



Bear River High School Ghidotti Early College High School Nevada Union High School North Point Academy Silver Springs High School

June 15, 2026

Judge Scott Thomsen
201 Church Street
Nevada City, CA 95959

Dear Honorable Scott Thomsen:

The Nevada Joint Union High School District (NJUHSD) is in receipt of your correspondence and the Grand Jury's report titled "Bullying and Harassment at NJUHSD Schools: Going Underground". A copy of the report was received by my office on March 18, 2026. The following is NJUHSD's required response to the Grand Jury's report.

In addition to following up on the required Findings and Recommendations that have been assigned to the District to respond to, I have added additional commentary at the end of this correspondence. In short, I am highly disappointed in the production and publication of this report.

RESPONSE TO FINDINGS, 1-11

Finding 1 (F1)

The District is complying with all State and Federal laws and codes regarding B&H.

The District agrees with this finding.

Finding 2 (F2)

The District has provided anti-B&H training for staff in addition to that required by CEC.

The District agrees with this finding.

Finding 3 (F3)

The information in this report indicates Bullying and Harassment incidents are not decreasing within The District schools; they are increasing.

The District disagrees with this finding. The Grand Jury reports that the interviews they conducted "consistently revealed interviewees felt that B&H within the District has been declining over the past 3 to 4 years." and that "The anecdotal information is not substantiated by the data." Contrary to this finding, students' reported sense of feeling physically safe on campus and emotionally safe on campus have increased over the 4 year period examined by the Grand Jury. This finding is unsubstantiated.

Finding 4 (F4)

Students at NUHS feel least safe amongst all the students within the District schools.

There are five schools in the District; one of the five schools will have the lowest measures of perceived safety in the District. The District agrees with this finding. It is to be expected, as NUHS is

the largest school in the District (almost 3 times the size as the next largest school). It also is the largest geographically in terms of the size of the campus, and has the highest variance in levels of socio-economic, political, academic, and ethnic diversity of all the schools in the District.

Finding 5 (F5)

The District LCAP metrics do not effectively measure B&H within its schools.

The District **disagrees** with this finding. It is not the intent of the LCAP survey to "measure B&H" but rather to assess broader indicators of school climate, connectedness, and physical/emotional safety. The District believes the current LCAP metrics are appropriate and align with the intended purpose of the LCAP Survey.

Finding 6 (F6)

The District LCAP survey lacks the safeguards required to ensure survey integrity.

The District **disagrees** with this finding. The LCAP survey is one of multiple measures of data collection utilized by the District to measure the progress and performance of our schools. The survey in and of itself is not "required" by the state; it is something we do to be inclusive and to solicit input from our students, families and staff to guide decision-making when developing our Local Control Accountability Plan. The data is reviewed by staff and can be screened for anomalies and duplicative responses. We trust our stakeholder groups to use the survey responsibly.

Finding 7 (F7)

The district LCAP student survey participation rate for NUHS is far below that of other schools within The District.

The District **agrees** with this finding, in that the participation rate *was* low for several of the recent years that the survey was delivered. The participation rate for the 2025-26 school year was 65.5%.

Finding 8 (F8)

The District's preventative efforts to reduce B&H have been primarily focused on district and school staff.

The District **agrees** with this finding. Training was also provided to students at the beginning of the school year. Efforts will continue in the coming years for both staff and students.

Finding 9 (F9)

Schools within The District do not discipline equally for like offenses.

The District **disagrees** with this finding. Site leaders regularly collaborate on topics of behavior and discipline and have collaboratively developed the District's Suspension and Expulsion Discipline Matrix. Every behavioral incident, set of circumstances surrounding an incident, and individual student is entirely unique. Discretionary decisions are made every day. Discipline will never be "equal" from student to student, or incident-type to incident-type.

Finding 10 (F10)

Student Handbooks are either not available, out of date, or not easily accessible on school websites within The District.

The District partially agrees with this finding. Several student handbooks are difficult to find on their school websites; however, the two schools primarily examined in this investigation (Bear River and Nevada Union) are easily accessible by simply typing “handbook” in the search bar of their schools’ homepage.

