

Kelseyville Unified School District

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David McQueen • Superintendent

To: The Honorable Judge Stephen O. Hedstrom
Presiding Judge
Superior Court of Lake County

From: David McQueen, Superintendent Kelseyville Unified School District

RE: Response to Grand Jury's Final Report

Date: August 28, 2013

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This response is from the Superintendent of the Kelseyville Unified School District and the Kelseyville Unified School District Board of Education,

GENERAL RESPONSE

We commend the Public Services Committee of the Lake County Grand Jury on its report entitled "Financial and Educational Benefits to be Derived from the Unification of Lake County School Districts".

RESPONSE TO FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LAKE COUNTY GRAND JURY IN ITS REPORT ENTITLED "FINANCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS TO BE DERIVED FROM THE UNIFICATION OF LAKE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS"

FINDING:

F 1. Based on the totality of the facts above, consolidation/unification of the seven Lake County school districts into one would be beneficial both financially and educationally to Lake County Schools.

RESPONSE:

The respondents disagree with this finding based upon insufficient evidence and lacking a fully vetted administrative structure.

The Kelseyville Unified School District firmly believes in local control and community based learning. Each community within Lake County that already has an established school district must have the ability and right to determine what is best educationally for its community. To take that right away is a detriment to every community in Lake County and Kelseyville.

Additionally, the State of California is in the process of overhauling the funding structure for school districts. This new structure is the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). A major part of the new funding is based on specific demographics in each district. The unification of all districts may have an adverse effect on the funding that is received by individual districts in the County, especially Kelseyville which has a larger English Learner population as well as a high number of socio-economically disadvantaged students.

Unless an in-depth study is done by a professional agency knowledgeable of school finance and administration, there is not sufficient evidence that such a consolidation of school districts would be beneficial financially and educationally to Lake County Schools.

FINDING

F 2. The PSC, guided by LCOE expenditure analysts, calculates that non-educational direct administration costs for the combined seven school districts amount to approximately \$10 million or approximately 15% of 2011-2012 Lake County total audited school expenditure of \$64,110,445. The potential savings may differ when the collateral costs of real estate, buildings and equipment are factored into the cost data. [See Appendix A]

RESPONSE:

The respondents disagree with the finding. Although some economy of scale may be obtained, the number of district level administrative staff needed to accomplish the required tasks in a district of 9000 students is significantly different than a district of 1500 students. Additionally there are numerous Collective Bargaining Agreements that would need to be addressed.

- County wide unification would require establishing a county wide uniform salary schedule for all teachers in Lake County (EC 45028). Each district has differing pay scales. A thorough study would find that salaries would increase as the highest paying district at unification would need to be employed. Any significant savings would be lost in higher wages.

Also, please note the following:

- There are differences in the dollar amount paid toward employee health benefits in each of the school districts. The increased cost of providing health benefits for employees as a result of unification would need to be considered.
- There are differences in the dollar amount paid for classified salaries in each of the school districts. The increased cost of salaries for classified employees as a result of unification would need to be considered.
- There are differences in the number of work days in each of the school districts. The increased cost of additional work days as a result of unification would need to be considered.

FINDING

F 3. With the internet, instant communication links and two-way electronic access to each individual school in Lake County, LCOE administrative staff stated they can adequately and cost effectively manage all of the Lake County's seven school district administrations.

RESPONSE:

The respondents disagree with the finding. The role of the County Office is to provide oversight and support to the districts in the county. By unification/consolidation all the districts into LCOE it removes any checks and balances in the system or LCOE would remain responsible under AB1200 to oversee a singular "Unified School District".

The Kelseyville Unified School District believes that each community within the County should be allowed to determine the financial and educational course of its constituents.

FINDING

F 4. There will be additional costs involved with the unification/consolidation process and the revising/upgrading of various systems upon completion of consolidation. These costs are unknown at this time but they should not curtail the effort of consolidation/unification. The potential savings realized could be funneled back to improve the education of Lake County students.

RESPONSE:

The respondents agree that all savings should be funneled back to improve the education of Lake County students, but at the local community level. Each community within Lake County knows what is best for their community. The community that elects their representatives for school governance should determine how those funds are

spent. If there are any savings, those savings should be funneled back into programs for students within the particular community or school district.

FINDING

F 5. Each of the seven Lake County school districts has their own unique identity and characteristics (sports and other competitive programs) which should remain unaffected by unification/consolidation. Students should not be required to relocate to different schools.

RESPONSE:

The respondents agree with the finding.

FINDING

F 6. After review of the LCBOE regular meeting minutes for the last twelve months, it appears that no business for the County Committee has been conducted and no petitions for reorganization have been received.

