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**To: Mendocino County Grand Jury**

**From: Leggett Valley Unified School District Board of Trustees**

**Report Title: RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT**

**This response is submitted on behalf of both Board of Trustees and the Superintendent.** Before setting forth its response to the Grand Jury Report, the Board would like to assert that the Grand Jury has totally missed the mark with regard to this report. The Grand Jury has ignored an underlying issue that has caused parents, students and some staff to be concerned. This is not an issue that rests solely with the alleged actions of the administrator. This report demonstrates that the Grand Jury did not undertake an independent review of the situation. The District has always had a goal and has been effective in having a school environment that is safe for students and emphasizes education. This year Leggett had the largest graduating class in the last several years and all of those students will be going on to post-secondary education. The District is extremely proud of those students and the work of the staff, including their prior administrator. The Board would also like to point out that the District recently received its WASC Accreditation. The Board has taken very seriously its responsibility to be well trained, and has done so, but has also been serious about the need to reduce expenses.

#### **FINDINGS:**

**We agree with the findings numbered: 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17, 30, 31 and 32.**

**We disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: 3, 5, 7, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29 as set forth below.**

3. District partially disagrees with finding #3 in that the District continues to attract students from other districts including Southern Humboldt.
  
5. District agrees that this is current make-up of Board.
  
7. District disagrees in part. Board members have attended several other trainings beyond those mentioned. Like most districts, there are insufficient funds to support training and conference attendance as in the past. Ethics training is not required for school boards.
  
12. District partially agrees. The District agrees with the first sentence regarding the expiration of the Superintendent's contract. With regard to the remaining findings of #12, the District did not appoint a principal, but did appoint one of the teachers to serve on a part-time basis as Dean of Students at the Leggett site for the last quarter of the school year. The Board has also been reviewing the administrative needs of the District as a whole and of the Leggett site.

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13. The District partially agrees. The District notes that in small districts, a variety of people take on a variety of tasks. The District also notes that a principal or superintendent has authority to discipline adult staff, but neither have authority to discipline “adults” who are not employed by the District.
14. The District wholly disagrees with this finding. The experience of this District is like many small districts, where administrators have had to serve in multiple roles and require a variety of skills that are not unique to one position. In many districts, like Leggett, and as provided in the Education Code, the Board acts as an appeal body when issues are not resolved at the administrative level.
15. District disagrees. The Board was not provided the basis for the Grand Jury’s findings and their calculations.
18. The District disagrees. The District disagrees that disciplinary actions have been ineffective to correct behavior. The District also disagrees that discipline has not been consistently enforced. While no recent referrals have been made to the SARB, this statement is vague as to the timeframe at issue. Also, the District asserts that appropriate discipline has been taken with regard to all illegal drug related issues involving students. It should be noted that student discipline and SARB are two different issues. As a result of a recent complaint, an investigation was done by a third party that found that the District Administrator had consistently and fully enforced discipline procedures. Under the guidance of our new Superintendent/Principal, the District is joining the North County SARB.
19. The District disagrees in part. The District has no information with which to comment on what the deputies said during an interview with the Grand Jury. The District notes that the reference to a District Civility Policy is not accurate. The District has a Community Relations Policy which has sub-parts, including, a sub-part dealing with “civility.”
20. The District disagrees in part. The District has no knowledge about what individual people may have commented on during their interviews with the Grand Jury, but does agree that for any community, the production of illegal drugs can have an impact on its community and the work of a school district.
21. The District disagrees in part. The District has never failed to call for police help when appropriate.
22. The District disagrees in part, in that the District cannot comment on the community perspective on

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involving law enforcement. The community is a small one and people have known each other and their families for years.

23. The District disagrees in part. It acknowledges that some families have moved out of the Leggett area or transferred their children to other districts. Reasons vary and the economy is a major factor.
24. The District disagrees with the Grand Jury characterization of many of the bulleted items. The District took appropriate action and the District does not have authority to discipline adults or parents. No retaliation can be taken against students for the conduct of their parents. The District acknowledges that there was a situation involving a coach that led to concerns by parents and staff.
25. The District cannot publicly comment on issues that involve personnel. The District does acknowledge that there have been concerns expressed by the community regarding certain staff members. In public meetings of the School Board, there have been heated discussions regarding the District's need to protect students and for staff to act appropriately.
26. The District wholly disagrees with this finding. Again, the District recognizes that there have been heated discussions and comments by parents who are attempting to protect their students and are concerned about the safety of their students and misconduct by staff. The District wholly disagrees with the finding that there has been any action that would constitute a misdemeanor.
27. The District disagrees wholly with this finding. The District Board did take action in 2008-2009 to realign academic standards with CIF requirements, such that incoming freshman had an opportunity to establish a record.
28. The District disagrees wholly. In the past year, some staff have resigned for childcare and child rearing purposes and/or other employment opportunities. With regard to parent and District interactions, the District is working to build a positive and strong parent-staff relationship.
29. The District disagrees partially. As noted above, the District has a Community Relations Policy, which in part refers to civility issues. The District disagrees with the characterization of the Penal Code sections.
33. The District disagrees partially, in that, as noted above, the District does not have a Civility Policy, it has a Community Relations Policy, of which, a portion is referenced as a civility policy. The portion cited in

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finding #33 is part of a sub-division labeled “Safety and Security.”