Finding 11 (F11)

The District’ superintendent has publicly taken a strong stance against B&H within its schools.

The District agrees with this finding.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS, 1-9

Recommendation 1 (R1)

The District should modify its LCAP metrics to measure unreported B&H.

The District will not be modifying its LCAP metrics to measure unreported B&H. The District finds this suggested method to be an irresponsible and inaccurate method for collecting data. The recommended method for manufacturing an otherwise unreported number of incidents is speculative and hypothetical and that lacks both validity and reliability.

Recommendation 2 (R2)

The District should implement safeguards in its LCAP survey to ensure accuracy.

The District is comfortable with the reliability of the data collected in its LCAP survey. The survey is one of multiple measures of data collection utilized for our annual LCAP (Local Control Accountability Plan) development process. It is not utilized as a sole indicator of success or sole basis for future decision-making. The survey will continue to be implemented, with slight annual modifications as the District deems necessary, for comparison purposes year over year.

Recommendation 3 (R3)

The District Board should establish a resolution re-affirming its commitment to reduce B&H within The District.

The Board of Trustees passed Resolution #23-25/26: Every Student Belongs on March 11, 2026, prior to the publication of the Grand Jury Report. This resolution publicly re-affirms its commitment to reducing B&H in District schools.

Recommendation 4 (R4)

The district should establish a program like OBPP at NUHS.

OBPP existed for one year at NUHS. It was a top-down initiative that failed epically due to lack of buy-in from staff. Initiatives like this achieve success when they have origins that are grassroots, not by mandate, and certainly not by an outside agency with limited (or no) exposure to our school campuses. The scope of the Grand Jury investigation is vastly limited and lacks many perspectives (1,500 students at the school site, 180 employees, ~3,000 parents and guardians). A schoolwide initiative relies on much greater stakeholder involvement and engagement prior to being considered for implementation. Additionally, the Grand Jury reports that Breaking Down the Walls was

discontinued. This is inaccurate. Breaking Down the Walls programming rotates between NUHS and BRHS on an alternating basis every other year.

Recommendation 5 (R5)

The District should publish B&H policies prominently on each school's website homepage.

There are a number of items required by Education Code to be displayed prominently on the District's and School's homepages. The District respectfully retains the right to display information that is viewed as most pertinent, relevant, and most frequently referenced by our school communities and end users at any given time.

Recommendation 6 (R6)

The District should ensure each school prominently displays their current student handbook on the school's website homepage.

The District is accepting this recommendation and is adding a link to the Student Handbook at the top of the Parent Resource tab on the schools' homepages. This is a prominent location on the homepage of each school's website.

Recommendation 7 (R7)

The District should conduct a study to understand why NUHS LCAP survey participation rates are much lower than that of other schools and take corrective action.

The District has investigated the low participation rates at NUHS and has taken corrective action to mitigate this issue. Participation rates were dramatically improved in the 2025-26 school year, with 65.5% of students completing the survey (the highest percentage to date).

Recommendation 8 (R8)

The district should align the application of discipline within its schools.

The District will continue to strive for consistent and equitable discipline practices that are aligned between school sites. As referenced under item F9 above, the application of discipline will never be "equal".

Recommendation 9 (R9)

The jury commends the public stance against B&H by The District superintendent and recommends the NJUHSD Board to take a similar strong stance in its actions.

The Board of Trustees took action in March to pass Resolution #23-25/26: Every Student Belongs. Additionally, board members have regularly denounced acts of bullying and harassment during multiple occasions both publicly and in small setting environments.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTARY FROM THE DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

The title of this report is "Bullying and Harassment at NJUHSD Schools: Going Underground?". This title is inflammatory and disparaging toward the District. It implies a lack of transparency, casts the district in a negative light, and implies wrongdoing, even when the data investigated to inform this report proves otherwise. It implies that somehow the District is hiding issues of bullying and harassment in our

schools. However, throughout the time of this investigation, the District maintained a standing item on its board agenda titled “Safety, Well-being, and Culture”, where data surrounding school discipline, suspensions, and anonymous reports of harassment were shared publicly. Each month, opportunity was provided for public comment, and open discussion between the District’s Board of Trustees and senior administration took place, in regular open session meetings, publicly. That is the opposite of Going Underground.

