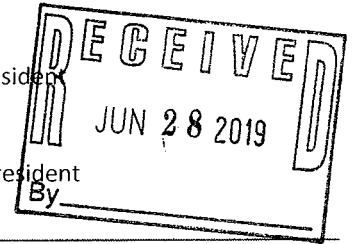


FORT BRAGG UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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June 14, 2019

Mendocino County Grand Jury
P.O. Box 939
Ukiah, CA 95482-0939

Re: Response to Findings and Recommendations (R2-R4) from Advancing Education Through Sharing dated April 3, 2019

Dear Members of the Grand Jury:

I am responding on behalf of the Fort Bragg Unified School District (FBUSD) to the Grand Jury report dated April 3, 2019 titled, Advancing Education Through Sharing. Please see FBUSD's responses below.

FINDINGS:

F1 – Innovations (creative teaching methodologies which benefit students) at any school are neither utilized nor shared between charter and district schools.

*PARTIALLY AGREE

FBUSD has maintained a positive working relationship with Three Rivers Charter School (TRCS) for the last three years. FBUSD has invited TRCS staff to attend our beginning of the year professional development days and we have included TRCS staff to attend our all-district staff training. Because of TRCS limited size, invitations to their trainings have not been received from FBUSD.

F2 – Since district schools operate under more restrictive rules and regulations, it is difficult for the district schools to offer some of the same options or programs as charter schools.

*AGREE

As charter schools may offer other programs without the strict credentialing requirements, our district continues to struggle to hire appropriately credentialed teachers for specialized programs.

F3 – The district schools are changing their curricula to attract students and increase their ADA funding.

*DISAGREE

FBUSD adjusts our curriculum as the state standards change and as our curriculum adoptions become outdated. We have never adjusted curriculum to attract and recruit students. We adjust our curriculum when we are mandated to do so, when our current curriculum is outdated, or when we find a curriculum that is better suited for the needs of our students.

F4 – Where existing, the assigned oversight person between the district and the charter schools has not looked for opportunities to broaden the success of district schools. Currently, the GJ found no evidence of collaborative processes between the charter and district schools.

***PARTIALLY AGREE**

While FBUSD has invited TRCS to participate in professional development opportunities, collaborative opportunities are limited in scope. Both FBUSD and TRCS have different academic calendars, different early release days, and different adopted curricula.

F5 – Many parents are not aware of the availability, or even the existence, of SARC, API, and other scores and reports to determine the best educational experience for their students. Parents have traditionally not been educated in the availability of these tools.

***PARTIALLY AGREE & PARTIALLY DISAGREE**

FBUSD publishes every school's SARC on the district website under Public Documents and the SARC is also published on each school's website. School administration provides a public report to the FBUSD Board of Trustees annually for Board approval prior to submitting the new SARC to the California Department of Education (CDE). While many parents may not be fully aware of this document, this document can be found in multiple locations on the FBUSD webpage.

FBUSD disagrees with the "existence" of API. The Academic Performance Index (API) has not been in existence for a little over six years. California produced the last API report in 2013. (See CDE confirmation at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/re/pr/api.asp>.) Any reference to API as an accountability model is a clear indication that current California school accountability standards are not understood or known.

F6 – The GJ has found in Mendocino County the mission of charter schools as originally envisioned has not been fulfilled.

***PARTIALLY AGREE**

The report summary states, "Charter schools were originally envisioned as a parallel system of education alongside the traditional district schools to drive innovation through a progressive approach to classroom instruction." If this is what F6 is referring to, then FBUSD partially agrees with this statement. TRCS faces the same challenges as FBUSD – finding qualified teachers who can afford to live on the Mendocino Coast is difficult. With consistent staff turnover, strengthening programs, expanding educational opportunities, and providing a wider range of courses is challenging.

Recommendations R2-R4

R2 – Schools should offer parents and guardians training on the tools available to evaluate and compare schools within the districts, e.g., SARC and API. Offering this allows the students to enroll in the school which is best aligned with their needs

FBUSD reports on all school SARCs at regular school board meetings annually. All SARCs are published on the FBUSD website and each school's website. SARCs are explained and discussed in open session with time for the public to ask questions and comment. FBUSD also shares student CAASPP scores, benchmark scores, and Dashboard reporting during open session at regularly scheduled school board meetings throughout the school year. These reports are available to the public and community in the school board packet and meeting minutes that can be found online from the FBUSD website. As mentioned earlier, API has not been reported since 2013 and is no longer applicable.

R3 – Post a link to the school, district and state SARC and API scores on the school’s website.

FBUSD shares all SARC reports in the public documents folder found on the district website. API is no longer applicable and is no longer reported.

R4 – Build a space on the MCOE website for teachers at any school in Mendocino County to publish tips and suggestions to improve classroom experience, e.g., behavior and teaching methodologies.

There is a wealth of resources on the internet for any educator to find “tips and suggestions” to improve the classroom experience. While FBUSD supports a central location from the MCOE website for county teachers to access, FBUSD does not believe this to be a barrier for teachers to access and find quality teaching aids and supports.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Grand Jury report. Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions or require further clarification.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Walker
FBUSD Superintendent

cc: FBUSD Board of Trustees