

Live Oak Unified School District

2201 Pennington Road
Live Oak, CA 95953
(530) 695-5400

Tom Pritchard, Superintendent

Focusing On Student Achievement

ENDORSED FILED

SEP 29 2008

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF SUTTER
CLERK OF THE COURT
BY LAURA SANTANA Deputy

To: The Honorable Christopher R. Chandler
From: Tom Pritchard, Superintendent
Re: Response to the 2007-2008 Sutter County Grand Jury Report: Encinal School and the Live Oak Unified School District

9/9/08

Dear Judge Chandler,

This letter is in response to the portion of the 2007-2008 Sutter County Grand Jury Report (REPORT), Education Committee Report, which pertains to the interviews and visitations of the Sutter County Grand Jury Education Committee on October 28, 2007, February 28, 2008, and March 11, 2008 regarding Encinal School and the Live Oak Unified School District.

I received a copy of the report on June 23, 2008. The copy I received was signed by Jennifer Lambert and dated 6/18/08.

Response to the Encinal Elementary School Report

The Grand Jury made two recommendations regarding Encinal Elementary School.

1. The first recommendation was to contact the California Highway Patrol and the Sutter County Sherriff's department to help assess student safety near Encinal School.

Upon receiving the Grand Jury report, the Live Oak Unified School District contacted Captain Samson of the Sutter County Sherriff's Department on 7/28/08. He contacted the CHP and officer David Eisenberg contacted our office on 7/30/08. Officer Paul Lust visited our office in early August to talk with Leandra Bright and stated that he would observe the traffic at Encinal. At the time of this response, it was our understanding that officer Lust would make a report to his Captain in the near future. In addition to the help from Sutter County and CHP, Mary Page, Encinal School principal, has sent information to parents regarding safe traffic practices.

2. The second recommendation was to give a high priority to resurfacing the Encinal playground and loading zone surfaces.

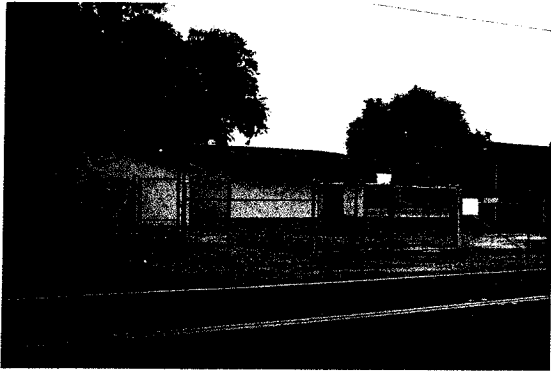
The asphaltting of the Encinal playground and loading zone is complete. I have attached some before and after pictures to highlight some aspects of the project.