The Summary of this report states that “Analyzing both the LCAP and the CHKS survey results for the past 4-5 years, it appears that bullying and harassment is getting worse within The District, primarily at Nevada Union High School”. This is simply not the case. The CHKS longitudinal data from students, in response to the question of, have you experienced “any type of harassment” for the past 4 years trended as follows:

	<u>% of students responding YES to experiencing any type of harassment</u>			
	2022	2023	2024	2025
9th Graders	32%	30%	29%	33%
11th Graders	28%	26%	28%	21%
Non-traditional schools	17%	33%	29%	26%

* NO trends exist here that would indicate increased bullying and harassment. The 9th grade data represents a new cohort of students year over year and reflects no upward trends. There are two gradespan cohorts of students (highlighted accordingly) whose responses could be tracked from 9th grade to 11th grade. Both student groups report a decline in this measure.

LCAP Survey data regarding student responses to “do you feel physically or emotionally safe at school” trended as follows:

	<u>% of students responding YES to this question year over year</u>				
	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Physically Safe	82.1%	86.3%	90.6%	90.2%	New Data for '26 - 92.5%
Emotionally Safe	81.3%	75.7%	78.6%	83.5%	New Data for '26 - 84.2%

* NO trends exist here that would indicate increased bullying and harassment. Data regarding student reports of feeling safe on campus for the last 3 years is contrary to the Grand Jury’s conclusions. Perceptions and feelings of physical and emotional safety are improving according to students.

No data collected supports the Grand Jury’s conclusion that bullying and harassment is getting worse within the District. The Grand Jury reports that “The Jury conducted interviews that consistently revealed interviewees felt that bullying and harassment within the District has been declining over the past 3 to 4 years.”. The report follows that statement up with the comment that “The anecdotal information is not substantiated by the data”. **That is simply not accurate. The interviews conducted by the Grand Jury indicate that bullying and harassment is declining. The data collected by the Grand Jury indicates that bullying and harassment are decreasing (or at a minimum, mixed), and self-reported feelings of students’ physical and emotional safety are improving; yet the conclusion the Grand Jury draws is that bullying and harassment is getting worse? This conclusion is problematic.**

Within the report, the Grand Jury attempts to calculate “the minimum number of unreported B&H incidents” within District schools for the past three years. This attempt is deeply flawed. The Grand Jury created its own data, which is speculative, hypothetical and lacks scientific reasoning. The Grand Jury

grounds its conclusion on this fabricated data. The Grand Jury actually generated its own numbers of unreported incidents, and then reports them as fact, stating "The information contained in Table 4 indicates that B&H incidents are not decreasing within The District schools but are in fact increasing and not being reported". This is grossly irresponsible.

The analysis performed by the Grand Jury members is flawed, unsubstantiated, appears to have bias, and has drawn an irresponsible conclusion. This conclusion, shared publicly in our community, generates a negative public perception of NJUHSD schools and Nevada Union High School. Ironically, the flawed conclusion purported by the Grand Jury weakens the sense of public safety at our public schools.

I have dedicated the last 25 years of my career to promoting and ensuring the safety of our public schools and I have spent the last 15 years doing so in our community for the Nevada Joint Union High School District. I am deeply disheartened that a government agency would publish unfounded, fabricated, and unsubstantiated findings about the safety of the schools in our community. It is contrary to the collaborative efforts that we strive for from positions of leadership in our county, and it creates an unwarranted narrative about the school climate and culture of our school campuses. Our schools, our students, our staff, and our community deserve better.

I am happy to make myself available if you would like to engage in further discussion.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Frisella', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dan Frisella

Superintendent
Nevada Joint Union High School District