



# MENDOCINO COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

WARREN GALLETTI, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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## Response to Grand Jury Report



Report Title: **POINT ARENA SCHOOLS**

Report Date: **April 21, 2015**

Response by: **Warren Galletti, MCOE Superintendent**

As a preliminary issue, the Findings and Recommendations are in regards to Point Arena Schools, an independent legal entity, over which the Mendocino County Superintendent of Schools has limited knowledge of day-to-day operations and limited authority. Therefore, the responses to the report will be limited.

### Findings:

Based on the limited knowledge of the Mendocino County Superintendent of Schools regarding the day-to-day operations of Point Arena Schools, I am unable to agree or disagree with the following Findings: **F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8, F9, F10, F11**

### Recommendations:

Because the Recommendations are directly the responsibility of Point Arena Schools, I am unable to comment as to whether or not any of the Recommendations (**R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10, R11, R12**) will or will not be implemented by Point Arena Schools.

Signature: Warren Galletti

Date: 6-19-15

Number of pages attached: 5



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May 15, 2015

Mendocino County Grand Jury  
501 Low Gap Road, Room 1500  
P.O. Box 939  
Ukiah, CA 95482-0939

Presiding Judge, Honorable David Nelson  
100 N. State Street, Room 303  
Ukiah, CA 95482

Re: Response of the Mendocino County Superintendent of Schools to the Mendocino County Grand Jury Report dated April 21, 2015, entitled Point Arena Schools

Dear Members of the Grand Jury and Honorable Presiding Judge:

My office is in receipt of the Mendocino County Grand Jury Report entitled "Point Arena Schools" ("Report") dated April 21, 2015. The report pertains to various complaints alleged against Point Arena Schools. Point Arena Schools is an independent legal entity, over which my office, the Mendocino County Superintendent of Schools, has limited knowledge of day-to-day operations and limited authority. Therefore, the responses to the Report will be limited. I hereby respond to the Report pursuant to Penal Code section 933.05. As requested, I am responding to Findings 1-11 and Recommendations 1-12.

## **RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY'S FINDINGS**

**Finding 1.** *The District Superintendent failed to follow the established drug testing policy to take reasonable steps to assure the confidentiality of student drug testing results. [Board Policy 5131.61(b)] This caused embarrassment to the student and exposed the school district to potential legal action.*

As already described, since my office has limited knowledge of day-to-day operations and limited authority regarding Point Arena Schools, I cannot comment whether I agree or disagree regarding this finding. I can state I believe school districts should comply with all adopted policies including those related to student drug testing.

**Finding 2.** *When three students were alleged to have cheated on an exit exam; the Superintendent invalidated the math portion of the exam for all students. This punished all of the students by requiring them to retake the exam as well as placing the High School in the School Improvement Program.*

As already described, since my office has limited knowledge of day-to-day operations and limited authority regarding Point Arena Schools, I cannot comment whether I agree or disagree regarding this finding. I can state I believe school districts should implement appropriate safeguards to limit students cheating on exams.

**Finding 3.** *The negative work environment at the High School caused over 40 percent of the certificated staff to terminate their employment.*

As already described, since my office has limited knowledge of day-to-day operations and limited authority regarding Point Arena Schools, I cannot comment whether I agree or disagree regarding this finding. I can state that I encourage school districts to foster a positive work environment.

**Finding 4.** *The previous principal worked with the teachers in allocating lottery funds; this is no longer the procedure. The current Principal/Superintendent was unaware of either the amount of lottery funds or their distribution.*

As already described, since my office has limited knowledge of day-to-day operations and limited authority regarding Point Arena Schools, I cannot comment whether I agree or disagree regarding this finding.

**Finding 5.** *The Grand Jury determined the confidentiality of personnel matters was breached when the District Superintendent handed out reduction in force notifications publicly causing both embarrassment and low morale.*

As already described, since my office has limited knowledge of day-to-day operations and limited authority regarding Point Arena Schools, I cannot comment whether I agree or disagree regarding this finding.

**Finding 6.** *District School Board meeting audio recordings are difficult to understand due to inadequate equipment and the lack of identification of those speaking.*

As already described, since my office has limited knowledge of day-to-day operations and limited authority regarding Point Arena Schools, I cannot comment whether I agree or disagree regarding this finding. I can state that encourage school districts to use appropriate audio recording equipment and, when appropriate, to have the individual speaking identify himself or herself.