RECEIVED

SEP 12 2008

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF SUTTER
CRIMINAL DIVISION

Encinal Elementary School: Blacktop "BEFORE" pictures



Encinal Playground 7/11/08



Encinal Playground 7/11/08



Encinal Playground 7/11/08



Encinal Playground 7/11/08

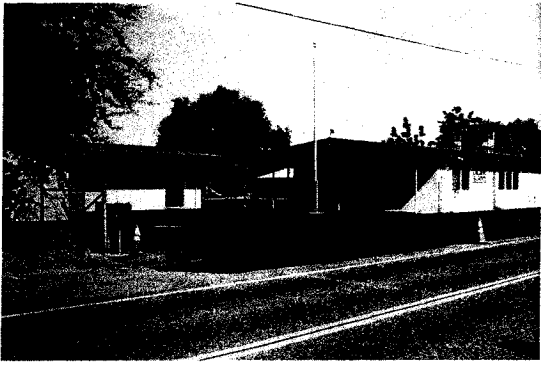


Encinal Playground 7/11/08

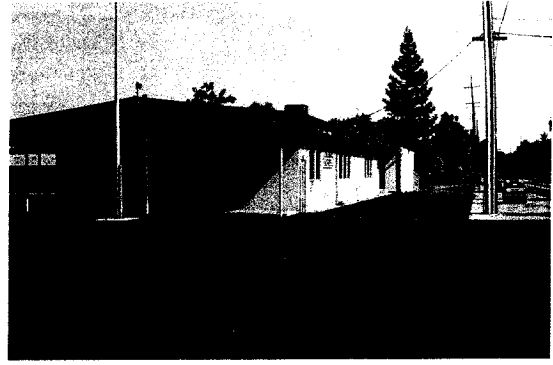


Encinal Playground 7/11/08

Encinal Elementary School: Blacktop "AFTER" pictures



Encinal Playground 8/6/08



Encinal Playground 8/6/08



Encinal Playground 8/6/08



Encinal Playground 8/6/08



Encinal Playground 8/6/08



Encinal Playground 8/6/08

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Tom Pritchard, Superintendent

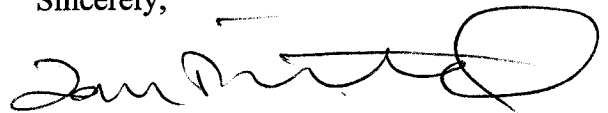
Focusing On Student Achievement

Response to the Live Oak Unified School District Report

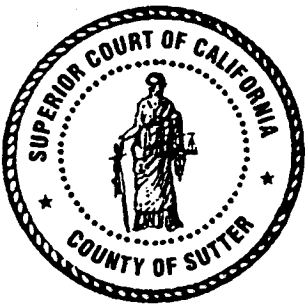
1. The Grand Jury recommended that the district do an assessment of security needs for the district.

Under the leadership of the Sutter County Superintendent of Schools, the Live Oak Unified School District is involved in an 18 month effort to identify and address student safety needs through a Readiness & Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) grant. At the time of this response, the district had completed a hazard assessment for each school site in the district and the County, headed by Grace Espindola, sent out a visiting committee, including Seargent Zembiec, Deputies Akin and Rawlin from the Sutter County Sherriff office; John DeBeaux from the Office of Emergency Services; and Captains Root and Martin from the Live Oak and Sutter fire stations, to visit both Luther Elementary School and Live Oak High School. Their job was to verify information gained in the hazard assessment document and physically walk the school site. The next step will be to make appropriate changes to any policies or procedures throughout the district. The district takes the safety of students very seriously and will continue to work on refining our safety procedures and practices.

Sincerely,



Tom Pritchard
LOUSD Superintendent



Superior Court of California

County of Sutter

446 Second Street ♦ Yuba City, California 95991
Telephone 530-822-3300 ♦ Fax 530-822-3500

LEN L. LeTELLIER
Court Executive Officer

June 18, 2008

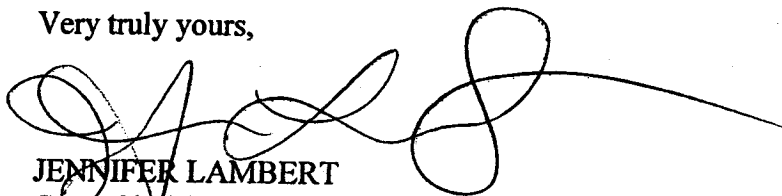
Dear Department Head:

Enclosed is a copy of the 2007-2008 Grand Jury Final Report section(s) that pertains to your department. Pursuant to Penal Code §933.05(f) the section(s) are provided to you on behalf of the Grand Jury.

Provide your response to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court within the time period specified in Penal Code §933(c) and include the details required by Penal Code §933.05. Your response will be filed with Court and a copy will be posted on the Court's web site, www.suttercourts.com.

Please acknowledge the receipt of these documents by signing below on the copy and returning the copy of this letter in the enclosed self-addressed envelope as soon as possible. Please retain one copy for your records.

