

# **SOLANO COUNTY GRAND JURY**



## **Rio Vista High School: Students Deserve Better Learning Environment**



**2004-2005 Grand Jury Report**

**Issued: May 18, 2005**

**Rio Vista High School**  
**Students Deserve Better Learning Environment**  
**2004-2005 Grand Jury Report**

**I. Reason for Visit**

The Grand Jury elected to visit and observe the physical condition of the Rio Vista High School.

**II. Procedure**

The Grand Jury:

- Toured the school facilities in September 2004
- Met and interviewed the principal, staff members and students
- Observed the physical condition of the buildings and grounds
- Reviewed the website summary of River Delta Unified School District 2004-2009 Facilities Master Plan

**III. Background**

Rio Vista High School is situated in the eastern part of Solano County but is part of River Delta Unified School District governed by the Sacramento County Office of Education. The River Delta School District is made up of nine schools consisting of six elementary schools, one middle school and two high schools. Rio Vista High School is in the School Facility Improvement District (SFID) #1 that includes the Rio Vista and Isleton attendance areas.

The Principal has been at Rio Vista High School for three years and was the Vice Principal for two prior years. There is a full-time vice principal and a full-time counselor. There are 22 credentialed teachers and a part-time librarian. The school was built to accommodate 500 students and on the date the Grand Jury visited, the enrollment was 422.

Rio Vista High School has an innovative vocational education program consisting of school "Academies" that operate small businesses, either in partnership with local businesses or as stand-alone enterprises. For example, the wood shop program produces custom-made storage sheds and cabinets; the foods and nutrition department runs a restaurant one-day a week; the art department has a screen printing business and the agriculture department cooperates with a local business that produces "RioGrow" fertilizer.

The school's main building was built in 1939 with the library and cafeteria added in the late 1950's. In 1966 the "A-B building" and gym were built.

At the time of the Grand Jury visit, the exterior of the school building was missing large sections of stucco. The gutters throughout the school were filled with debris and in some places, rusted through. The flagpole needed to be painted and a frayed State flag replaced. The parking lot was in need of replacement and/or resurfacing. The school needed painting inside and outside; ceiling tiles were missing in hallways and classrooms; floor tiles needed replacing and the walkways were cracked. Asbestos contamination had not been addressed. Window coverings were tattered and in need of replacement in the library and classrooms. One door was missing from a campus handicapped toilet and the fixture was not handicapped

compliant. One boys' restroom visited was in need of janitorial attention. The floor tiles needed scrubbing. One of the sinks was dirty and rusty. A fountain located near the attendance office did not have adequate water pressure to allow a person to drink.

The housekeeping in some classrooms visited was substandard. For example, the art room had papers, rags and other paraphernalia scattered about the room.

The grounds were in reasonably good shape. The school employs a gardener along with four custodians. Near the gymnasium is an attractive landscaped waterfall that was created by the art students. The wood shop was well-organized and neat for a shop class of that size. The boys' restroom in the gym was neat and clean.

Steps provide entry to the front of the school, yet there is no signage to indicate where the disabled may enter. Inside are more steps to reach the main hallway. The present student population does not have ambulatory challenges, according to the principal, and he indicated that any Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance issues are handled on an individual student need basis. Accessibility to the public was not addressed.

In November 2004, Measure U, a bond issue was passed to provide allocated funding for major modernization projects for the school site. The bond issue will do the following:

- Renovate outdated restrooms and plumbing systems to comply with health and safety standards
- Improve handicapped access to comply with federal standards including building access, restroom access, wheelchair access and lifts as needed.
- Replace heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems with modern energy-efficient controls and materials
- Upgrade and modernize classroom interiors and support facilities including the library and cafeteria; replace outdated windows, white boards, blinds and repaint school facilities as needed
- Upgrade and renovate electrical systems including lighting and power supply to improve student access to computers and modern technology
- Removing hazardous materials, including asbestos, to make health and safety improvements
- Improve school site to include parking, utility system upgrades and school exterior and grounds
- Upgrade communication and fire systems including telephone, public address, data wiring and fire alarms
- Provide or purchase other school furniture and equipment as needed
- Provide temporary facilities during construction/modernization including additional site improvements as needed

#### **IV. Findings and Recommendations**

**Finding #1** –The school needs immediate and major renovation.

**Recommendation #1** – The Grand Jury recommends the District immediately implement the renovations and upgrades as outlined in the 2004-2009 Facilities Master Plan.

**Finding #2** – Some areas of the school were not clean and were in need of janitorial attention.

**Recommendation #2** – The school administration should insure all areas of the school are clean and tidy.

**Finding #3** – The Rio Vista High School is not in compliance with Title II of the ADA regulations.

**Recommendation #3** – The Grand Jury recommends that as renovations/modernization projects are undertaken; the School District insures that ADA standards are met.

#### **IV. Comments**

The District needs to be more proactive in seeing that its students are housed in a structure that is conducive to maintaining their academic achievements along with meeting their environmental needs. Recent passage of the bond measure provides the funding needed to make this possible.

#### **V. Affected Agencies**

- Rio Vista High School
- River Delta Unified School District
- Solano County Office of Education – courtesy copy
- Sacramento County Office of Education – courtesy copy
- Sacramento County Grand Jury – courtesy copy