**Finding 7.** *Attendance by the working public, and their opportunity to have input, is curtailed by the current District School Board meetings being held at an inconvenient time.*

As already described, since my office has limited knowledge of day-to-day operations and limited authority regarding Point Arena Schools, I cannot comment whether I agree or disagree regarding this finding. I can state that I encourage school districts to schedule school board meetings at times that are reasonably convenient for the public to attend.

**Finding 8.** *A District School Board member using profanity during a public District School Board meeting is never acceptable.*

As already described, since my office has limited knowledge of day-to-day operations and limited authority regarding Point Arena Schools, I cannot comment whether I agree or disagree regarding this finding. I can comment that the inappropriate use of profanity by board members at a public school board meeting should be discouraged.

**Finding 9.** *The Grand Jury heard the same Board member ridicule a visiting presenter's report on nutrition, causing embarrassment to both the presenter and those in attendance.*

As already described, since my office has limited knowledge of day-to-day operations and limited authority regarding Point Arena Schools, I cannot comment whether I agree or disagree regarding this finding. I can state that I encourage the respectful treatment of presenters and the public at school board meetings.

**Finding 10.** *It is critically important to continue maintaining separate balance sheets for each school since they have a combined budget.*

I agree it is important to practice good accounting practices in developing school district budgets. One of the roles of the Mendocino County Superintendent of Schools is to provide fiscal oversight over Mendocino school district budgets. Maintaining separate income statements for Point Arena Joint Union High School and Arena Union Elementary School District is a good accounting practice.

**Finding 11.** *There are multiple Brown Act violations during District School Board meetings that can be remedied with education, training, and a desire to act professionally.*

As already described, since my office has limited knowledge of day-to-day operations and limited authority regarding Point Arena Schools, I cannot comment whether I agree or disagree regarding this finding. I can state I encourage school district administrators and board members to receive training in understanding and complying with the Brown Act.

## **RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY'S RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Recommendation 1.** *The school administration follow the established drug testing policy.*

I encourage school districts to follow established district policies to include any student drug testing policy.

**Recommendation 2.** *Academic testing be monitored more closely to reduce the risk of cheating.*

I encourage school districts to monitor the academic testing of students to reduce the risk of student cheating.

**Recommendation 3.** *The administration work together with all employees to create a more positive work environment.*

I encourage school districts to develop and maintain a positive work environment.

**Recommendation 4.** *The use of lottery funds be transparent to all staff.*

I encourage school districts to involve appropriate input regarding the development of a budget.

**Recommendation 5.** *Personnel issues, including reduction in force notifications, be handled confidentially.*

I encourage schools districts to implement all personnel actions with the appropriate level of confidentiality.

**Recommendation 6.** *The District Board President ask all speakers to identify themselves.*

I encourage school district boards to ask speakers to identify themselves, but I also understand that a member of the public making a public comment during a board meeting may choose not to identify himself or herself.

**Recommendation 7.** *The District Board utilize more than one microphone and place them in better locations.*

I encourage school district boards to appropriately implement amplification technology during board meetings.

**Recommendation 8.** *The District Board meetings be held at a convenient time for the working public.*

I encourage school district boards to schedule board meetings at times that are reasonably convenient for the public to attend

**Recommendation 9.** *All speakers and program presenters be respected and treated with courtesy.*

I encourage the appropriate treatment of speakers and program presenters at school district board meetings.

**Recommendation 10.** *The District Board members who use profanity be reprimanded and asked to remove themselves from the room.*

I encourage appropriate use of language by school district board members at public school board meetings.

**Recommendation 11.** *The School District continue to use separate balance sheets for Point Arena Union High School and Arena Union Elementary School.*

Maintaining separate income statements for Point Arena Joint Union High School and Arena Union Elementary School District is a good accounting practice that I encourage.

**Recommendation 12.** *All District Board members and Administrators receive Brown Act training annually.*

I can comment that I recommend **R12** be implemented and I will direct the Mendocino County Office of Education to provide on at least an annual basis Brown Act training that will be available to all Mendocino County school district administrators and board members.