

# Grand Jury Report

## REQUESTED RESPONSE FORM

**Grand Jury Report Title :** Mendocino County School Nutrition Programs

**Report Dated :** May 29, 2018

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**Response Form Submitted By:**

Michelle Hutchins, Superintendent Anderson Valley United School District  
PO Box 457  
Boonville, CA 95415

**Your Response is REQUESTED no later than: July 28, 2018**

**I have reviewed the report and submit my responses to the FINDINGS portion of the report as follows:**

- I (we) agree with the Findings numbered:  
F2, F3, F4, F9, F10, F11, F14
- I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the Findings numbered below, and have *attached* a statement specifying any portion of the Finding that are disputed with an explanation of the reasons therefore.  
F1, F5, F6, F7, F8, F12, F13, F15

**I have reviewed the report and submit my responses to the RECOMMENDATIONS portion of the report as follows:**

- The following Recommendation(s) have have been implemented and attached, as requested, is a summary describing the implemented actions:  
R2, R3, R5, R6
- The following Recommendation(s) have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future; attached, as requested, is a time frame for implementation:  
\_\_\_\_\_

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- The following Recommendation(s) require further analysis and attached, as requested, is an explanation and the scope and parameters of the planned analysis, and a time frame for the matter to be prepared, discussed and approved by the officer and/or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed: (This time frame shall not exceed six (6) months from the date of publication of the Grand Jury Report)

R4

- The following Recommendations will NOT be implemented because they are not warranted and/or are not deemed reasonable; attached, as requested, is an explanation therefore:

R1

I have completed the above responses, and have attached, as requested the following number of pages to this response form:

Number of Pages attached: 5

I understand that responses to Grand Jury Reports are public records. They will be posted on the Grand Jury website: [www.mendocinocounty.org/government/grand-jury](http://www.mendocinocounty.org/government/grand-jury). The clerk of the responding agency is required to maintain a copy of the response.

I understand that I must submit this signed response form and any attachments as follows:

First Step: E-mail in pdf file format to:

- The Grand Jury Foreperson at: [grandjury@mendocinocounty.org](mailto:grandjury@mendocinocounty.org)
- The Presiding Judge: [grandjury@mendocino.courts.ca.gov](mailto:grandjury@mendocino.courts.ca.gov)

Second Step: Mail all originals to:

Mendocino County Grand Jury  
P.O. Box 939  
Ukiah, CA 95482

Printed Name: Michelle Hutchins

Title: Superintendent

Signed: [Signature]

Date: July 13, 2018



**Anderson Valley Unified School District**

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July 13, 2018

**Superintendent Michelle Hutchins' Response Attachment to Grand Jury Report dated May 29, 2018: Mendocino County School Nutrition Programs**

Disputed findings and statement of reasons therefore:

F1: Federal and state reimbursements do not cover Mendocino County school district food program costs, thereby imposing a financial burden on school district budgets.

AVUSD spent several years closely monitoring food service program costs. The table below shows the amounts contributed from the general fund to cafeteria fund to meet required expenditures and the student participation rates of the food programs offered:

School Year	Amount Contributed from General Fund	Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner Participation Rates
2014-15	\$107,765	B 21%, L 71%, D 19%
2015-16	\$2,321	B 48%, L 81%, D 53%
2016-17	\$25,059	B 37%, L 71%, D 47%
2017-18	\$111,281*	B 48%, L 77%, D 37%

\* 2017-18 revenue was high due to payment of a \$71,000 penalty resulting from clerical and programmatic errors. Contribution was \$40,281 when you remove the penalty.

The table above illustrates that program participation plays a large role in the amount a district contributes to the food service program. I believe the State and Federal reimbursement rates would adequately cover food program costs if participation in the program was maximized. The school year 2015-16, there was almost no contribution to AVUSD's food service program. When Districts maximize participation in Breakfast and Dinner Programs, then the State and Federal Rates are enough to cover program costs. The same applies to school attendance. If students only attended 50% of the school year, schools would not receive enough State revenue to cover costs.



F5: In smaller school districts, food managers who cook as well as manage are overburdened with additional administrative California State required record keeping.

AVUSD, a small school district, employs a 1.0 FTE Cafeteria Manager who has the responsibility to cook four hours a day. To support the Cafeteria Manager from becoming overburdened with administrative California State required record keeping, AVUSD provides two days a month of Administrative Support to submit claims to the State and an additional hire at 30 hours a month to design menus and input data into the NutriKids system. In addition, the Cafeteria Manager is allowed release time to “catch up on paperwork” and provide oversight and guidance to the satellite sites that is built into the food service budget.

F6: Schools use disposable serving trays and utensils instead of paying additional labor costs to wash reusable trays and utensils.

AVUSD used compostable trays last year and attempted to compost the trays in worm bins with mixed success. The process of preparing trays for composting was extremely time consuming. The reason AVUSD wishes to keep from using non disposable trays relates more to water conservation and preventing chemicals used to clean the trays from being released into the water systems than to reduce staff hours. AVUSD will be using non disposable trays and utensils next year as we explore other recyclable options.