Very truly yours,



JENNIFER LAMBERT
Court Clerk/Jury Services

JL
Enc.
c:file

Receipt Date: 6/23/08

Signed: 

Respondent

Department: Distriet office

Tom Pritchard

Please Print Name

CALIFORNIA CODES
PENAL CODE
SECTION 925-933.6

933. (c) No later than 90 days after the grand jury submits a final report on the operations of any public agency subject to its reviewing authority, the governing body of the public agency shall comment to the presiding judge of the superior court on the findings and recommendations pertaining to matters under the control of the governing body, and every elected county officer or agency head for which the grand jury has responsibility pursuant to Section 914.1 shall comment within 60 days to the presiding judge of the superior court, with an information copy sent to the board of supervisors, on the findings and recommendations pertaining to matters under the control of that county officer or agency head and any agency or agencies which that officer or agency head supervises or controls. In any city and county, the mayor shall also comment on the findings and recommendations. All of these comments and reports shall forthwith be submitted to the presiding judge of the superior court who impaneled the grand jury. A copy of all responses to grand jury reports shall be placed on file with the clerk of the public agency and the office of the county clerk, or the mayor when applicable, and shall remain on file in those offices. One copy shall be placed on file with the applicable grand jury final report by, and in the control of the currently impaneled grand jury, where it shall be maintained for a minimum of five years.

933.05. (a) For purposes of subdivision (b) of Section 933, as to each grand jury finding, the responding person or entity shall indicate one of the following:

(1) The respondent agrees with the finding.

(2) The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation of the reasons therefore.

(b) For purposes of subdivision (b) of Section 933, as to each grand jury recommendation, the responding person or entity shall report one of the following actions:

(1) The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.

(2) The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation.

(3) The recommendation requires further analysis, with 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 head 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.

(4) The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefore.

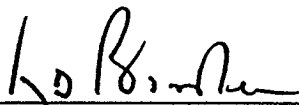
(c) However, if a finding or recommendation of the grand jury addresses budgetary or personnel matters of a county agency or department headed by an elected officer, both the agency or department head and the board of supervisors shall respond if requested by the grand jury, but the response of the board of supervisors shall address only those budgetary or personnel matters over which it has some decision-making authority. The response of the elected agency or department head shall address all aspects of the findings or recommendations affecting his or her agency or department.

(d) A grand jury may request a subject person or entity to come before the grand jury for the purpose of reading and discussing the findings of the grand jury report that relates to that person or entity in order to verify the accuracy of the findings prior to their release.

(e) During an investigation, the grand jury shall meet with the subject of that investigation regarding the investigation, unless the court, either on its own determination or upon request of the foreperson of the grand jury, determines that such a meeting would be detrimental.

(f) A grand jury shall provide to the affected agency a copy of the portion of the grand jury report relating to that person or entity two working days prior to its public release and after the approval of the presiding judge. No officer, agency, department, or governing body of a public agency shall disclose any contents of the report prior to the public release of the final report.

Final Report
of the
2007-2008
Sutter County
Grand Jury



Kenneth D. Brooke,
Foreperson



Christopher R. Chandler,
Presiding Judge

Encinal School

Live Oak Unified School District

Introduction

The Sutter County Grand Jury Education Committee conducted an investigation of Encinal School in the Live Oak Unified School District. The past four Grand Juries had made recommendations, some of which have yet to be implemented. The investigating committee was comprised of Robert Ahu, Kimber Andersen, Maria Arreola, Nance Contreras, Joan Doolittle, Satoko Kim and Jody McGinnis.

Discussion

The Sutter County Grand Jury Education Committee interviewed Superintendent Tom Pritchard, of Live Oak Unified School District, on October 29, 2007, and February 28, 2008, at which times Encinal School was discussed, including the cracked and uneven condition of the playground surface. Encinal School Accident Reports were reviewed. The 2004 School Bond, the district's budget, and the delays and/or problems with addressing the recommendations of the past Grand Juries also were discussed. Funding, planning, and student/staff safety were key issues. Committee members visited Encinal School on February 28, 2008 and March 11, 2008. During a site visit, the committee visited with Mary Page, Encinal School Principal.

The 2004 School Bond did not include Encinal School's needs as School District Improvement Projects. Superintendent Pritchard stated that, to the best of his knowledge, no injuries have occurred as a direct result of the condition of the playground. Principal Page made the same observation. The school district's prudent planning provided for accomplishment of the recent improvements, which delayed previous Grand Juries' recommendations.



Student Loading Zone

Mr. Pritchard stated that money in the 2006 - 2007 budget had been allocated for the project of paving/resurfacing of the playground and loading zone areas. A later District Needs Assessment identified a construction project that took precedence, and which would require removal of any pavement in that area. The school district determined that it would be fiscally irresponsible to pave the area and then tear it out for the imminent construction project. In late 2007, a new building, including a handicapped-accessible bathroom, office space, and storage, was constructed on the school property.

