

Clear Creek
Elementary School District

"since 1867"



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MS

Board of Trustees

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The Honorable Thomas M. Anderson
Presiding Judge of the Grand Jury
201 Church Street
Nevada City, CA 95959

Superintendent/Principal
Scott W. Lay

Dear Judge Anderson,

This letter is in response to the Grand Jury report dated May 25, 2017. I would like to thank the Grand Jury for looking into coordination between school districts for the benefit of our students. Before responding we would like to address two items that were of concern to the Clear Creek Elementary School District (CCESD) on first page of the summary.

First, the last sentence in the first paragraph "Some elementary school students in the County are better prepared than others for high school due only to the quality of elementary instruction they have received". This is a very narrow summation of what goes into students being prepared for high school. Although the quality of elementary instruction is very important, many other factors play a key role. These factors include socioeconomic status, mental health, health issues, and parent involvement.

Second, a little over 20% of our students in the county were not included in the report. These students attend well established charter schools in the county and most continue on to our traditional high schools. I'm not sure why they were excluded.

Below are the responses to the Findings (F1, F2, F4) and the Recommendations (R1, R2, R4, R5) as requested.

FINDINGS

F1 The failure of the school districts within the County to identify teacher leaders and coordinate teacher collaboration and articulation negatively impacts student opportunity.

Response: Disagree

At CCESD we do identify certificated and classified leaders for curriculum and other areas such as technology. These staff members become leaders in their areas and work with other staff members to improve student learning and school climate. As noted in your findings from Appendix C, CCESD does provide collaboration times weekly for teachers. We also hold

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meetings once a month with the entire staff and provide staff training several times a year (which often include staff members from other schools).

F2 There is an apparent lack of Professional Learning Communities in the areas of English Language Arts and Mathematics in the nine school districts in the County.

Response: Disagree

CCESD practices Professional Learning Communities during our weekly collaboration meetings. Staff will meet in grade clusters, such as K-2, 3-5, 6-8 and/or other grade groupings that are relevant in the areas of not only English Language Arts and Mathematics, but also Science, Social Studies, and PE.

F4 There is a lack of communication and collaboration between the two comprehensive high schools and their feeder elementary districts concerning expectations for entering ninth graders.

Response: Disagree

There is a great deal of collaboration and communication between CCESD and the two comprehensive high schools. Once a month the nine district Superintendents and the County Superintendent meet. High school articulation with the feeder districts is always on the agenda. Articulation is also discussed in the county Principal meetings that are held three times a year with representatives from all nine districts and the county office. At the school level, the two comprehensive high schools are in direct contact with CCESD for incoming ninth grade expectations. Both comprehensive high schools, as well as our charter high schools, meet with all incoming ninth graders and their teachers at our site to go over expectations and paths for success in high school. This has been a priority amongst all of our school districts for the past 25 years that I have witnessed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1 The superintendents from each district should come together and set communication and collaboration guidelines for teachers including the coordination of time for this communication and collaboration.

This recommendation is already standard practice in the Clear Creek Elementary School District.

Superintendents from all nine districts do come together and set communication and collaboration times that make sense for teachers that take collective bargaining agreements into account. Currently the Superintendents from CCESD, TRESA, and CPESD (the three smallest districts in the county) meet monthly to work on this for the cross collaboration and

trainings. The Superintendent of Schools office is always willing to coordinate any collaboration between districts and puts on a countywide collaboration day each year in September.

R2 The individual school districts should select teachers to act as leaders in the process of forming Professional Learning Communities in the areas of English Language Arts and Mathematics.

This recommendation is already standard practice in the Clear Creek Elementary School District.

Please see response to F2. As mentioned in that response, CCESD is also working on Social Studies, Science, and PE with our teacher leaders.

R4 These leaders should establish working relationships with their peers allowing them to freely share ideas, plans and the results of their instruction.

This recommendation is already standard practice in the Clear Creek Elementary School District.

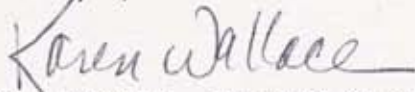
There is already time built in to our schedule that allows for this to happen. CCESD and CPESD have done this over the past 10 years. We have also included other school district leaders when relevant (such as inviting Nevada City School District teachers to our math inservices). Please refer to the answers for findings F1, F2, and F4.

R5 The Nevada Joint Union High School District should develop a process in collaboration with the elementary districts to more clearly identify the expectations for entering ninth graders.

This recommendation is already standard practice in the Clear Creek Elementary School District.

Please see response for finding F4 above.

Thank you,



Karen Wallace -- President, Clear Creek Elementary School Board of Trustees