RESPONSE:

This finding is directed to the LCBOE, and does not require a response from the respondents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION:

R 1. Residents of Lake County review the Lake County Civil Grand Jury's report in its entirety. (F1 - F6)

RESPONSE:

The respondents agree with the recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION:

R 2. The Boards of Trustees for all school districts in Lake County consult with all school districts to identify opportunities for consolidation with a view to petitioning the County Superintendent of Schools pursuant to Education Code 35700. (F1 - F6)

RESPONSE:

The respondents are not interested in pursuing opportunities for consolidation at this time. The Kelseyville Unified School District cannot speak for other agencies.

RECOMMENDATION:

R 3. The Boards of Trustees for all Lake County school districts adopt and deliver to the CCSDO a resolution proposing consideration of consolidation all districts in Lake County, pursuant to Education Code Section 35721 (c). F1

RESPONSE:

The respondents are not interested in pursuing opportunities for consolidation at this time. The Kelseyville Unified School District cannot speak for other agencies.

RECOMMENDATION:

R 4. The County Committee on School District Organization (CCSDO) formulate plans for the consolidation of Lake County school districts pursuant to Education Code Section 35720.

RESPONSE

This recommendation is directed to the LCBOE, and does not require a response from the respondents.

RECOMMENDATION

R 5. The Lake County Board of Supervisors adopt and deliver to the CCSDO a resolution proposing consideration of consolidation of local school districts in Lake County, pursuant to Education Code 35721 (c). F1

RESPONSE:

This recommendation is directed to the Lake County Board of Supervisors, and does not require a response from the respondents.

RECOMMENDATION

R 6. The County Committee convenes one or more public hearings to gauge the electorate support for such unification/consolidation pursuant to Education Code Section 35700(a) and 35721 (a). (F1)

RESPONSE

This recommendation is directed to the Lake County Board of Supervisors, and does not require a response from the respondents.

GRAND JURY REPORT -- "OVERSIGHT OF EDUCATION TRANSPORTATION IN LAKE COUNTY"

GENERAL RESPONSE

We commend the Public Services Committee of the Lake County Grand Jury on its report entitled "Oversight of Education Transportation in Lake County"

FINDINGS

FINDING:

F 1. The various transportation departments are doing an excellent job considering the budgetary constraints under which they operate.

RESPONSE:

The respondents agree with the finding.

FINDING

F 2. Each district handles purchasing according to their own needs.

RESPONSE:

The respondents agree with the finding.

FINDING

F 3. The procedures are fairly uniform between districts.

RESPONSE:

The respondents agree with the finding.

FINDING

F 4. Administrative savings could be realized with centralized Information Technology for record keeping and purchasing. This could eliminate the teaching staff, principals, et al. from being responsible for transportation needs of the students (see "The Educational and Financial Benefits Derived from the Unification of all Lake County School Districts" in the 2012-2013 Civil Grand Jury Report).

RESPONSE:

The Kelseyville Unified School District already works with LCOE in bulk purchasing on certain items for Transportation. Actual administrative savings would have to be calculated in a realistic way to see if savings was derived. Collective Bargaining agreements have not been taken into consideration in past studies. More information and study must be considered to ascertain if this finding has merit. The Kelseyville Unified School District agrees that centralized Information technology would be beneficial but not necessarily a savings.

FINDING

F 5. The inclusion of GPS transponders allows for real-time location reporting which enhances student safety and security.

RESPONSE:

The respondents agree with the finding.

FINDING

F 6. Middletown bus barn security is in need of repairs

RESPONSE:

The respondents have no information that would allow them to agree or disagree with this finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

RECOMMENDATION

R 1. The transportation departments of all districts be commended for their performance under difficult circumstances. (F1)

RESPONSE:

The respondents agree with the recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION

R 2. The committee recommends coordination of administration and IT into one office with one director. This can facilitate better contracts, inventory control and record keeping and governmental reporting. The IT system can further facilitate performance measurement of staff and facilities. This could eliminate the teaching staff, principals, et al from being responsible for transportation needs of the students. (F4)

RESPONSE:

This recommendation requires further analysis. The Kelseyville Unified School District believes that these matters need to be determined by each elected school board and the community in which they serve. Because this is a financial obligation, only the elected school board for that community can decide this based on fiscal ability.

RECOMMENDATION

R 3. All buses and white fleet in the county have GPS transponders installed. (F5)

RESPONSE:

This recommendation requires further analysis. The Kelseyville Unified School District believes that these matters need to be determined by each elected school board and the community in which they serve. Because this is a financial obligation, only the elected school board for that community can decide this based on fiscal ability.

RECOMMENDATION

R 4. The Middletown School District repair their security fence to control theft. (F6)

RESPONSE:

This recommendation is directed to the Middletown School District, and does not require a response from the respondents.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. McQueen", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David McQueen
Superintendent, Kelseyville Unified School District