



Building a strong  
foundation for  
learning and creativity

**JOHN BAGGETT, SUPERINTENDENT**

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September 12, 2023

The Honorable Judge Scott Thomsen  
Supervising Judge of the Grand Jury  
201 Church Street  
Nevada City, CA 95959

Dear Honorable Judge Scott Thomsen:

I am writing to respond to the June 15, 2023 Nevada County Grand Jury report titled “Nevada County School Boards: An Educational Opportunity”. This letter reflects the sentiments shared by the Nevada City School District Board of Trustees following their public meeting on August 8th, where the concerns raised in the Grand Jury report were discussed extensively.

Although Nevada City School District agrees with your finding, “legal ethical Brown Act training required for all board members across the county should address laws regarding political campaigning” we disagree with your methods and assumptions. The Nevada City School District was regrettably not contacted regarding these accusations. Our Board receives regular training and abides by the district policies and laws, which includes the Brown Act.

While we recognize the importance of the Grand Jury's role in ensuring transparency and accountability within public institutions, we wish to convey our reservations about certain aspects of the report's methodology and conclusions. Our intention is to provide a comprehensive perspective on the matters raised and to highlight the nuances involved.

The Nevada City School District Board of Trustees takes immense pride in its commitment to being well-versed in educational policy and dedicated to ethical conduct. Our board members participate diligently in regular training and workshops, all aimed at enriching their understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Biennial board governance training sessions, particularly during election years, are actively encouraged, emphasizing legal and ethical conduct within their capacities.

It is important to note that our board members consistently uphold the guidelines outlined by the Brown Act, which governs open meetings and public participation. We have invested significant time and resources to ensure that our board practices align with the principles of transparency, inclusivity, and accountability espoused by the Brown Act.

However, we must clarify that the concerns regarding non-compliance with the Brown Act, as outlined in the Grand Jury report, do not pertain to the Nevada City School District Board of Trustees but rather to the actions of individuals who previously served on the Nevada Union High School board. These individuals are no longer in office due to their subsequent electoral defeat. Regrettably, the report's lack of distinction between these boards may have inadvertently led to confusion within our community.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the conclusions drawn by the Grand Jury were done so without engaging our district to inquire about our existing training programs and protocols. The Nevada City School District Board of Trustees, at its August 8th public board meeting, expressed concern about the report's apparent oversight in considering our well-established efforts to provide comprehensive training to our board members. We believe that a more collaborative and communicative approach would have yielded a more accurate understanding of our training initiatives. Our current policies and procedures already exceed the recommendations of the Grand Jury, reflecting our ongoing commitment to maintaining the highest standards and ethical conduct.

In light of the above, we are receptive to the recommendations presented by the Grand Jury, especially those aimed at refining training programs for trustees. Our commitment to providing quality training and ethical governance remains unwavering. We view these recommendations as opportunities to strengthen our practices and uphold the highest standards of conduct.

In conclusion, the Nevada City School District Board of Trustees is dedicated to continuous improvement and welcomes constructive feedback that enhances our governance processes. We value the opportunity to contribute to meaningful change while also emphasizing the importance of conducting future reports with thoroughness, sensitivity, and a complete understanding of the efforts educational institutions undertake to maintain exemplary standards of conduct.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Baggett", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John Baggett  
Superintendent  
Nevada City School District