities.

Response: Mill Valley School District has a plan and equipment in place for communications to and from local officials. Plan also includes district-wide drills observed by local emergency officials. The District uses a Sprint/Nextel push-to-talk system for internal communications and a stand alone radio system for local external communications. Mill Valley School District agrees the current county-wide system needs an upgrade.

F9. Both the Red Cross and the Department of Health & Human Services recognize the importance of school sites as gathering places in times of emergency. Both have contracted with various school districts for their use in times of crises.

Response: Mill Valley School District agrees.

F10. There is a belief that installing MERA radios now could instill a false sense of security in the schools, because in any major crisis the MERA system would be overwhelmed with any immediate help unlikely in spite of MERA.

Response: Mill Valley School District agrees.

F11. An alternate plan to equip the schools with an emergency radio communications system that could be outside the MERA radio network is in an early stage of consideration.

Response: Congruent with Marin County Office of Education response, "...these considerations will be coordinated and intensified by the Marin County Office of Education in the coming period of time with a preliminary report to the Marin County Civil Grand Jury by March 2009."

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- R1. The Board of Supervisors, the Marin Emergency Radio Authority, the Disaster Council, the Marin County Office of Education, the Marin County Office of Emergency Services, the Marin County Department of Public Works, the Marin County Administrator's Office, the Marin County Department of Health & Human Services, the various school districts and the private schools should immediately work together to fund and install the MERA system and its radios in all of Marin's public and private schools.**

Response: Mill Valley School District will work with the Marin County Office of Education and other districts as to a communications solution. In the interim, Mill Valley School District will continue its current plan, both for response to emergencies and communications. Mill Valley School District will support a Marin County Office of Education coordinated MERA or other appropriate system funding mechanism.

- R2. In the event it is determined that MERA is not a feasible option for Marin's schools, an effective, alternative emergency radio communication network, independent of MERA, should be immediately modeled, funded and installed in Marin's public and private schools through the collective efforts of the entities identified in Recommendation 1 (R1) above.**

Response: See the Response to R1.