Nevertheless, a visit to the playground indicated that it is still in need of repair. School Accident Reports, examined by the committee, did not indicate that any injuries were the result of playground disrepair. Re-surfacing of the playground has not yet occurred and has been rescheduled to a later date; however, completion is expected in 2008.

Education Committee members noted that the student loading zone construction area also needs to be finished, as the uneven surface presents a safety hazard.

Committee members noticed that no crossing guard was visible during arrival times. Unescorted children crossing the street, illegal u-turns and vehicles exceeding the speed limit, as indicated by the solar-powered speed sign, were observed. The committee opined that pedestrian safety was insufficient along Larkin Road, in front of the school property.



Young girl crossing busy street



Illegal U-Turn



Excessive Speed

Findings

The Grand Jury finds that the playground surface at Encinal School is in disrepair, presenting a potential for accidents, as well as detracting from an aesthetically pleasing school environment.

The Grand Jury finds that the loading zone needs to be surfaced, to allow safe access to, and egress from, school buildings, especially during inclement weather.

The Grand Jury finds that road safety along Larkin Road, in the vicinity of the school, is insufficient. Committee members observed lack of supervision for children crossing the road, as well as numerous and varied traffic violations in the school zone.

Recommendations

The Grand Jury recommends that the school district contact the California Highway Patrol and the Sutter County Sheriff's Department, requesting assessment of student safety near Encinal School on Larkin Road during arrival and pickup times.

The Grand Jury recommends that playground and student loading zone resurfacing be given a high priority.

Respondents

Tom Pritchard, Superintendent, Live Oak Unified School District

Live Oak Unified School District

Introduction

The 2007-2008 Sutter County Grand Jury conducted an investigation of the Live Oak Unified School District to review the health and welfare of the District, as well as follow-up on recommendations of the 2006-2007 Grand Jury.

The investigation was conducted by the Education Committee, comprised of the following jurors: Robert Ahu, Kimber Andersen, Maria Arreola, Nancy Contreras, Joan Doolittle, Satoko Kim and Jody McGinnis.

Discussion

Education Committee members interviewed Tom Pritchard, Superintendent of the Live Oak Unified School District (LOUSD) on October 29, 2007 and February 28, 2008. During an interview, the condition of the Encinal School playground was discussed. Committee members visited Encinal School on February 28, 2008, and March 11, 2008. Mr. Pritchard considered "the District running well, good teachers and staff, exemplary student attendance and a budget in the black," as points of pride for the District.

The Superintendent of Schools position is hired by a School District Board, comprised of five members elected by the people of Live Oak to serve four-year terms. The Board has four Trustee Areas; two schools are in one area, and one each are in three others. District schools include Luther Elementary School, Live Oak Middle School, Live Oak High School, and Encinal School. Encinal, once its own district, is now a "necessary small school" funded by the district. An alternative high school, Valley Oak, is adjacent to both the District Office and the high school. Each of three schools has its own principal, while Encinal School and Valley Oak Alternative High School share a principal.

Live Oak High School	Mat Gulbrandsen
Live Oak Middle School	Parm Virk
Luther Elementary School	Marjorie Jones
Encinal School and Valley Oak A.H.S.	Mary Page

District enrollment is approximately 1900 students. Over 60% are Spanish speakers, 25% are English Learners, and 15% are Punjabi speakers. There are almost 100 teachers at the five school sites. Mr. Pritchard indicated that it is difficult to get Punjabi-speaking teachers. Teachers are CLAD certified in ELD (English Language Development). The CUB House at Luther School is available for ELD activities and programs. Luther Elementary School and Live Oak Middle School are both Program Improvement Schools, out of compliance with the No Child Left Behind mandate. Areas not meeting State API (Adequate Progress Improvement) or Federal AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) standards are English and Math.

Qualified teachers are drawn to the Live Oak area "by the slower pace, rural atmosphere and a good benefit package, including retirement, that the district offers," related Mr. Pritchard. Also appealing is the District's ability to maintain close to a 20:1 ratio of students to teachers, with a goal of all classes achieving that ratio. Teachers are usually in place for the start of school. Substitutes are used early in the school year in the event that a class needs to be divided. Staff meetings are held monthly. An

annual staff retreat is held for professional development planning; a similar instructional planning meeting is also held.

