

TRAVIS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



Reaching beyond the boundaries
to build a community of learners.

Kate Wren Gavlak
Superintendent

2751 DeRonde Drive
Fairfield, CA 94533
(707) 437-4604

Cambridge Elementary School
100 Cambridge Drive, Vacaville
(707) 446-9494

Center Elementary School
2900 Armstrong Street, Travis AFB
(707) 437-4621

Foxboro Elementary School
600 Morning Glory Drive, Vacaville
(707) 447-7883

Golden West Middle School
2651 DeRonde Drive, Fairfield
(707) 437-8240

Scandia Elementary School
100 Broadway Street, Travis AFB
(707) 437-4691

Travis Community Day School
2785 DeRonde Drive, Fairfield
(707) 437-8185

Travis Elementary School
100 Hickam Avenue, Travis AFB
(707) 437-2070

Travis Education Center
2775 DeRonde Drive, Fairfield
(707) 437-8265

Vanden High School
2951 Markley Lane, Fairfield
(707) 437-7333

Governing Board

Harry Axhelm
Mary Jo Dickerson
Ivery Hood
Wanona Ireland
Edwin Sanderson

July 31, 2007

David E. Power
Presiding Judge of the Solano County Superior Court
600 Union Ave
Fairfield, CA 94533

Dear Judge Power:

Re: *Response to Grand Jury Report - Travis USD Emergency Safety Plans*

This communication serves as a formal response to the Solano County Grand Jury's *Findings and Recommendations* presented in the 2006-07 Grand Jury Report entitled "Travis Unified School District Emergency Safety Plans," dated June 7, 2007.

Finding 1: The basic overall Emergency Safety Plan was not consistent for each school. Variance for school design and geography location was noted.

Grand Jury's recommendation: Emergency Safety Plans should be consistent throughout the Travis Unified School District. School design and geographical location plans may differ.

Travis USD Superintendent's response: The key elements for Emergency Safety Plans are consistent, but may not have been apparent. During the 2006-07 school year, the Safety Committee developed a template for all school sites to use. While the template was not completed and in use prior to the Grand Jury's visit, it was implemented districtwide near the end of 2006-07 year and will be in place for subsequent school years.

Finding 2: Several fire and electrical code violations were found such as: blocked access to fire alarm pull stations, fire extinguishers and use of temporary extension cords in place of permanent wiring. Some passageways to exits were partially blocked. Some doors to the outside were not marked with an "EXIT" sign.

Grand Jury's recommendation: The Travis Unified School District Superintendent should ask the appropriate fire departments to perform safety inspections.

Travis USD Superintendent's response: Blocked access to fire alarm pull stations, fire extinguishers and use of temporary extension cords are addressed each year and on a continuing basis by the Supervisor of Maintenance. On occasion, staff members might not comply or will simply put cords back after they've been removed. Currently the Supervisor of Maintenance is moving

forward to tape off certain areas on floor tile to maintain appropriate clearance areas. Some areas have signs addressing clearance needs. Staff has been directed to unplug extension cords, and custodial staff is encouraged to unplug any cords they find during their shifts. Older buildings were not designed for the current needs for outlets—an ongoing challenge in many districts. The Supervisor of Maintenance and site administrators will be addressing these issues with the opening of school for the 07-08 year. Safety inspections will continue, performed by the Supervisor of Maintenance, to encourage compliance. Travis Unified will also continue to work with our insuring group who does annual site safety surveys.

Finding 3: Maintenance of older buses is becoming progressively more difficult.

Grand Jury's recommendation: The District should consider purchasing new vehicles to replace the older buses.

Travis USD Superintendent's response: A couple of TUSD buses are older; however, district staff are still able to maintain these vehicles by ordering parts directly from the dealer. The safety and integrity of these buses is still up to code and meet all the requirements during annual inspections by the California Highway Patrol.

The current price of a 62-passenger bus is over \$125,000.00. Currently, Travis Unified School District has 17 buses which are 78-passenger or larger. It would require over 21 vehicles at a cost in excess of \$2.5 million just to replace our current fleet of buses. As funding or grants become available, the District will begin to upgrade the vehicle fleet.

Finding 4: Adequate water and food supplies are not available at some schools in case of prolonged lock-down. Some schools depend on the District Office for water and food during an emergency.

Grand Jury's recommendation: The District should provide an adequate supply of water and food on site.

Travis USD Superintendent's response: School sites within the Travis Unified School District can be broken down into three categories: Vacaville sites (Cambridge and Foxboro elementary schools); Travis Air Force Base sites (Travis, Scandia and Center elementary schools); and adjacent sites (adjacent to the Travis Unified District Office): Golden West Middle School and Vanden High School).

Foxboro Elementary School has limited storage that just meets the needs of the food service operation for the current student population. Refrigerator and freezer space is also limited due to limited physical space. The District will study options for providing a storage area for emergency stocks of water and food.

Golden West Middle School and Vanden High School are both adjacent to the District Office and, therefore, have access to the warehouse and the supplies that

are stored there, which include food items. TUSD staff will work with site administrators to review their needs for emergency stocks of water and food.

Finding 5: Fire alarm pull stations did not have covers.

Grand Jury's recommendation: The District should install covers to prevent false alarms.

Travis USD Superintendent's response: According to information received from the fire departments, fire alarm covers are not mandatory and we have not been directed to provide covers in our most recent inspections. The District has installed a cover panel on a pull station at Foxboro Elementary due to a particular student who continued to pull the fire alarm. TUSD staff works closely with the fire department and promptly acts on their recommendations and any discrepancies they note during their annual inspections.

Covers have a cost of approximately \$100 each and are installed where appropriate and when available as we modernize facilities. Vanden High School has the covers that were installed during last year's modernization project. As covers are no longer in use in portable buildings, staff have used available covers to install where appropriate at Golden West Middle School. Staff will continue to move forward with the installation of covers.

Grand Jury's Comments:

Include student representatives on safety committees at District schools to provide input from a student's perspective.

Travis USD Superintendent's response: In addition to the regular input from our Student Board Member in representation of the entire student body, student input is considered through student surveys and the California Healthy Kids Survey. Students are given opportunities for learning safety lessons during class time and are surveyed by teachers when student input is needed and appropriate. The safety of students, both physically and emotionally, is a top priority in the Travis Unified School District and is always taken very seriously by Board members and staff members across the District.

Increase communication and collaboration between schools in the District during the Emergency Safety Planning process.

Travis USD Superintendent's response: The Travis USD Safety Committee meets regularly, and information is shared with all appropriate parties. During the past year, the District has invested in upgrading its hand-held radios to improve communication in the event that other systems fail, as well as the implementation of a districtwide "Connect-Ed" program that allows administration to send voice messages to all students and staff, in an emergency, within minutes.

Monthly Management meetings provide a time and place for all management—certificated and classified—to discuss safety concerns. This is also the forum for discussing the emergency planning process.

Sincerely,



Kate Wren Gaviak
Superintendent

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cc: Travis USD Governing Board