F7: The grand jury is concerned that there is no registered or certified dietitian employed for the county's meal programs.

This statement appears to be a concern not a finding of facts for which is impossible to submit whether I agree or disagree.

F8: There is a paucity of oversight and guidance for the county's school nutrition programs.

California Department of Education (CDE) has a Nutrition Services Division (NSD) whose sole purpose is to help schools serve healthy meals to children. Each school district is assigned a person who provides technical assistance to the Cafeteria and Food Service Managers at each District. In addition, CDE provides professional development to Food Service Staff as well as to Administrators charged with overseeing Food Service Managers. The NSD staff helped me



develop formulas based on Meals per labor hour to determine the staffing needs of our kitchens. The NSD also came and did an administrative review to help determine areas we could derive more efficiency and flagged areas of concern for a formal review. What I do agree with in this statement is that there is a paucity of use of the CDE consultants who are already paid to support school districts with food service. If more of the Districts actively used the CDE Nutrition Service Division Consultants we would have less financial penalties.

F12: Food service job descriptions in small districts include duties that require more time than allotted or funded.

The AVUSD Food Service Department averages 35 meals per labor hour. According to the CDE NSD this is an acceptable meal per labor hour expectation. The kitchen did operate for one year at 42 meals per labor hour which was high so the District added staff to bring down the average. Job descriptions outline what a person will be asked to complete, they do not outline how much time per task a person spends during the day or week or month, so I am unsure how the Grand Jury came to conclude this finding.

F13: Ongoing computer training for food service managers is lacking in most school districts.

The Job Description of the Cafeteria Manager requires the ability to use a computer and calculators. It is not the responsibility of the employer to make the employee eligible for the minimum qualifications of the job. With that said, it is the responsibility of the employer to train on any applications specific to the job. When AVUSD purchases applications, we include a support contract. The support contract provides direct training on the use of the application and troubleshooting for all staff using the application. When new staff are hired, training on the use of applications is provided.

F15: The addition of a MCOE dietician who could review procedures with food service staff might prevent negative evaluations from the state.

AVUSD had two reviews where there were negative evaluations from the State. There were three things that caused a penalty: 1) Students were served dinner in an after school program before the school day had ended; 2) Doubled a Claim form to the State (requested payment for the same bill twice); and 3) Claiming hummus as 100% bean product towards meeting the weekly bean



requirement. Only the third item would be caught by a Dietician and only if the Cafeteria Manager thought to ask them. Again, this service is already provided by CDE and had the Cafeteria Manager asked CDE, the mistake would have been corrected. A Dietician hired by MCOE would be a redundant service.

**Responses to Recommendations:**

Implemented recommendations:

R2: Meal program supervisors regularly inspect satellite sites for program compliance. (F4, F5, F8, F12-14)

AVUSD Cafeteria Manager is given release days to inspect satellite sites for program compliance.

R3: School districts provide ongoing computer training for meal site managers and staff. (F13, F14)

When software is purchased, a training and support package is also purchased. The vendors of the application's we purchase provide direct training on their product and provide troubleshooting support when the program does not function as planned.

R5: All school districts provide application forms for free or reduced-cost meals at the beginning of each school year or when the student is enrolled. (F1, F2, F9, F14)

Included in the Beginning of the Year Packet and the New Student Enrollment Packet are the Free and Reduced Lunch Forms. It is the responsibility of the Site Secretaries to distribute the packets, the site principals follow up on forms that do not immediately get returned.

R6: To prevent waste, school districts instruct the students in the proper handling of reusable tableware and disposal of trash and recyclables. (F6, F8, F10, F11)



As part of the opening on school, all students are taught the behavior expectations in the school cafeteria. Included in this lesson is how to properly handle the trays and dispose of trash and recyclables. In addition, one school conducts a weekly trash audit and provides the class that produces the least waste with a prize. If waste amounts increase, then students are retaught how to properly dispose of trash and recyclables. The schools have sorting tables with signs to help remind students of the expectations.

Recommendations requiring further analysis:

R4: All school districts enable meal site supervisors to meet on a regular basis to share best meal preparation and staff practices. (F2-5, F11-14)

I would support this recommendation only if it included California Department of Education Nutrition Service Division Staff to ensure the practices being shared are truly "best".

Recommendations NOT to be implemented because they are not warranted or are not deemed reasonable:

R1: Mendocino County Office of Education hire a full-time Nutrition Services Director who is a registered dietician to assist all 11 county school districts in reducing costs and improving the quality of service to children. (F1, F2, F5, F7, F8, F12-15)

California Department of Education Nutrition Services Division provides this service for no additional charge. Asking MCOE to organize time for CDE NSD Staff to directly interface with all 11 county school districts at once and on an ongoing nature is an alternative suggestion that would, in my opinion, provide the same support.