34. The District Board has no personal knowledge from which to comment on this finding.
35. The District partially disagrees. The disagreement is with regard to the last sentence regarding a check-in process. This concept is not included in Education Code section 32211 (e).
36. The District disagrees with this finding. There is a sign at the front door among other locations at the Leggett school site that directs visitors to the office. The office maintains a sign-in log.
37. The District disagrees partially. The alleged adult disruptions in and of themselves don't warrant nor constitute a mandate for “lockdown drills.”
38. The District disagrees. The Board cannot comment on what the Grand Jury may or may not have heard with regard to implementation of the curriculum. The District cannot act on complaints that are not brought to it. The Board must also act in accordance with the Brown Act regarding any complaints. The Grand Jury Report does not follow the Brown Act requirements. Finally, the District is committed to having a strong and full curriculum for all students.

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**Recommendations numbered 1, 4, 11 and 12 have been implemented.**

**Recommendations numbered 8 and 9 have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented at least partially in the future.**

**Recommendations numbered 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10, 13, 14 and 15 will not be implemented because they are not warranted and/or are not reasonable.**

1. This recommendation has been partially implemented. The District has hired a full-time Superintendent/Principal who has demonstrated success in managing student and parent behavior as well as effectively enforcing disciplinary policies. The District continues to consider its other administrative needs and will address them as economic resources are available and need is determined.
2. This recommendation will not be implemented. The District has successfully hired a new Superintendent/Principal. CSBA search costs are very expensive and prohibitive at this point.
3. This recommendation will not be implemented. Not only would this be cost prohibitive, but it is inappropriate to have a non-employee establish and be responsible for enforcing student and adult behavior. Any development of new or different behavior expectations for students will be done by the District and its staff. At the same time, staff will be responsible for training and working with students on behavioral issues. The District does not have the authority to discipline adults, except for staff, and the District will take responsibility for working with staff on any issues that come to light.
4. The new administrator for the District has already organized training in August for staff on a variety of issues and will also take initiative in organizing training for Board members on important and required topics.
5. This recommendation will not be implemented. The new District administrator will be responsible for holding appropriate safety drills for students, but the recommendation to hold “regular lockdown drills” is neither appropriate, nor necessary.
6. This recommendation will not be implemented. The concept of a closed campus typically refers to students and their ability to leave a campus. The District will review requirements for posting of signs and school hours and will continue to have a process where visitors are to check in with the main office before

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proceeding. The District is a public facility and a community center and the District needs to continue to be mindful of its role in the community. The District will continue to review its Community Relations Policy and its sub-parts, including the portion on civility. This will be done during the course of the 2009-2010 school year.

7. This recommendation will not be implemented. As noted above, the District will ask the new administrator to make sure that appropriate postings are in place in accordance with state law. Threats of Penal Code violations, unless required by law, would add a negative and hostile atmosphere to the District and would not be appropriate.
8. This District will partially implement recommendation number 8 in that the administrator understands their responsibility to report appropriate matters to the Sheriff's office and will continue to fully support law enforcement agencies as they work to assist the school district.
9. The District will have an expectation that the administration will provide a monthly update on behavioral issues related to students. This would not necessarily be an appropriate topic for closed session. This recommendation will only partially be implemented in that the Board has made it clear to the District administrator that they are to use their good judgment in working with students and working with families in our community and that as they believe appropriate under the state law, matters may be referred to appropriate authority for further action outside of the school district.
10. This recommendation will not be implemented. The District is very concerned by this recommendation and the "big brother" concept of people being under surveillance. Not only is this contrary to the positive environment that the District wishes to establish, but is cost prohibitive.
11. This recommendation has already been implemented.
12. The District believes that this is already in place, but will continue to work with faculty regarding curriculum and the adoption and maintenance of appropriate books and materials for all students.
13. This recommendation is not within the jurisdiction of the District.
14. This recommendation is not within the jurisdiction of the District.

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15. This recommendation is not within the jurisdiction of the District.

**Date:** July 23, 2009

**Signed:** Marcia Bradley

**Approved by the Leggett Valley Unified Board of Trustees on July 23, 2009.**