The District employs a Chief Financial Officer, and a Director of Special Programs. A credentialed nurse is full-time this year, offering nursing-plus, and a three hour per week nurse's assistant is also available. The nurse spends two days a week at Luther School, and a half day at Encinal School and the Alternative School. The district has recently hired a K-8 Counselor.

Attendance rate in the District is a commendable 91-92%, up from 89% in 1999-2000, as is evidenced in the 2005-2006 School Accountability Report Card, the most recent available, reviewed by Committee members. Luther Elementary School boasted 99.3% attendance, during the 2005-2006 school year. The same is true for parent involvement. Mr. Pritchard noted that attendance dips slightly at the middle school level, and again slightly at the high school level. Mr. Pritchard cited schools' dedication to developing a personal relationship with student families as the greatest influence on student attendance. Providing food at events at which parents are expected to be present has been helpful in rapport-building. Mr. Pritchard asserted that, "Meeting family needs is paramount." Absences receive follow-up calls "early on." Saturday School is used in lieu of suspension, for non-severe cases. Suspension in lieu of expulsion is used for a good student, along with a contract for that semester plus one more. The SARB (Student Attendance Review Board) is rarely accessed, but when it is, the Vice Principals or the Attendance Secretaries accompany the student and his parent or guardian.

A three-week break is now calendared for Christmas break, which helps the numerous families who leave the country at that time, thus increasing regular student attendance. According to Mr. Pritchard, students are warned that being gone longer will "risk not being able to continue in the same classes."

The committee inquired about the status of the Encinal School playground, as follow up to a 2006-2007 Grand Jury concern. Committee members had noticed that the playground has yet to be re-paved. Mr. Pritchard explained the delay, also reported in the separate Encinal School report. The playground is now budgeted and planned for 2008.

Three vice principals constitute "the safety committee," Mr. Pritchard explained. Campus security and student safety has not been a serious problem, to date, and he was not aware of any problem with timely delivery of emergency services due to train traffic. Classrooms have intercoms, gates are locked during the school day at every school except the high school, and cameras are used on buses. He considered the District's "weakest area" walk-on security at the high school. The Sheriff's Department is called "maybe once a week, to remove a student under the influence, usually of marijuana, on campus," said Mr. Pritchard. The high school has an open campus policy at lunchtime; other campuses are closed.

To plan for growth and updates to schools and facilities, Mr. Pritchard stated the local community had approved a school bond in 2004 to fund the plans. The plan was to purchase property to build a new high school, and convert the current high school into a middle school. The current middle school will be updated and continue to serve as a middle school. Mr. Pritchard stated that the original plans were no longer realistic due to the original cost estimates having almost doubled. At the time of these interviews Mr. Pritchard's new plans, some of which were reviewed by the committee, were already in progress but only in the proposal stage.

Findings

The Grand Jury finds that the Live Oak Unified School District has very high student attendance and parent participation.

The Grand Jury finds that security at Live Oak High School is inadequate.

The Grand Jury finds that the Encinal School playground is still unpaved; additionally the student loading zone needs to be paved.

The Grand Jury finds that the District maintains a close to 20:1 ratio of students to teachers.

The Grand Jury finds that the Live Oak Unified School District continues to demonstrate forward thinking and prudent management of the funds entrusted to it by the local community.

Recommendations

The Grand Jury commends the District for its high student attendance and efforts to meet student/family needs.

The Grand Jury recommends that an assessment of security needs and possible solutions be conducted as soon as possible. It is additionally recommended that money for implementing needed security measures be budgeted.

The present Grand Jury recommends that the 2008-2009 Grand Jury follow up on the anticipated paving of the Encinal School playground and student loading zone.

The Grand Jury commends the District on its success in meeting 20:1 student to teacher ratios.

The Grand Jury commends Mr. Pritchard for his leadership and example as was demonstrated during the education committee's investigation.

Respondents

Tom Pritchard, Superintendent, Live Oak Unified School District